

PRAY FOR ME.

No ties of friendship here on earth— None stronger, better can there be, Than those expressed in grief or mirth; In these brief words: Friend, pray for me.

It is the sign of troubled hearts, What'er the source of grief may be, When friend from friend in sorrow parts, He says, "farewell and pray for me."

At morn, when all the eastern skies In golden splendor o'ber me, And thy first thoughts to God arise, The boon I ask is pray for me.

When "Angelus" at noontide rings With joyful peal, reminding thee To raise thy soul from earthly things, Oh! in that moment, pray for me.

And at the altar, when our Lord Shall deem to come and visit thee, When thy devotion's fuest chord Is touched by Him, then pray for me.

O sweet Communion! who can tell What glorious visions thou may'st see, When Jesus Christ in joy doth dwell? In that blest union pray for me.

When thou shalt kneel at Mary's shrine, And our dear Mother smiles on thee, Forget not this request of mine, Oh! ask her then to pray for me.

When night's dark shadows softly steal In silence o'er the earth and sea, And thou in fervent prayer shalt kneel, Remember thou to pray for me.

May God's choice blessing on thee rest, And keep thy soul from evil free; My angels guard thee and request, That thou shouldst often pray for me.

Amid the changing scenes of life, What'er thy future lot may be; In smiles or tears, in joy or strife, Where'er thou art, oh, pray for me!

And when beneath the verdant sod, My earthly form in death shall lie; In smiles or tears, in joy or strife, Where'er thou art, oh, pray for me!

M. S. B.

DORA.

By JULIA KAVENAGH, Author of "Vathalis," "Adèle," "Queen Mab," &c.

CHAPTER XXII.—CONTINUED.

"I am coming," answered Dora; but the sparrows she used to feed, seeing her stand by the open window, went fluttering past, expecting their little pittance, and Dora would not disappoint them. She covered the window ledge with bread, then, with a last look and a last sigh, she bade adieu to her room, and for the first time in her life—to liberty.

And yet she looked happy and gay when she entered Les Roches. For, after all, hers was a happy lot, and she knew it. It was pleasant to be valued so highly by the father, and to be loved so dearly by the child. Even Fido's greeting was grateful to her; and then it was something surely that when one door closed upon her, another should open so readily and so soon. It was a relief to Mr. Templemore to read the brightness of all this in her face, as she arrived with her mother. Yes, he felt it keenly; he could trust his child—whilst he was away to this fine joyous nature—so joyous, and that, too, Mr. Templemore knew, though not to what extent, because it was so brave.

And now Dora entered the school-room, and became queen absolute there. Eva's love for her governess partook of adoration. There had never been so perfect a being, in her opinion, as Dora. Miss Moore looked puzzled, and scarcely pleased, at this ardent affection; but Mr. Templemore was both amused and delighted, and took evident pleasure in watching and fostering its growth. He would justly ask Dora to tell him which of the two, Eva or Fido, loved her most, or could do best without her society. And when Dora would leave the room, or the garden, and Eva, however absorbed, would soon look up from her book or her playthings, shake her curls, and ask, "Where is Cousin Dora?" Mr. Templemore would reply, with a smile:

"Come, Eva, I see it is Fido's affection which is the stronger of the two, after all! he never lets Cousin Dora out of his sight, prudent dog, and you do."

"But Fido does not love Cousin Dora half so much as I do," Eva would cry in hot indignation; and throwing down her book or her doll, she would go in pursuit of this much-loved cousin, to Mr. Templemore's evident satisfaction.

Mrs. Courtenay put only one construction upon all this, and felt both amazed and indignant when Mr. Templemore suddenly went away one morning. Before going he spoke to Dora.

"You have bewitched Eva," he said with a kind smile, "so I need only ask you to go on with the magic, the secret of which I will not attempt toathom. I shall only trouble you with two requests: be so good as to teach Eva to wait on herself as much as possible, and not to grow up into a helpless young lady; also, if she should be unwell, to send for Doctor Le Roux first, then to telegraph to me. The rest I leave to you; and now, before we part, forgive me to have laid this task upon you—I sometimes feel I have been selfish!"

"How so?" composedly asked Dora. "I really could not expect a better situation than that I have in your family, Mr. Templemore."

"Pray do not talk of it as a situation," he said, looking slightly disturbed. "What else is it?" she replied, with smile of quiet pride. "Of course you do not look upon me merely as a person to whom you give a certain amount of money—nor do I think of myself merely as one who receives it; but for all that, Mr. Templemore, I am the governess of your child, and I am paid for being so."

Mr. Templemore's dark cheek flushed, and he bit his lip, but he said nothing. "I hope you are not displeased with my frankness?" composedly resumed Dora, who saw very well that he was.

"Oh! not at all," replied Mr. Templemore, but he thought: "Miss Courtenay is a proud woman—a very proud woman."

And now it was time for him to go. He would not let Eva accompany him to the station, Dora and the child bade him adieu at the gates of Les Roches. The day was bleak and very dreary—such at least, it seemed to Dora, as she gave him her hand, and wished him a happy journey. But if the sweet sunshine of spring had been in the sky, Mr. Templemore could not have looked brighter and more genial than he looked as he bade them farewell. He kissed Eva two or three times, indeed, and with evident grief, but grief under which seemed to flow a strong current of joy. Dora stood and looked at the carriage which bore him away, like one in a dream. She felt no wish to lament his departure, no temptation to regret his presence, but there fell a coldness upon her like that of a shadow which suddenly shuts out a strong sun. She felt both lone and chill, and turned back to the house in silence, till Eva's sobs and tears roused her to the effort of consoling the child.

But Eva's grief was a childish grief—it did not last. When she had got all the comfort she could out of Dora, she raised her head from her young governess's shoulder, dried her tears, looked about her, and said, with a little tremulous sigh,

"Cousin Dora, I think I shall go to aunt now."

"Very well, my dear, do so," she patted her, and she jumped lightly on the floor, shook her dark curls, and, with them, no doubt, some portion of her sorrow, then opened the door of the school-room, slipped out, and left Dora alone.

She could not help going back to the past, and to some of the dreams by which that past had been haunted. She could not help comparing the romance of life with that of reality. How far a beginning she had had! She had read novels very like it. A rich man in disguise discovers a poor girl in some obscure nook, and removes every thorn from her path. He holds a magic wand, and life becomes sweet and easy before the unconscious maiden. Then, having won her heart, unaided by the prestige of wealth and rank, he takes her some day to a noble dwelling, and says, "Be mine." How pretty! And it was her story. That pleasing commencement she had had, and to make its romance more complete, the rich man in disguise was a sort of feudal enemy. But alas! the fair ending of the tale was wanted.

"Life is not a ballad or a novel, after all," thought Dora, amused at her own disappointment, and glancing round at the maps and globes, which showed her how wide a gap lay there between the first and the last pages of her book; "the rich man is very kind, but it is not a wife he wants, 'tis a governess. He has a foolish sister-in-law, whom he cannot trust his child with, and as the poor girl is a lady, and cheerful, and can teach what she knows, he is pleased to have her with his little daughter, whilst he goes and spends the winter in a house which is his, but which he will not have her brother's. That is life, and that is why, too, biography is so disappointing. The first pages are always full of wonderful promise, but the last have lost the charm; and the beauty of the tale departs with youth, and returns no more."

Here a black-and-tan paw, gently scratching Dora's knee, drew her attention. She looked down smiling, and saw a pair of full bright eyes mutely begging for a lap. "Yes, Fido, you shall be petted," she said, taking him up; and as Fido luxuriously made a ball of himself, and soon snored with pleasure, Dora thought, "God bless him!—he has a good kind heart. It was like him to cheer a dying woman by removing this sad thought from her mind. She died, knowing that the little creature who loved her would not be forsaken. God bless him! he was kind to me too. I am sure it made him happy to see me drawing at the Muse, and thinking myself a bit of a genius. I can remember many a smile and many a look in which, if I had read them rightly, I might have detected the pure, heart-felt joy of a good man. I can pay him back now, and I will. I will be happy, and I will be cheerful—were it only for his child's sake!"

The opportunity for fulfilling this resolve came almost immediately. The door opened, and Eva entered the room, with a sad, long face. "Cousin Dora," she said, with a profound sigh, "aunt is busy, and—and I am very miserable."

Miserable! Dora laughed the declaration to scorn. Miserable—why, Mr. Templemore, if he knew it, would be quite angry. Besides, was he not coming back? Miserable! she would not hear of such a thing. But, unfortunately, Eva thought herself bound to be miserable, and Dora soon found out that she owed this idea to Miss Moore, who had taken some pains to impress on the child that she must in duty make herself unhappy, because of her father's departure. Dora did not contradict openly—there was no need to do so—but she swept the morbid fancy away; then, putting Fido on his cushion, she sat down to the piano, and began to play; whilst Eva so far forgot her grief as to dance, waving her arms as she had seen little girls do in pantomimes, and making some erratic and abortive attempts to stand upon one toe. As she was in that picturesque attitude, the door opened, and Mrs. Courtenay entered the room. She, too, came to be miserable, for she thought Dora very ill-used by Mr. Templemore; but on seeing Eva thus dancing to her daughter's music, she looked so bewildered, that Dora, who had turned round, asked with a smile:

"What is it, mamma?"

"I am glad you are both so cheerful," replied Mrs. Courtenay, still looking bewildered.

"Yes, we are cheerful," said Dora, with a bright, proud smile, "and we mean to go on being cheerful, too, mamma."

Mrs. Courtenay's countenance beamed again on hearing this.

"My dear, I am so glad!" she exclaimed, raising her voice—"so glad!"

Dora laughed, and turned back to the piano, and Eva waved her arms, and again stood on her toe, whilst Mrs. Courtenay entered little screams of delight, and Miss Moore, who heard these doings from afar, felt shocked and scandalized.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Thus had passed, and brought few changes in Dora's life. She had done with Eva one evening, and stole up to her own room, as she often did at that hour. It was very cold, but a bright moon shone in the wintry sky, and standing in the deep recess of her window, Dora looked at the sharp icicles which hung from the stone angles of the fountain in the court.

"So am I," thought Dora. She did not feel dull, she did not feel unhappy, but she felt torpid like that frozen water.

"My dear, here is a letter for you," said her mother, coming in.

Dora turned round quickly; John Luan had written a week ago, the letter might be from Mr. Templemore. It was from him—a friendly letter, as usual, and enclosing a check.

"My quarter's salary," she said.

"How nice," exclaimed Mrs. Courtenay; "and then that pretty English maid Mr. Templemore sent for you and Eva. Dora, you had a fairy for your godmother?"

"Had I?" asked Dora; for memory flew back with a sort of passion to Madame Bertrand's rooms, and the old church, with its garden high up in the buttresses, to the Musée with its pictures, and to long happy evenings, which must return no more. "Have I not buried my dead yet?" she thought, scolding her own weakness.

"My dear, you will tear that check," uneasily said Mrs. Courtenay, as she saw her daughter crushing the paper in her little nervous hand, with unconscious force.

Dora laughed, and who that heard her girlish laugh would have guessed how much strength and how much pride lay within its clear ringing sound?

"Are you coming to the drawing-room?" resumed Mrs. Courtenay; "a poor Miss Moore does prose so when we are alone."

"I shall join you presently," said Dora, cheerfully; "but I must go down and look at some drawings first. I shall not be long," she added, gayly, on seeing Mrs. Courtenay's blank face.

She went at once, and on her way down she met that pretty English maid, whose presence was, in Mrs. Courtenay's opinion, one of the glories of her daughter's lot.

Fanny curtsied, and stood by respectfully whilst Miss Courtenay passed.

"Fanny is very civil and very pretty, and I have not a fault to find with her," thought Dora, looking at the girl's blooming face and smiling blue eyes; "but I suppose I am hard to please, for I do not like Fanny, and would rather be without her."

Mr. Templemore before leaving, had placed his library at Dora's disposal, and she had spent some pleasant hours with its silent tenants. "But now she was not inclined for a book, she wanted something more vivid, something to charm the eye as well as to feed the mind, and she found it in one of Mr. Templemore's many portfolios. The hours Dora spent thus were very happy hours in their way. Surrounded by mementoes of Mr. Templemore, she could not help thinking of him now and then; but the old illusions, the old friendship even, she forgot, or thought that she did forget. She might be mistaken. Her self-subjection was not, perhaps, so complete as she imagined it to be—but she was far too proud to be unhappy.

Perhaps love does not make its victims so very wretched after all. Perhaps it is rather a state of mild and bearable suffering than of distracting pain. There are many reasons why the patient's pangs should be concealed; and when they are revealed, it is generally because they have become intolerable. It is then that the world sees despair, and the agony of grief and draws its hasty conclusions concerning the tragic nature of love. We may be sure there are many calm lulls to that sorrow, many hours when it is forgotten, and life and its blessings are prized in their fullness. Love in itself can never be a curse; though it may be in love's destiny, and no doubt it is to lead to some of the sharpest torments which a human being can experience. But when there is and can be no hope, there can be no acute suffering, and so it was with Dora. So she now lingered over a view of Pompeii, and as she looked at the lone and desolate streets and roofless houses, and listened to the stormy wind blowing around Les Roches, she thought how time with the same restless force had swept away man and his generations from the dead city. "Yes," she said to her own thoughts, "we are before that mighty conqueror and dried leaves on the path of a strong gust, and surely it is impossible to think of these things, and indulge in vain illusions or dangerous reverie."

Dora felt very calm just then, full of philosophy and of that wisdom which comes from thought, and has not stood the test of experience. The wind was strong, as we said, and it did not let her hear the wheels of a carriage on the gravelled path outside. She did not hear unaccustomed sounds in the house at that hour, she heard nothing till the door of the room in which she sat opened, and Mrs. Luan stood before her.

"Aunt!" cried Dora starting to her feet in much surprise. "Is it really you?—are you really come?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Luan, nodding; Mr. Templemore asked me. He knew it would please you, he said."

"How kind!" exclaimed Dora in glad surprise. "Do you stay long, aunt? Is John coming?"

"No," shortly replied Mrs. Luan. "Mr. Templemore did not ask him."

"Of course not," said Dora with a gay laugh; "but he could go to Madame Bertrand, you know, and I long to see John again."

"And Mr. Templemore," said her aunt, "when is he coming?"

"Really, aunt, I don't know," and her face, bright as sunshine, seemed to add, "Really, I don't care."

Mrs. Luan's brain was not a clear one. A dreadful fear now seized her. Had Dora's heart turned the wrong way? She gave her so strange and moody a look, that her niece was startled.

"Aunt, what is it?"

"Nothing, but I wish I had not lost the letter—Mr. Templemore's letter; it was beautiful—and all about you."

Dora's deep blush did not speak much in favor of poor John; and Mrs. Luan, whom her one idea could render clear-sighted, read its meaning.

"I must go and see Miss Moore now," she said, prudently leaving Dora to the powerful auxiliary of her own thoughts. "Will you come?"

"When I have put away this portfolio," answered Dora.

But she did not follow her aunt at once. She stood with a smile on her lips, and a happy light in her eyes, forgetting the easy wisdom of five minutes back. Ah! what a thing is the present moment, that subtle portion of time which is either past or future, and which is gone before we can say "tis here.

In vain Dora had read and looked. Neither book nor picture now gave her her lesson, or yielded her their honey. In vain they had told her generations had come and gone, how creeds had changed, how the sun of some nations had set in the darkness of an eternal night, and that of other nations had arisen and reached its meridian glories and splendour—there was something stronger than it all in the heart of the dreaming girl.

"What could there be in that lost letter?" she thought, as she closed the door of the study behind her.

She stood in the darkness of a narrow passage, but thence she could see the square stone hall brightly lit, and the broad staircase. Suddenly the front door opened, and Jacques, the servant, showed in a tall handsome young man. For one moment Dora remained amazed and mute, the next she eagerly came forward.

"John!" she said, joyfully; "John Luan!"

He turned round quickly and took her extended hand, and looked at her with a happy, beaming face.

"God bless you!" he said; then he added, "you are as pretty as ever."

"Of course I am," gayly answered Dora, "but what a cheat aunt is to say you were not coming!"

John Luan changed color, and looked sobered at once.

"Is my mother here?" he asked.

"She has just arrived, and is up-stairs with mamma and Miss Moore. Did you not travel together?"

"No," sulkily replied John. Before Dora could make any comment, a door above opened, and Mrs. Luan, who had probably heard her son's voice, appeared at the head of the staircase.

There was a moment's silence, and during that interval, brief though it was, Dora saw and guessed much. She saw the brightness which her aspect had called up pass away from John's face, and a strange sullen likeness to his mother appear there in its stead—a likeness which grew deeper and stronger as Mrs. Luan and he exchanged looks. She saw this, and she guessed that mother and son had deceived each other; though how far the deceit had been carried—how John had said he was going to Scotland, and Mrs. Luan that she was going to Dublin; how John had come to ask her to become his wife, and Mrs. Luan to prevent her from consenting; and, above all, how she had come to Les Roches without the slightest invitation from its master, Dora could not divine. She had always thought that the obstacle to John's suit rested with

herself; she had never suspected that it lay with Mrs. Luan.

"And did each of you not know that the other was coming?" she could not help exclaiming.

"Come, come, I see we have caught and surprised you, gayly replied John Luan, recovering his composure. "And is aunt caught too? Where is aunt?"

"Why, John, I thought you were in Scotland," exclaimed Mrs. Courtenay's voice upstairs; "what a shame of Mrs. Luan to impose upon me so!"

John laughed, and went up to Mrs. Courtenay, who, in the same breath, introduced her to Miss Moore, and informed him that he would be delighted at Madame Bertrand's, who was the dearest old thing, and would take such care of him. John's reply concerning the shortness of his stay, and the advantages of hotels, did not reach Dora. She did not believe that this was a concerted plan between John and his mother, and she stood amazed and perplexed at the foot of the stairs case, with her hand on the banisters, and her eyes downcast. On looking up, at length, she saw Mrs. Luan standing alone, almost in the same attitude as herself. Dora looked at her steadily as she went up the staircase; but Mrs. Luan never moved nor raised her sullen eyes.

"How moody she looks!" thought Dora.

"Aunt," she said, on reaching her, and gently touching her hand as she spoke, "why did not John tell you he was coming?—and why also did you not tell him?"

Mrs. Luan looked up, and there was a confusion in her gaze which did not seem to come from Dora's question—the confusion of a dull mind, to which even light and clear matters appear perplexed and strange.

"He can't stay," was her only answer; "he can't afford it, you know."

There was nothing else to be got from her. Dora saw it, and thought, "Poor John, he came to see me, and his mother tells me he cannot afford to marry; as if I did not know it—and as if I wanted him!" This much she understood—this much and no more.

It was quite true that John could not stay; his time was not his own—he too said so. He was very full of his prospects, for he had been promised an appointment of a hundred a year, which he seemed to consider a small fortune. He was to be the medical attendant of a wonderful society for the improvement, or the benefit, or the perplexity of young women; he was to have a cottage and a garden, and plenty of time, for the young women were only to be invalids when they could not help it; so that, as every one else in the neighborhood was, on the contrary, to be in delicate health, Doctor John Luan would enjoy every opportunity of establishing a large practice, and of earning a handsome income. He seemed so sure of all this, he looked so handsome with his blue eyes and his florid complexion, there was something so young and yet so perfectly manly about him, that Miss Moore, spite Dora's reserved manner, had no doubt but John Luan was a favored admirer. How could he be otherwise? Surely Miss Courtenay never thought she could do better.

Some vague suspicion of the same kind lurked in Mrs. Luan's mind. Either she was not quite convinced of Dora's secret liking for Mr. Templemore, or she doubted its depth and durability, for she never left her son's side. But spite all her watching, John found means to see Dora alone. He would not mind her gravity, or read its meaning. He knew she did not love him, for love gives keenness even to the dull; but John was not exacting or romantic; let Dora marry him, or promise to marry him some day, and he was content. He was matter-of-fact in love, as in most things, and considered that to have the woman he was fond of, was the great point in matrimony. "The rest will come with time," was his philosophic conclusion. And as he meant to be kind, a affectionate, and devoted, he may be excused if he was also easily satisfied.

"I wish I could like him," thought Dora, who knew better than John himself how good, how kind, how true was her cousin. But she could not, it was not in her power, and never had lover's wooing less chance of success than John Luan's, when he suddenly came upon her the next morning in the garden. The day was mild and gray. One of the last days of winter, with something of Spring softness in the air. John found Dora in the flower-garden, near the house, with Eva trundling her hoop. Mrs. Luan, unconscious of her danger, was in the dining-room at the other end of the chateau.

Dora availed herself of the opportunity to urge on John a matter which had long lurked in her mind, and which the preceding day's occurrence had brought back very forcibly.

"John," she said, "how has aunt been whilst she was with you?"

John stared, for his mother enjoyed perfect health.

"Why, well, of course," he answered.

Dora hesitated.

"You were never struck with anything?" she asked.

"Struck with what?"

"With any oddity or peculiarity?"

John stared again. His mother had always been peculiar.

"In short," said Dora, with a strong effort, "you have no fear that her mind is in at all affected?"

If John could have been angry with Dora, he would have been angry then. He was so indignant, and so much pained too, that his cousin stammered an excuse. This pacified him.

"You must think nothing of the kind," he said, good-humoredly; "and you must listen to what I have to say, please. I have liked you all my life. Whilst you had money I was silent. We are both poor—I can speak. You know my position. I can afford to marry now. Will you share my lot?"

"No, John, thank you," replied Dora, with a grave smile. "I like you dearly, but not as I should like you for that."

But John, who had expected this, would not be disheartened, and he said so.

"So, Dora, I will not take your denial, I have thought of it years, and I am sure I could make you happy—very happy! I know you would say no, but I believed, and still believe, that you will end by saying yes."

He spoke resolutely, and Dora looked at him in perplexity. Was John a prophet? Was she really to conquer the present so far as to become, some day, the wife of the good-humored friend and cousin she now gazed on? The prospect almost appalled her. Yet it might be. She, too, might—like many a girl before her—reject her first lover, then turn back to him, and be glad of the refuge of that true, faithful heart. But integrity would not allow her to indulge John Luan in an illusion which, whilst it bound him, would leave her free, and she said so.

"And what need you care if I do not mind it?" he answered impatiently. "I tell you stranger things than this have come to pass. Just tell me if it be not strange that you, Mr. Courtenay's niece, and Paul Courtenay's sister, should now be governess to Mr. Templemore's child? Did you not detect the man's name? Did you not always vow that, if poverty struck you, you would be a seamstress, and not a dependent in a rich man's house? And yet here you are, to all seeming pleased and happy in your position. According to your account,

Dr. Templemore is white as snow, and we were to blame—not he. That little girl dotes on you, and you dote on her, and you look very happy and contented—all of which, if I did not see it, I should deem incredible. Yet so it is. Why, then, tell me that I must not hope?"

Dora, who had turned red and pale repeatedly whilst she spoke, felt silenced by his blunt and not unreasonable argument. Yet she ventured on one objection.

"I am happy here, as you say, John; and as my task is one which will take years, why should I leave it?"

"It is a long lane that has no turning!" replied John, a little sulkily.

Again Dora felt silenced, and Eva, by coming up, and leaving her governess no more, did not allow either to renew the subject. John, indeed, no more cared to speak further than Dora to hear him. He had said his say, and not being an eloquent man, he could add nothing to his blunt wooing. It satisfied him that Dora should know he loved her, and wished to marry her. The rest would come. Her rejection he would not consider as final. He was his mother's son in many things—in obstinacy, not to say stubbornness, as well as in abrupt inelegant speech. And Dora would rather not pursue a theme which grated on her ear like discordant note in music. She thought highly of her cousin, she was sure of his affection, but she also felt that to be loved thus could never make her happy. She required that something more which, to exciting youth, is like the crown of love, the grace, the poetry, the touch of romance, which must exist, whether they be merely in a girl's feelings, or really in the man she loves.

John could waken no admiration, no enthusiasm in her heart: he appealed to none of these faculties which attend on every strong feeling, and deepen its intensity, or add to its force. He was plain John Luan to her, and with a sigh Dora felt he must remain so; her cousin, her early friend, but no more. She had felt almost certain of it before he spoke—she was sure without a doubt now that he had spoken. The man who, in so deep and urgent a matter, could find no more persuasive accents than poor John had found to plead his cause, could never rule her heart. The fault might be hers, but the fact remained, and it was clear and strong, and not to be disputed or resisted.

With such feelings upon her, Dora welcomed the child's presence as a Godsend; she was glad even when Mrs. Luan came down. That lady, indeed, looked confounded on seeing her son with Dora, but on perceiving that Eva was with them too, her brow cleared; nothing could have taken place, and lest anything should take place she left them no more. Her task of watchfulness was soon over. John went away that same afternoon, and he bade Dora adieu in Les Roches, and his mother accompanied him to the station, and came back looking sulkily triumphant, as was her wont whenever she had achieved some little success.

There is always something momentous to a young girl in an offer of marriage whatever may be her feelings toward the man by whom it has been made. It almost always makes a crisis in the story of her life; it is an epoch in her youth, toward which she looks back sometimes with amusement, sometimes, too, with regret, but which she cannot well forget. In vain Dora had known for years that she was dear to John Luan's heart, in vain her only source of wonder was that he had taken so long to speak, in vain too his wooing had been both plain and brief, something of that wooing, such as it was, remained behind him when he was gone, and made Les Roches seem cold and dull. She did not repent her refusal, she could not believe she ever should regret it, and yet she felt that one of her chances of happiness as a woman was gone. John Luan was not the right one, but it is not always the right one who comes in life, he often goes elsewhere or he dies early, or lives unwedded, or has a wife and three children when one sees him first; in short, even a beauty has and can have but a certain amount of lovers, and an beauty must make up her mind to the sad and unpleasant fact that amongst these the right one may never be.

Some secret voice told Dora this, and though she was too brave and proud to fear the lonely life which would probably be her lot, she was too honest not to feel that if she could so far have conquered her feelings it might have been well for her to have become John Luan's wife.

Some gravity, therefore, appeared on her countenance, and Mrs. Luan, unaccustomed to see such a sign there, grew uneasy, and watched her niece both closely and stealthily. But if Dora spoke less than usual on the day that followed John Luan's departure—if she looked, as she was, abstracted and thoughtful, the little cloud soon passed away, the brightness returned, the happy, smiling eyes got back their light, and the rosy cheek its bloom.

"My dear, how well you look!" Mrs. Courtenay said, admiringly.

"Because I am well," was the gay reply—"well and happy!"

She felt so well and so light, that she wondered at it herself, and never guessed the cause. There is a great, a powerful renovator, who visits us every year, giving back to the old the dreams of youth, and whose breath clears the sullen winter sky, whose steps cover the green earth with flowers, whose mere aspect is as the beauty of lost paradise—Spring, the youth of nature, the divine messenger of love, the enchanting promise of joy that never comes in their fulness. It was not in Dora's power to resist the voice of this sweet deluder. He came one day in a soft shower, and birds began to sing, and buds broke forth into foliage on the boughs. Violets blushed in the shade, cowslips and primroses followed the cold-looking snowdrop. The gardener let in the sun to the fair captives in the greenhouse, and every thing about Les Roches looked sweet and enchanting.

If the little world around Mr. Templemore's chateau was restricted in extent, it was full of beauty. A narrow but pleasant river flowed through it with a soft murmur; tall trees grew on its banks, and bent over it with sylvan grace; reeds, grasses, and water lilies, gathered on a path wound in the shade and here, near the rocks and the waterfall, was the spot which Dora loved. The little green recess, with many a tangled weed, and many a trailing ivy-bough, in which stood the stone bench, old and gray. A hundred years and more had that bench stood there. It had seen the ancient regime, and gay gentlemen, and powdered ladies, with long trailing silk skirts; it had heard the love-making of two or three generations. Madame de Schudry's Clelie, had been forgotten upon it, then Florian's pastor