

ONLY A DOLL.

Polly, my doll! why don't you grow? Are you a dwarf, my Polly? I'm taller and taller every day! How high the grass is! do you see that? The flowers are growing like weeds, they say! The kitten is growing into a cat! Why don't you grow, my doll? Here is a mark upon the wall. Look for yourself, my Polly! I made it a year ago, I think. I've measured you very often, dear. But, though you've plenty to eat and drink, you have not grown a bit for a year. Why don't you grow, my doll? Are you never going to try to talk? You're such a silent Polly! Are you never going to say a word? It isn't hard; and oh! don't you see the parrot is only a little bird, but he can chatter so easily. You're quite a dunce, my doll! Let's go and play by the baby-house; You are a dwarf, my Polly! There are other things that do not grow; Kittens can't talk, and why should you? You are the prettiest doll I know; You are a child, my doll; Just as you are, my doll!

—St. Nicholas.

DORA.

BY JULIA KAVANAGH.

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CHAPTER VII.—CONTINUED.

Yes, it was all gone, indeed, and with it had departed the new life which had been so pleasant—the admirers, the parties, the intellectual society, the little luxuries, the many comforts. All these were gone, and Mr. Ryan no longer wielded that magic wand of capital which would conjure them back again. With a heavy heart he left his friends, and he spent the night in musing plans for their benefit. But when he called the next day Mr. Ryan found that everything had already been settled without the help of his advice.

"It is no use fretting, you know, Mr. Ryan," said Mrs. Courtenay, with airy fortitude; "staying in London is out of the question, and Dublin air disagrees with me, so we shall go to France."

"To France!—why, who put that into your head, Mrs. Courtenay?"

"No one," tartly replied that lady; "but I am sure my native air is the very thing for me."

Mr. Ryan stared. Mrs. Luan was looking at the wall, and Dora's eyes were downcast. John was not present.

"And what does John Luan say to that?" he asked.

"John knows nothing about it," was the supercilious reply. "He went off to Oxfordshire by the first train, and it was only five minutes ago I made up my mind that Rouen was to be our future residence. But now, Mr. Ryan, I have a great favor to ask of you, Mrs. Luan and I will go off at once, and settle our new home. Will you kindly take care of Dora here, and help her to dispose of the furniture?"

Mr. Ryan tried to remonstrate, but opposition only confirmed Mrs. Courtenay in her purpose. Seeing her so determined, Mr. Ryan desisted. After all, going to France might not be so bad a plan. France was cheaper than that it is now, and economy must be once more the law of Mrs. Courtenay's life.

It is always sad to break up a home, and so Dora now found it, spite her stoicism. When it had been ascertained beyond doubt that not a farthing of her money could be recovered, Mrs. Courtenay and Mrs. Luan proceeded together to France. Once more John Luan's mother consented to leave him, in order to separate him from Dora. She knew that the best way to keep Mrs. Courtenay and Dora in their new home was to accompany them. Indeed, she had a strong presentiment that her volatile little sister-in-law, if not watched, might escape back again to England. Rather than run so great a risk, Mrs. Luan would forego even bidding adieu to her son, who was still down in Oxfordshire, hunting for his appointment.

A letter soon came from Rouen, informing Dora that Mrs. Courtenay had discovered the most delightful lodging, with the dearest old creature, and that all she wanted to be perfectly happy was her dear Dora's presence.

The furniture was disposed of to a broker, so that on receiving the letter Dora had to pack up her trunk and leave the house where she had spent some pleasant, if not happy hours. She went off at once, sighing gently at the loss of her four hundred a year. She looked wistfully at the deserted drawing-room, which she had taken such pleasure in adorning. Never more should Dora Courtenay see pleasant genial faces gathered there; no more should she hear intellectual and witty talk within its walls. A few letters from Mr. Ryan to a few clever people in London, a few parties, and Dora's bright happy face had soon made Mrs. Courtenay's little villa an attractive abode.

"But all that is over now," thought Dora, as she closed the door, and went up to her own room. "We must return to the old life. All I had but dear Paul, how welcome it would be!"

That was the thought that ever came back. Deep within her heart slept the remembrance of her great sorrow, but every now and then it woke again to cruel and bitter life. That was the thought, too, which had kept Dora's heart free. No man seemed able to awaken love in her even a far echo of that passionate love which she had once bestowed on her brother Paul. When she looked at his portrait, the keen eye, the intellectual brow, the manly look, all seemed to say, "Find the like of us if you can." Who, indeed, could compare with the lost hero of her young worship?

"Yes, all would be well if I had you," she now thought, glancing toward the miniature, which hung between the fireplace and her narrow bed. "Oh! my brother! my brother!" she exclaimed, as she clasped her hands in sudden sorrow, and could not see that adored image for blinding tears. "Why did I lose my brother?"

"Vain appeal to the inexorable grave! Yet how often will that pitiful cry, 'my brother!' be heard like a wail in the life of Dora Courtenay!" She had sunk on a chair in her grief, when her room door opened, and Mrs. Luan entered.

"Aunt," exclaimed Dora, much amazed, "what has happened?"

"Nothing. What are you crying for?" Dora did not answer. She never could speak of her grief. Mrs. Luan took her bonnet off and threw it on a chair.

"You want to stay," she said angrily. "Aunt, I do not."

"Oh! you want to go back to London?" "Oh! no," sadly replied Dora.

The thought of returning to her lost home was exquisitely painful to her. What was that home without Paul's dear presence to cheer it, or fill it with bright hopes and fond illusions? Moreover, in Dublin she must meet Florence, or see Mr. Templemore. She did not hate them, but they had so filled her brother's heart with grief, that this proud and silent heart had broken, and the spot that held them became to her as the fatal gulf, or the pitiless rock where some loved being has perished, to be shunned for evermore. But

Mrs. Luan still looked at her mistrustfully. She had come back to fetch her niece and take her away, actuated by one of those wonderful maternal presentiments which fail so rarely, and she had found John Luan below with Mr. Ryan. He had just arrived from Oxfordshire, rather sulky and crestfallen at having failed completely in his object, and very indignant with Mrs. Courtenay for taking her daughter off to a strange country. Thus he spoke to his mother with the unconscious selfishness of the young. She looked at him sullenly. Why did he not think of her going? Why did he not want her to stay with him? Why was it all about parting with Dora, and nothing for the separation between himself and his mother? In this jealous mood Mrs. Luan went up to Dora's room, and seeing her tears, gave them but one meaning. Dora was crying at parting from John Luan! From that moment forward Mrs. Luan no longer left Dora's side. She allowed Mr. Ryan to settle with the brokers, she suffered the furniture to be removed and money to be wasted and squandered at a terrible rate, according to her economical principles, and still she stuck to Dora; whilst John stalked about the house with gloomy and sullen looks, and thought of his lonely rooms in Howland Street.

In one respect Mrs. Luan's caution was not needed. John had no intention of making open love to Dora. He had not done so when she had four hundred a year, and he would not do so now that she had not a shilling. Indeed, all Dora's admirers, with Professor Gray at their head, had vanished. Report exaggerated her losses, and the thought of marrying a whole family daunts most men.

"It is well for me I cared for none of them," thought Dora, rather stung to find how suddenly her value had fallen.

And now all was ready, and Dora and Mrs. Luan had to depart. John and Mr. Ryan saw them to the station.

"Good-by, dear girl," said Mr. Ryan, kindly. "I shall keep my eye on Mr. Brown, you know, and if anything turns up, why you may rely upon me."

Dora could scarcely repress a smile. Mr. Ryan's eye in London or even in Dublin, did not seem to her very likely to affect Mr. Brown in America, and she had not the faintest hope of anything turning up in the shape of money.

John was silent, but he was rather pale, and Dora saw that this parting affected him.

"Poor John," thought Dora, kindly; "he has fancied himself so long in love with me, that he believes it. I dare say he will go on so to the end."

But she went up to him and said a few kind words about better times that were coming for them all, and his getting that appointment in the end.

"And if I do get it," began John rather eagerly; but he ceased abruptly on seeing his mother behind him. He had a vague consciousness that Dora's altered circumstances had also altered his mother's feelings and wishes.

"Time to go John," said Mr. Ryan. "Yes it was time, and spite Mrs. Luan's watchful eye, John took Dora in his arms and kissed her."

"Tell aunt I shall go and see her in Rouen," he whispered.

"What is it? What did John say?" eagerly asked Mrs. Luan, when the two gentlemen were gone, and she and Dora sat in the railway carriage.

"John says he will come and see us in Rouen," simply replied Dora.

Railway and steamboat travelling has no romance now. It is swift and convenient—we must not ask it to be eventful. After an easy passage and a rapid journey through a green landscape, Dora and her aunt reached Rouen in the evening. Narrow streets and church spires rising through the darkness, seemed to Dora the chief characteristics of Rouen as they drove through it.

"Oh such a dear old place," said Mrs. Courtenay, whom they had found at the station; "I am sure you will like our apartments, Dora, and that dear old thing, Madame Bertrand."

Dora asked no better than to be pleased with everything. But when she reached her new home, and saw a dingy old house, a dark and narrow staircase, a clean little old landlady in a cotton apron and white cap, and some very poorly-furnished rooms on the first floor, she tried not to sigh as she remembered the pretty villa in Bayswater.

CHAPTER VIII.

The often-boasted charm of novelty was not felt by Dora when she awoke the next morning and looked around her. The little room, with its dingy old-fashioned furniture, not one article of which was endeared by familiarity, seemed both cheerless and unpleasant. The ceiling was low and depressing. The few sounds which arose from the street had no old homely meaning in them. A certain quaintness there was, indeed, in the aspect of the place, but even Dora was obliged to confess that there was no more.

"And yet I shall be happy here in spite of you, you poor little room!" she thought, as she rose and dressed herself. "I never had such bed-curtains before. I shall remember that when I am dull, and be thankful."

Those curtains were certainly peculiar, more peculiar than beautiful. Dora sat down on the edge of the bed to look at them. They were of a dull lilac tint, which many a washing had faded, and they represented the fortunes of the fair and much tried Griseldis. Dora saw her standing at her father's door in humble, shepherdess attire; then came the noble woe and his suite to bear the new marchioness away. Now Griseldis sits on a throne in state, and with rank and dignity begin her sorrows. Her children are taken from her, her husband grows unkind, and finally repudiates his too patient wife. Dora, who had raised the curtain to follow the story to its happy end, dropped it with some scorn as the last print showed her the Marquis of Saluces embracing his forgiving spouse.

"How I should have hated that man!" she thought, her bright eyes flashing. "Some sour old bachelor certainly had these curtains first. What woman would choose such a subject for night or morning contemplation?"

She was dressed by this, and opened the window a little impatiently. Stranger still than within did everything without look to her unaccustomed eye. On the opposite side of the narrow street stood an old church, at the corner of a dark alley. It had long been disused for worship, and was now the storehouse of a large foundry. Through the open door Dora could see heaps of grapeshot and musket-balls lying on the dusty floor. The cold gray walls were striped of all their ecclesiastical pagantry. The painted glass windows had long been shattered and walled up. Altar, pictures, flowers, and golden candlesticks were all gone, but high up near the roof Dora could still read the half-effaced words, "Gloria Dei."

Above the gate stood a stone bishop in his mitre. The figure, though sadly mutilated, still stretched out a benignant hand to bestow the pastoral blessing. But the staff, emblem of authority, was broken in the other hand, which grasped but a useless fragment. Very brown and gray was the carved front of this dilapidated edifice. And yet the sad old ruin had a charm which struck Dora as being both quaint and graceful. The keeper of this place

probably had a taste for flowers, for he had made himself a garden high up among the buttresses. A sort of terrace he had fashioned there, and had brought mould to it, and then filled it with stocks and lilies. Tall, white, and spotless rose the virgin flowers, looking very fair and pure against the sombre background. A vine, too, there was, that scattered its green arms about and hung over the street in festoons, which the light breeze of the morning stirred gently.

The street itself was narrow, steep, and very old. It had been of some note in the days gone by. Presidents and members of the Parliament of Rouen had dwelt in those large hotels, with quiet grass-grown courts in front and broad gardens behind. They were now the abode of manufacturers and of retired legal practitioners, who kept them in repair, but who cared to do no more. Everything was tranquil and silent. One house, more poorly inhabited than the rest, showed a few tokens of life. A green sign-board dangled from one of the second-floor windows and informed the passers by that Professor Didier lived within. A pale, thin old woman looked out for a few moments, then shut the window.

A rosy boy appeared at another window on the third floor, and stared at Dora, but he too vanished, and the house became as silent and as quiet as its neighbors. In the street Dora saw two children lazily going to school, then a servant girl in clattering sabots, who came back with a pail of water from a fountain that was almost underneath her window; but when the children had gone by, and the servant-girl had passed beneath a dark archway in the alley, not a soul was to be seen in the whole street, and not a sound was to be heard save the little flow and splash of the invisible water. Dora tried to see it, and leaned out, but she only caught sight of some stone carving with a green fern growing on the top of it, high out of the reach of rosy hands.

"It will be very quiet," she thought, "Already a sort of torpor, the forerunner of the life she was to lead, stole over her. She looked down the street, and at its narrow close she saw the green lazy river, with a black boat gliding down, and thus looking and leaning on her window-sill, Dora fell into a vague yet not unpleasant reverie. The clear foreign sky, the strange city, and the quiet street, with its picturesque memorials of bygone days, lulled thought to rest, and drove care away. The loss of some money secured an event of little magnitude when compared with these impressive tokens of ruin and decay. Besides, Dora was still young, and as a rule gold is neither youth's hope nor its desire. Other wishes, other longings than the sordid are they which haunt the heart of twenty-three."

"Well, my dear," said her mother's voice behind her, "how do you like this?"

"Dora turned round, smiling brightly. "It is very picturesque and peculiar," she replied.

"Picturesque and peculiar!" exclaimed Mrs. Courtenay, with that little shrill raising of the voice by which she expressed astonishment. "My dear, it is simply enchanting. I have not felt so happy for years as I have felt since I came here; and Madame Bertrand is the most delightful old creature you ever saw!"

"Is she old?" demurely asked Dora.

"Is she old?" exclaimed Mrs. Courtenay, with the little shrill raising of the voice again. "Old as the hills, but so good; only I suspect, my love, that she is a little touchy. She has been better off, you see, and feels it hard to have to wait upon us now. She made it a stipulation that she was to be called Madame Bertrand, and I came to tell you she was afraid you might hurt her feelings in so-called 'only'."

Dora promised to be careful, but expressed some wonder that Madame Bertrand should have undertaken to be their servant-of-all-work. Upon which it turned out that Madame Bertrand had undertaken no such thing; but had volunteered her services with restrictions now numerous that Dora was amused to hear them recapitulated by her mother. She promised, however, to attend to all this touchy lady's regulations. Mrs. Courtenay nodded, and at once resumed Madame Bertrand's praises. That lady, it seemed, had had a succession of lodgers.

"And they all adored her, save one," said Mrs. Courtenay. "He was a Monsieur Theodore, and after behaving abominably, coming in and going out at all hours, and calling her Bertrand," quite short, as if she were a man, he ran away without paying the poor old soul."

Dora laughed merrily. "Do they do that in France too?" she asked.

"My dear, how can you be so simple? They do it everywhere. But it is a shame to impose on that poor old thing, who from all she has told me about herself, must be one of the best creatures who ever breathed!"

Dora did not attempt to answer this. She knew it was her mother's habit to take her opinion of people from their own accounts of themselves. So she listened to Madame Bertrand's praises with an amused smile, but without other contradiction than the demure remark:—

"I wonder if Monsieur Theodore made love to her."

"My dear, I tell you she is old—old!" remonstrated her mother; and in the same breath she informed her that breakfast was ready, Madame Bertrand having condescended so far as to prepare it.

Dora cast a quick look around her sitting-room, as she sat down to breakfast. It was a clean, cold, and poor-looking apartment enough.

"But you shall have another look before he day is out," said Dora aloud. "I am talking to the room, aunt," she added, smiling at Mrs. Luan's startled face.

"Don't spend Dora!" exclaimed Mrs. Luan, putting down her cup in alarm.

"Oh! I must; but it shall not be beyond penance. I know that shillings are forbidden now."

Mrs. Luan still looked uneasy, but did not venture on further remonstrance. When breakfast was over, Dora entered her room, unpacked her trunk, and took out some of those little toys which are the delight of a woman's heart. She had saved them from the wreck of her fortunes, not merely because habit had endeared them to her, but because, though valuable, of their kind, they would only have been swallowed in the great catastrophe, and would have brought in little or nothing at a sale. Within an hour the room, as Dora had told it had another look. She had hung up a few water-color drawings on the walls, put up two brackets with the bronze heads of Shakespeare and Dante upon them, and for the dingy, common French porcelain vases, with artificial flowers in them, under glass globes, which adorned Madame Bertrand's black marble mantel-piece, Dora substituted two white and blue vases of genuine china, which she filled with fresh wall-flowers, bought from a woman in the street. This, and work-basket on the table, a few books on a shelf, and here and there a little feminine trifle, so altered the aspect of the place, that when Mrs. Courtenay came out of her own room, and saw it again she uttered a little scream of delight.

"You are a fairy!" she cried, clasping her hands in admiration.

"Two-pence for nails, and two-pence for flowers," triumphantly said Dora, looking at her aunt; "total, fourpence!"

Mrs. Luan was mute; but, if she had dared, she would have said that the fourpence were ill-spent.

The day had been a busy one for Dora, and toward the close she entered her room and sat down to rest by her open window. She looked at the old church, at the lilies, at the house where the professor lived, and she found them all quiet and silent as in the morning. The little rosy boy, whom she had already seen, was peeping at her from behind a window curtain, but when he saw her smiling face he disappeared. A glimpse of the professor's wife she also had, but it was a brief one. Madame Didier was looking out at her husband, a lame, infirm man, who walked down the street leaning heavily on his stick. She watched him till he turned the corner of the street, then she shut her window, and was seen no more. Dora leaned back in her chair, with a book lying unopened on her lap. She could imagine from this day what her life would be. She would not have pictures to hang or brackets to put up daily; but daily she might, if she pleased, sit by her window and read, or sew, or look at the old church, Mrs. Courtenay was too delicate to take long walks. Mrs. Luan too indifferent, and she could not afford to hire carriages. She had been out for an hour alone, and she had caught a glimpse of Rouen. It looked a dull, grave, commercial city, with magnificent Gothic churches, but it also looked very dreary. Little light or cheerfulness was there in those ancient streets over which huge mediæval piles shed their gloom.

"And we do not know a soul here," she thought; "and if we stay years in Rouen, as we may, I shall spend those years in comparative solitude."

There was something almost appalling to Dora in the thought, and the evening of that first day was not calculated to contradict it.

It was a spring evening, hot as summer, yet they remained within, for whether should they have gone? Mrs. Luan, who never felt dull, perhaps because she never felt merry, was busy with her patchwork. Mrs. Courtenay at first talked in a very lively strain, and was enthusiastic about the pleasure of this new life, but gently fell asleep in the end. Dora looked at a flower-pot on the window-ledge, in which a weak shoot was attempting to send forth a pair of leaves.

"I suppose I shall have to take some interest in you," she thought; "but you are not animate enough for me. I wish one could make slips of living creatures, and watch them growing. It would be pleasant to see the tips of a pair of brown, furry ears shooting up, then bright eyes, then a round head, then the rest of the creature; but the ears would be the really pretty part of it. I should like to have a kitten so, or a pup; but where is the use of liking anything more? I, who could not see a bird fly but I longed for it, must now learn to be as sober and demure as any nun."

In this austere mood, Dora took up a book and tried to read, but reading seemed to have lost its charm.

"I must study," she thought—"nothing else will do." So she went and fetched Dante, and did her best to fathom one of the most obscure of his difficult passages. But neither would that answer. Study cannot be taken up as a foil against passing tediousness. She is an austere mistress, and requires undivided worship. Besides, there rose sounds from below which disturbed Dora. Madame Bertrand had friends who spent the evening with her. Their loud talking and louder laughter came up to Dora as a sorrowful comment on the present, and a no less sorrowful remembrance of the past. She remembered joyous young days in Ireland, pleasant evenings being her brother Paul and her cousin John Luan. She remembered evenings when she had conversed with the gifted and the wise during the brief year of her prosperity. That, too, had its charm, colder than that of her youth, but happy because intellectual. And now, how had it ended? She had lost the two friends of her girlhood; she had lost the intercourse which is so dear to an inquiring and cultivated mind, and she was the denizen of a strange city, thrown on her own resources, bound to live without a purpose or a task in life other than that of life itself—a dull and a hard prospect at twenty-three. But we do not all feel alike on these subjects. Madame Bertrand and her friends talked so loud, that Mrs. Courtenay awoke, and looked startled.

"Dear me!" she said, innocently, "I thought I was at one of our parties, and I had fallen asleep whilst Mr. Gray was telling me of a scientific experiment. It is such a relief to find it a dream! Poor Mr. Gray! how he used to prose!"

"Thank Heaven, she regrets nothing!" thought Dora, with a smile.

"Do listen to these people laughing," good humoredly continued Mrs. Courtenay. "You have no idea how cheerful my country-people are, Dora."

She spoke airily. It was plain that she appropriated the cheerfulness of Madame Bertrand and her friends, and made it her own for the time being.

"And so will I," resolutely thought Dora, with a little defiant shake of her bright head. "So will I."

Alas! it was very easily said—more easily said than done. When Dora went back to her room that evening, and looked at the prim and patient Griseldis, she wondered if *enfin* had ever been amongst the trials of that lady's lot.

CHAPTER IX.

A brave heart will go through more than Dora had to bear. After all, her lot was not so hard. She had the shelter of a roof, daily bread, raiment, all the things that thousands struggle for so wearily, and can so seldom win. She had these, and with them leisure, a few books, the companionship of two beings who loved her, and a happy, sunny temper, to make all good. If she sometimes heaved a little regretful sigh, it was because she was still young, yet she did not know the wonderful blessings of peace. Give her a few years more, and let her go forth and be tossed in some lonely boat on the waves of life, and how she will look back to this safe haven, and pine for its sweet shelter! Happy girl! Neither passion which is wasting, nor sorrow which is cruel, nor care which is remorseless, is with you now. So this is still your golden time, and these are still your halcyon days, though Rouen is rather a gloomy city to live in.

But though Dora, more through temperament than from any philosophical appreciation of the blessings which remained to her, was happy and contented; though Madame Bertrand said it did one good to see the demoiselle's bright face, and grow poetic with her neighbors when she once broached that theme; though everything, in short, seemed as it should be, still Dora heaved that little regretful sigh we have spoken of. It came probably because no human life can be free from it. We may be sure that on the day when Napoleon was crowned in Notre Dame he heaved a sigh for Corsican hills, or for having eaten cherries with a pretty girl in an orchard when he was sub-lieutenant—for any

thing, in short, which he had no more. It is the mortal lot to repine. Saints fret over their sins, and sinners lament their lost follies, and every one has suffered some deprivation or other. Dora's was money, and with money, the loss of comforts, and pleasures, and enjoyments, which that modern lamp of Aladdin summons forth at its bidding from the dark recesses of life, where they sleep so soundly, so far as the needy are concerned. The cruel enchanter Brown had taken her lamp away; the spell was gone, and some trouble was the result. On most days she defied her fate, and forbade it to vex her; and on other days, as we said, she sighed.

Her mother and her aunt, who shared her loss, did not deny its existence, but they were not prepared to sympathize with Dora when she felt dull now and then. The sound of her native language had not yet lost its charm for Mrs. Courtenay, and Mrs. Luan professed herself delighted with the cheapness of Rouen. So Dora, behaved like a true stoic. She endured and did not complain.

Rouen is a picturesque city, and Dora liked the picturesque and found made herself pleasures out of it. The solemn gloom of Notre Dame and Saint Ouen, the glorious painted glass in Saint Vincent and Saint Patrice, the wonderful facade of Saint-Maclou, or the exquisite court of the Palais de Justice, gave her many a delightful hour. But one cannot live on architecture, and Dora often felt restless, and scarcely happy, even though these magnificent memorials of the past were daily within her view. She missed something—something which Athens itself, and the Acropolis, which glimpses of Olympus and Mount Athos could not have supplied. The open space and border of heath, the view of a gleaming or stormy sea, which she had had from her mother's cottage in Ireland, often came back to her with a sort of passion. Oh! that sad memory did not stand between her and that past! For a year back again in the old country, with the bracing sea air, and with it the breath of liberty, far, far away from those grand frowning Gothic heaps of stone.

Rouen has few attractions as a modern city—and they were fewer than then they are now—and these Dora quickly exhausted. The theatres she did not visit, her mother did not care for excursions, and the feminine delight of looking in at shop windows she seldom indulged in. She was still young, and not insensible to the charms of elegant and costly attire. So it was rather hard to see velvet and silks which she must now never wear, or jewels that could no longer be hoped for as a good yet to come. The gate of all luxurious enjoyment was closed upon her; and if Dora was not wise enough to scorn such vanities, she was too proud to indulge in weak and useless regret.

To stay very much within was therefore one of the features of her lot, and such tranquillity is utterly obnoxious to youth. She sometimes longed for motion with a feverish restlessness. She did her best to conquer the unquiet mood, and she tried to make herself home pleasures, but this was no easy matter. Madame Bertrand's cat did indeed steal up to her, but she only slept and purred. So Dora made friends with a host of sparrows, whose nests were in the old church. She bribed them with crumbs, and soon so tamed them that they would come and flutter past her open window, and if she sat very still, peck on the ledge whilst she looked on. She also opened a flirtation with the little rosy boy in the opposite house, and she seldom appeared at her window but he was to be seen at his laughing and nodding to her. A silent interest she likewise took in the doings of the lame professor and his pale wife; and altogether she made the best of her lot, but, as we have said, she could not help feeling restless now and then.

That unquiet mood had been very strong upon her on a bright day in summer, when, in the afternoon, Mrs. Courtenay suddenly expressed the wish to partake of some Fromage de Brie.

"I should like it, oh! of all things," she exclaimed, raising her voice in her little shrill tone.

Dora looked up from her work, and supposed the wish was one her mother could satisfy.

"Oh! no!" was the slightly plaintive reply. "I would not touch one of the cheeses they sell about here; and Madame Bertrand's woman lives miles away, at the other end of Rouen—miles away!"

"I shall go and fetch you a cheese, mamma," quickly said Dora, throwing down her work.

"My dear, it is ever so far away. Oh! so far—miles!"

"Then it is the very thing for me," joyfully said Dora. "I feel just now as if I should like to go to the edge of the world and look over."

"My dear!" expostulated her mother. "I should!" wiffully said Dora. "Oh! for one good peep out of this world, and to see the stars spinning!"

The journey to fetch the cheese Mrs. Courtenay longed for, promised no such prospect, and was described by Madame Bertrand as something formidable; but Dora was bent on going, and she went.

She had not walked ten steps when, as she passed the house where the lame teacher lived, she heard a groan of distress coming from beneath the archway. The gate, as is usually the case on the Continent, stood wide open, and Dora put her head in and saw a lamentable picture. A little woman, very old, and very poorly dressed, was sitting on the last step of the stone staircase, staring at half-a-dozen of broken eggs and some spilt milk. An earthen bowl and a plate also lay in fragments near her.

"Can I help you?" asked Dora.

"Can you pick up milk," was the sharp retort, "or mend broken eggs?"

"Yes," good-humoredly replied Dora, "I think I can do both."

"I had not tasted a drop of milk, or seen the yolk of an egg, since I lost my five-franc piece," groaned the old woman, without heeding her, and now that I had saved and saved till I could have an egg again, I stumbled and there they are, dish and all—dish and all! There they are!"

Dora stooped and carefully picked up two of the eggs, which had escaped with a gentle crack.

"These will do," she said, softly laying them on a fragment of the plate; "and for the other four and the milk here is a cure."

She put her hand in her pocket and took out a few pence; but the old woman shook her head.

"Have eggs and milk got feet?" she asked. "Will they come? I cannot go and fetch them—no, I cannot, I am too tired," she added, as if Dora were attempting to persuade her.

"You are but a cross old fairy," thought Dora; "but still you shall have your way, and I will see if I cannot make you happy."

So she took back the money which she had put in the old woman's lap, and she went away.

The little old woman remained sitting on the step of the staircase groaning over the broken eggs and the spilt milk, and addressing them with impotent wrath.

"You did it on purpose," she said, shaking her head at them, "you know you did it!"

"Did they, though?" said some one, coming in from the street. "That was too bad of them."

"Go your way," was her angry reply. "Go to you, old fippery, and let me be quiet. Don't touch them," she almost screamed, as in going up the staircase, the stranger seemed likely to tread on the two eggs which Dora had put on the broken plate. "She is bringing me more; but I will have these too."

Even as she spoke Dora appeared underneath the archway, followed by a child with a cup of milk, and four eggs on a plate.

"There," she said, "they did come to you, after all; and they are all yours, the cup, the plate, the milk, and the eggs," she added, taking them from the child's hand to present them to her.

"The cup too?" screamed the old woman. "Yes, yes, the cup too,"