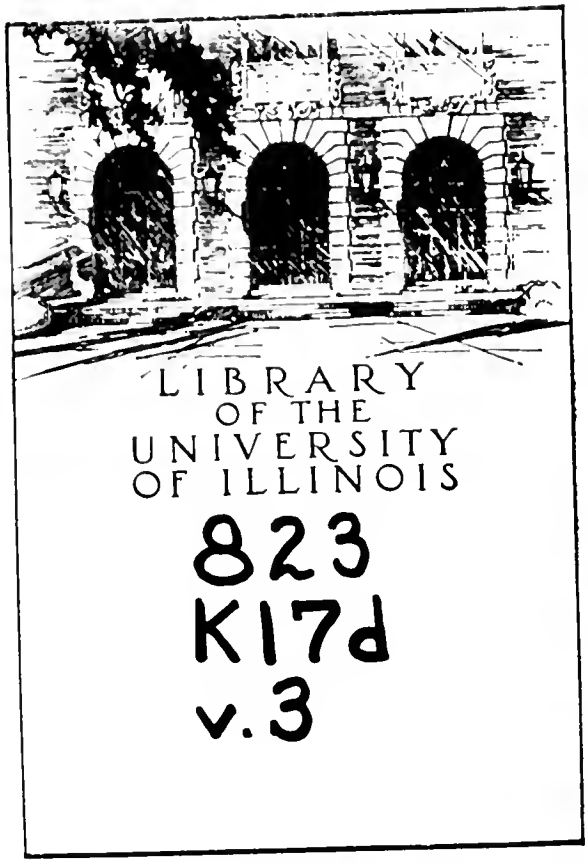
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DORA.

VOL. III.

DORA.

BY

JULIA KAVANAGH,

AUTHOR OF

"NATHALIE," "ADELE," "QUEEN MAB,"

&c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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DORA.

CHAPTER I.

AND now that Mrs. Luan's cross-examination was over, Mr. Templemore had leisure to think. Never in all his life had he felt so strangely perplexed and troubled as he did then. Should he write to Dora, or should he follow her?—or, in plainer speech, should he marry her or not? Even a man in love has been known to pause before so formidable an alternative as this. When his duty, as he conceived it—when his honour had made him offer his hand to the girl whose devotion to his child had in some sort caused her ruin, Mr. Templemore had not felt the hesitation he felt now. Then every generous impulse of his nature had urged him on, and given strange sweetness to the sacrifice of his liberty. But Dora had

released him—she had released him in language so proud and so cold, that, unless it was the veil of a strong and secret love, it was offensive to his pride as a man. He was free—free in honour as well as in fact, since no man is bound to press himself on a woman to importunity. He was free, and Mrs. Luan might have deceived him, or been herself mistaken. It was quite possible that, though she felt no positive aversion against him, Dora recoiled from wedded life with him just as he now hesitated to venture upon it with her. All this Mr. Templemore felt and knew, for the sweet visions of the preceding evening had rather paled with the morning sun; but something else, too, he could not help feeling. What if that idiotic Mrs. Luan, as he mentally called her, had spoken divine truths, like the ancient sibyls, who gave forth oracles, and strewed them to the winds of heaven, not knowing their worth? What if poor Doctor Richard had been fondly loved by one of the brightest and most accomplished girls he had ever met? What if the very sincerity of her feelings made her shrink from a union in which she could scarcely hope to have her husband's whole heart? Here was a

temptation, indeed!—here was a strange, unexpected triumph, made to intoxicate even a wiser man than Mr. Templemore.

There was fever in the thought, and all the seduction of her paleness, of her sad looks, and low voice came back with it. Read by that light, these tokens had a dangerous meaning—dangerous, at least, to Mr. Templemore's freedom. As he walked through the streets of the old city he again seemed to see Dora Courtenay. In vain liberty beckoned on one side, and bade him beware how he lost her; on the other there appeared a fairer vision by far, and infinitely more alluring.

"I am young," she said, "and attractive, a tender, yet proud woman. Your marriage was the folly of a boy; your second choice did not prove the wisdom of your manhood; but what you had not with the one woman, what you could never have had with the other, I can give you. For I am youth and I am love, and I come but once in a man's life when I do come, and he whom I visit, and yet who fails to keep me, was never worthy to have me."

A colder man than Mr. Templemore was, might surely be forgiven if he listened to this

temptress. He paused, he hesitated; should he write and trust to that anonymous terrace, and that number five, for the safety of his letter; or should he seek and find the fugitive, and read, as he could surely read, with this clue to guide him, the truth in her face! He could not resist this desire. He could not resist the secret hope that the truth had been told to him that day. Above all, he could not resist the longing he felt to secure Dora Courtenay, and call her his. She was to him in this feverish hour as many an exquisite relic of ancient art had been for the last year—a wish to be gratified, no matter how extravagant the cost might be.

"I daresay it were better for me that I had never seen her," he thought, still pausing irresolute on the threshold of his fate; "better for me that I had never gone to her house, and brought her to mine; but now it is too late to think of this. She has lost all for me. Peace, fair name, the world's esteem, the chance of honourable marriage, everything perished in one hour for my sake; but am I so selfish and so cold that I cannot atone—that I cannot repay her tenfold, and turn her wrong into unexpected happiness?"

There is something splendid in the power of giving; it is a glorious privilege, and makes us kings and sovereigns for the hour, as with the stroke of an enchanter's wand. Mr. Templemore could not help smiling to himself as he thought how he could change Dora's desolation into joy. She would never tell him—never—but surely blind though Mrs. Luan thought him, he could see it. He looked at his watch. It was not four yet. If he took the evening train he could be with her to-morrow.

"And why should I not?" he asked himself; "if she really likes me, ought I not marry a woman who has suffered so severely for my sake. And if she does not—ought I not know it, and be free in conscience and honour, as I am in fact?"

Mr. Templemore was no less prompt to act on his resolve, than Dora had been to follow up hers. He left that night, and was the next day in London.

Dora's first act, on returning to Madame Bertrand's rooms, had been to write to a widowed lady in reduced circumstances, and ask whether she would receive her. The reply had come that Mrs. Robinson no longer took in lodgers, but that she would accommodate Mrs. and Miss Cour-

tenay for a time. Thus, on arriving at the station the two ladies had but to take a cab and drive through well-remembered streets, now wearing a strange look, after the absence of a year, to that quiet terrace with a garden wall in front, and nodding trees, where Mrs. Robinson resided. Mrs. Courtenay had been very ill at sea, and she retired to her room almost at once. Dora sat in the front parlour, sad, but calm, because her fate, as she considered it, was now irrevocable. She had placed it, as she thought, beyond the reach of her own will, and she blest heaven that she had had strength to do so.

The day was now nearly worn, the grey English twilight was setting in, and she was looking at the trees before her, seeing them not—seeing in their stead a grey old church, with lilies growing midst its buttresses, and all in a flame with the red light of a rich sunset, when a tap at the door roused her. A demure parlour-maid looked in, and merely saying, "Please, Miss, Mr. Templemore wishes to speak to you," she showed him in, as a matter of course, and closed the door behind him.

The cab that had brought him had put him down at the corner of the terrace; he had not

knocked at the door, but rung, that she might have no warning; and now he stood before her, as if called up by that vision in which she had been indulging.

She rose and faced him, pale and trembling. It is dreadful to be for ever struggling. Strength and courage may well fail us; well may we quail when the battle is perpetual, and never won. With a sort of despair, Dora felt her heart going away from her, rushing back to its old servitude. She rebelled, she tried to brave this cruel subjection—one of the most humbling a proud woman can feel, and in that first moment, at least, she was powerless. The joy of hearing his voice, of seeing his face again, was stronger than either will or pride.

"Am I again going to be conquered?" thought Dora, with secret anguish. "Am I again going to do the very thing I condemn?—and has he but to appear in order to prevail against me?"

She could not bear the thought. Pity them whose conscience is ever striving against inclinations; pity them, and if they succumb, condemn them not lightly. It is something to have striven; and the defeat which tells of a contest can never

be all ignominious. Nevertheless, that habit of self-command which is at the root of a woman's nature, came to Dora's help in this hour of need.

"Mr. Templemore," she asked calmly, though sadly, "is this well?"

"Miss Courtenay," he replied gravely, "allow me to reciprocate your question: Is this well? Did you use me well?"

"Perhaps not," she said, with some emotion; "but I wished to have it all over. It seemed best."

He looked at her. She had recovered her composure, which his unexpected appearance had somewhat disturbed, and she spoke very quietly. He felt disappointed and perplexed. Had Mrs. Luan deceived him? Surely he would soon know.

"Your letter told me nothing," he said; "I come to know your reasons. You cannot have changed your mind so suddenly without a reason."

"I have no new reason," replied Dora.

"But you have some old reason," he persisted; "some old reason, which you had not told me."

"No—none."

There was a sad passiveness in her tone, that told him nothing save that the subject was painful to her. He still felt perplexed, and more irritated

perhaps than perplexed. He asked her to hear him, and Dora raised no opposition. She sat down by the window, and he sat facing her, watching every motion of her features as he spoke. He urged over again every argument for their marriage, and against her refusal, which he had already used—but vainly. Dora leaned back in her chair with her hands clasped on her lap, and her eyes downcast or fixed on vacant space, and with a face as pale and as changeless as marble. She heard him, she did not contradict him much, but she said despondently, "No, Mr. Templemore, it cannot be."

"Then I see what it is!" he exclaimed, reddening as he spoke, and speaking with more warmth than he was conscious of using—"you have a previous attachment, and will not tell me!"

Dora reddened too, but whether with resentment, shame, or any other feeling, it was impossible for Mr. Templemore to tell.

"You are mistaken," she answered; "if I had any such feeling, I should not be ashamed of it, and I would tell you at once."

"Then you dislike me!" he said, with some impetuosity.

Dora smiled, but simply answered: "No; why should I?"

Mr. Templemore was confounded. He was stung too. All his fond visions had melted away, and he only saw a calm, proud woman, who did not seem to care much for him; and whom, spite her indifference—alas! perhaps on account of that indifference—he could not help wishing to win. Had he hesitated whether he should marry her or not, had he followed her thus far in hot pursuit, had he pleaded his cause for the last half hour with every subtle and varied argument, to be balked in the end? Mr. Templemore was not a handsome man, and he knew it; but he knew too that woman is won by the ear far more than by the eye; and if he had never guessed that Dora loved him, he had always seen that she liked him. Again and again he had prevailed with her, made her yield her will to his, and not quarrel with her subjection. And now, when he laid himself out to charm, he failed. When he offered her position, wealth, and what he justly thought most of, himself, he failed. He was offended, he was hurt, but he was allured too, and that unexpected resistance was the last crowning seduction which

rendered Dora irresistible, and made him resolve not to leave the room till he had conquered.

"And so," he said, with a mixture of pathos and anger in his voice, which moved Dora's heart—"so that is your unalterable resolve, Miss Courtenay? We might be happy together—we must be wretched apart. Think of it well! You condemn me to solitude. You know I cannot, I will not in honour marry another woman whilst you live. I say it again—you condemn me to solitude!"

He had risen, and was pacing the room in some agitation; but he came back to her as he uttered the last words, and standing before her, seemed to appeal, more in sorrow than in wrath, against so harsh a sentence. Dora felt much disturbed, but she tried to say composedly,

"I do not, Mr. Templemore. I trust, I hope you will marry—as to that, so may I!"

"Then you do want to marry!" he exclaimed jealously; "you do want to marry?"

"Why not, Mr. Templemore?" she asked, lifting up her head proudly, for both tone and question offended her.

"Then why not marry me?" he argued angrily;

"you say you have no previous attachment, why not marry me?"

"Because I will never marry a man who marries me from honour," replied Dora with some energy. "I have said it, Mr. Templemore, and nothing shall make me gainsay it."

Mr. Templemore looked amazed.

"Honour!" he said impatiently; "did I speak of honour, Miss Courtenay?"

Dora felt troubled. He had not, indeed, urged that argument.

"You said you could not marry any other woman in honour, Mr. Templemore," she replied at length.

"Nor can I—but did I say that I wished to marry *you* from honour? On my word, Miss Courtenay," he added with sudden emotion, "it is not honour, it is not the wish to right you that brought me here this evening. I know all you can urge. That a few days ago I was to marry another woman—I grant it; but I also know this, that I am here, and that, as I said before, it is not honour that brings me. It is the wish—the irresistible wish that you should be my wife."

Involuntary tenderness softened his voice and

look as he uttered the word "wife;" and no lover's protestation could have moved Dora's heart as that word thus uttered by one so dear. It comprised all—every eloquence, every promise, every fond hope, every pledge, every bond. Without a word of doubt or resistance, with her whole soul in the act, she placed her hand in his.

"And this time," said Mr. Templemore, radiant and triumphant, "I shall keep you to your promise!"

"You need not, Mr. Templemore," she said with the brightest smile he had ever seen on her bright face; "nothing shall make me break it."

"Her aunt spoke the truth," thought Mr. Templemore as he looked at her; "but what a strange, perverse creature to give me all that trouble!"

Perverse or not, he loved her. Perverse or not, he grudged not the trouble she had cost him—he regretted not the strange turns of fate which had given him this prize. She was to him just then that something exquisite and rare, which in certain moods the best and the wisest man will purchase, no matter at what cost, ay, even though the price should be life-long liberty.

When Mrs. Courtenay, much recruited by a

long nap, thought she should like a cup of tea, and came down for that purpose, she found the tea things on the parlour table, two candles burning brightly, and by their light she saw Mr. Templemore looking perfectly happy, and her daughter as gay as a lark on a summer morning.

CHAPTER II.

NOTHING occurred to delay the fate which one woman's folly and another woman's treachery had brought down on these two. Mr. Templemore wished for a speedy marriage, and he had his way. The morning on which Dora was to become his wife was fixed, and in the meanwhile he came daily to see her. He came early and stayed late, and unless when he was with her, he felt restless and unhappy. He did not know himself what ailed him. He seemed to be bewitched. It was as if he had never seen before that this girl was worth winning. He did remember having admired her, but he could not now believe in his past admiration—it seemed so cold, so dead. Sometimes he had gleams of reason, and wondered at himself; but they were gleams, and no more. They passed athwart his mind troubling it, and when they had departed, he only felt more strongly impelled to rush on this fate before

him. He was like the fisherman in the ballad. The very waters that were to devour him allured him irresistibly. Perhaps he could not help it. Perhaps this sudden and vehement passion, following on a long quiet love for another woman, was the only thing that could save him from the abhorrence of marrying a girl his heart had not chosen; even as but for that passion he could never have conqured Dora's pride and won her consent. The feeling that turned his sacrifice into sweetness had vanquished all her scruples, and changed their bitterness to strange joy.

For, after all, she could not be blind. If Mrs. Logan had been loved, she was loved ten times more. If Florence had been dear, Dora was far dearer. He made no professions—perhaps remembering his involuntary infidelity, he was silenced; but there is another eloquence besides that of language, and a hundred signs betrayed him.

And Mr. Templemore was not more blind than his mistress. He kept his promise to Mrs. Luan. He told Dora nothing; he put no questions, but before two days were over he knew more than Dora's aunt had betrayed.

Mr. Templemore was too imaginative to be a

clear-sighted man. He often remained blind to the plainest things, because he could not compel himself to see them under their real aspects; but once his penetration was awakened, it became quick and searching as lightning, and his very imagination coming to his aid, it left no recess unexplored. A sudden paleness which passed across her face as he recalled the past, and inflicted upon her the sting of a retrospective pain—who said that love was merciful? The glow which surrounded it when reminded of the time during which he came to her as plain Doctor Richard, and other signs as subtle, but as plain, convinced him that the poor struggling medical man had been as tenderly loved as the affluent gentleman, and that either had been infinitely dear to Dora's heart.

No man could remain indifferent to such a discovery, least of all a man who had a generous nature, and who was himself very much smitten. Passion softened into tenderness as he remembered all that this now happy-looking girl had endured for his sake, and with silent fervour he vowed to atone for the sufferings of the past by the love and devotion of the whole future. Alas! how easy it

was to Mr. Templemore to keep that vow! How swift, how invading, how all-absorbing was this new love which had conquered the old, and buried it fathoms deep! How is it that even fine and noble natures are subject to this lamentable inconstancy? We see it daily, but who shall venture to read a riddle so perplexing! Of voluntarily forsaking the woman to whom he had been pledged so long, for any other woman, Mr. Templemore was incapable; but honour is not love, and when he found how willing he was to take Florence at her word, and how eager he felt to do Dora justice, he did not dare to question his own heart. Had his affection for the one grown cool since he had known the other? Had that irresistible attraction which had drawn him to Dora day after day, made him bring her to his house, and delight in her society, been the guilty dawn of his present lawful fondness? It might be so; but another explanation as plausible, and more soothing to his conscience and his pride than this, was also possible.

Mr. Templemore's nature was one of strong passions—as, indeed, his countenance expressed plainly; but though he was past thirty, though he had been married to one woman, and pledged to

another, passion had never had her day, nor even her hour. Now, amongst the legends of science is one of historical truth. Every eighty or ninety years for the last three centuries a volcanic isle has risen in the Mediterranean, near San Miguel of the Açores. Flames and earthquakes mark its birth. As it rises a burning stream flows down its sterile peaks into the sea. When it has reached its full height it remains motionless for awhile, burning like a beacon, which ships can see miles away; then it slowly sinks back again into the deep waters, and a faint wreath of smoke shows the spot where it has vanished.

Such cycles of passion and fever there are in most human lives. The feeling may take the name of love, of ambition, nay, of devotion itself—it matters not, forth it must come. Midst catastrophe and bitter throes it must rise from beneath those calm waters where it lay so falsely sleeping. This might have been Mr. Templemore's fate. He might have been destined to love a woman passionately at a certain time of his life, and for good or for evil, as the future would show, that woman proved to be, not Florence, but Dora. The suddenness of this new feeling carried with it a

sort of intoxication, which was both sweet and dangerous, and against which it was very difficult to guard. Mr. Templemore did not seek to do so; he gave himself up to the love which there was no law, human or divine, to forbid, and which the woman who inspired it shared in all its fulness.

And thus the brief days of the courtship went by, and ended in a marriage morning that made Dora Courtenay Mr. Templemore's wife.

When Dora alighted from the carriage that brought her home, she felt as if she were treading upon air; and Mr. Templemore, as he led her in, looked as happy as a man who resolves to marry a woman from honour, but who has the good fortune to fall desperately in love with her, can well look. That their marriage was hurried, private, and contracted under the ominous cloud of disgrace, with no kind friends gathering around them to wish them joy, neither heeded in that hour. They were happy, and happiness, we fear, is rather a selfish feeling. Still Dora had one keen pang. Her aunt had promised to come and stay with Mrs. Courtenay, but she had not kept her word. Her mother must remain alone, for Mr. Templemore would have his honeymoon to himself, and

only smiled when Mrs. Courtenay grew querulous, and Dora looked imploring. He promised they should not long be divided, but separated it was plain they must be.

To Dora's great joy, therefore, though somewhat to her surprise, Mrs. Luan was found sitting in the bed-room upstairs when the bride entered it to change her dress.

"Oh! aunt, that is kind!" cried Dora. "But why did you not come earlier—why did you not come to see me married?"

Mrs. Luan looked at her; never did bride look brighter or happier than Dora, as she stood before her aunt, resting her two hands on Mrs. Luan's shoulders and gazing down with the most radiant smile in her face.

"I began to think you did not care about me," saucily continued Dora, putting on a frown.

"Are you married?" asked Mrs. Luan.

Dora laughed gaily.

"Why, aunt, this is not my every-day dress—is it?" she asked. "You never saw me in white with orange flowers before to-day—did you?"

"Well, but are you really married?" insisted Mrs. Luan.

Dora took off her glove and showed the wedding-ring on her left hand.

"Now do you believe it?" she asked good-humouredly; "besides, Mr. Templemore is below, and if you will but come down you will hear him call me Mrs. Templemore. He has already done so twice; and, aunt," she added, in the fulness of her joy, "I do believe he is as happy as I am!"

Everything in her betrayed joy and happiness, not unmixed with triumph. She could not help it. Some brides are pale and tearful, some are dignified, and some are simply cheerful. Dora was glad, and her gladness, which she never thought of concealing from her apathetic aunt's eye, which she scarcely thought visible to that cold-blooded lady, now shone forth without disguise. With Mr. Templemore, with her mother, even, she would have been more shy, but with Mrs. Luan she was not on her guard, and she looked as she felt, the happiest of women. John Luan's mother stared at her moodily. It was she who had parted Mr. Templemore and Florence Gale; it was she who had given the rich man to her poor niece; it was she who who had stimulated his liking into passion, who had urged him on with

the lure of Dora's love. She had done it, she felt no regret, and not an atom of repentance, and yet this happiness of Mr. Templemore's wife irritated her.

"How dare Dora be glad, when she must know that her bliss would be John Luan's grief! How dare she!"

She could not speak her resentment, but she was untying her bonnet-strings, and was going to display her wrath according to her usual fashion, when Dora nimbly took the bonnet from her hands and laughingly put it away.

"No, aunt," she said, "I cannot allow it. I made that bonnet myself; and I cannot allow it. Besides, what is there to put you out on a day like this? Look, I have not forgotten you."

She opened a jewel-box, and produced a handsome ring, which she slipped on Mrs. Luan's finger.

"That is our gift," she said, "his as well as mine; I need scarcely tell you so," she added with a smile, for the ring was evidently an expensive one, "and you must look glad, aunt."

A romantic, high-minded woman, if she had felt what Mrs. Luan felt towards Mr. Templemore just then—namely, that he was robbing her son of his mistress, and making his wife of the very girl

whom John Luan had chosen years ago for himself—such a woman, we say, would certainly have thrown the ring away, and probably have made a speech. But Mrs. Luan, though she cared not one farthing for the gift, and hated the donor with all the unreasonable hate of a wrong-doer, who wants to vent on some one the resentment due to her own deeds, was neither romantic nor high-minded. She only looked angry and sulky.

"Aunt, what ails you?" asked Dora.

"What will John say?" inquired Mrs. Luan in her turn.

Dora's colour fled at the question.

"I am sorry for John," she faltered—"very sorry, aunt."

"And where are you going to live?" continued Mrs. Luan, changing her theme. "Here?"

Dora smiled.

"Oh! aunt, what a question!" she said gaily; "is Mr. Templemore going to live in an eight-roomed house?"

"Well, but where is it?"—persisted Mrs. Luan—"in what square?"

"In no square at all," replid Dora, still amused. "Do you think, aunt, Mr. Templemore has a house

everywhere? He has but one of his own that I know of—the house to which we are going—and that is Deenah!"

Mrs. Luan looked up with sudden interest.

"Then you are going away," she said.

"Ay, surely, after breakfast; and that is why, aunt, I am so glad and so grateful, too, for your coming. Poor mamma will not be left alone."

"And you will cross over to-day," continued Mrs. Luan—"this very day you will be in Ireland?"

"No, Mr. Templemore wants to show me North Wales. I do not know when we shall reach Deenah!"

She looked in some perplexity at her aunt. She could not understand why this journey seemed to interest Mrs. Luan so much, that her face had cleared and brightened the moment Dora had mentioned it. But it was so. Mrs. Luan looked quite brisk and cheerful now, and said that she would go down; and so she did, leaving Dora rather grave and pensive.

Mr. Templemore was alone in the front parlour, waiting for his wife, when the lock turned, and the door opened. He thought it was Dora, and with that impulse which prompts us to go and meet

whatever we love, he moved towards the door. When he saw Mrs. Luan's clumsy figure and sallow face, he almost stepped back, so unpleasant was the surprise. A feeling which could not be a presentiment, for it came too late, but which certainly partook of repulsion and dislike, suddenly rose within him.

"I must get that woman's son some appointment or other," he thought; "and she must leave Les Roches. I will not have her near Eva."

He had not time to linger over the feeling. Dora, who had quickly changed her dress, now entered the room, no more a bride, but a wife; and with her came Mrs. Courtenay, who, in doleful and hysterical tones, informed them that breakfast was ready.

The meal was not a cheerful one; it was soon over. Mrs. Luan's presence seemed to Mr. Templemore to have brought a funereal gloom with it. He was eager to be gone, and pleaded that they would be late for the train if they did not depart at once.

Mrs. Courtenay heaved several deep sighs, and could not help remarking,

"I must say, Mr. Templemore, that it is a very

barbarous fashion to take away girls so—it is like kidnapping to me. Or a taking away of the Sabines, or anything horrible."

"But Dora is willing," pleaded Mr. Templemore, good-humouredly; "so that makes a great difference, Mrs. Courtenay, between me and the sons of Romulus."

Mrs. Courtenay sighed again, but submitted. She even went through the trying ordeal of bidding her daughter farewell, with a fortitude for which Mr. Templemore, who was watching Dora's quivering lip with some uneasiness, was grateful to his mother-in-law. And when he pressed her hand and bade her adieu before entering the carriage where Dora was waiting, he said warmly,

"My dear Mrs. Courtenay, you shall soon see your daughter again, and she shall tell you then, that if I take her from you it is to make her a very happy woman."

With these words, he, too, was gone; the carriage drove away, and Mrs. Courtenay burst into half angry, half pitiful tears.

"I never knew anything so selfish as men!" she exclaimed, addressing Mrs. Luan. "To think of Mr. Templemore taking my child from me in

order to make her happy! Could he not have stayed here—Mrs. Robinson would have given up the house—or taken me with them to North Wales? Why," she continued, warming with the sense of her wrongs, and rocking herself to and fro in her chair—" why must he have Dora all to himself? I say he is no better than Romulus. As to Dora being willing, I daresay those Sabine girls were willing too, or they could not have been taken away. I have always heard, indeed, that thieves are loth to attack women, because they scream so. I wonder Mr. Templemore could be so absurd!"

The consciousness of Mr. Templemore's absurdity, however, had one good result; it so far soothed Mrs. Courtenay's irritated feelings, that her next remark could refer to the propriety of making a cold dinner on the remains of the wedding breakfast. Great was her amazement, therefore, when Mrs. Luan composedly declared that she did not intend dining with her sister-in-law.

" And where, then, do you dine?" asked Mrs. Courtenay, sitting up, and looking confounded.

Mrs. Luan answered that she meant to dine with Mrs. Smith. With this lady Mrs. Courte-

nay had long entertained a deadly feud, and she therefore considered this declaration doubly insulting. Moreover, it was simply ridiculous, as she kindly added, "for how could Mrs. Luan want to dine with Mrs. Smith, when she had not been two hours in London."

But Mrs. Luan, in her stolid way, replied that she had gone to Mrs. Smith's first; and she completed the list of her iniquities by adding that, as Mrs. Smith had a spare bedroom, she meant to stay with that lady. Mrs. Courtenay seldom got in a passion, but she felt fairly enraged at such usage, and she expressed her resentment with a warmth which might have led to a final breach between the two ladies, if Mrs. Luan had been a sensitive person, which she luckily was not. Unmoved by her sister-in-law's reproaches and tears, she put on her bonnet and left her.

Mrs. Smith used to live at Highgate, but she had probably changed her quarters, for Mrs. Luan took the Tottenham Court Road omnibus, and having reached Bedford Square, knocked at the door of one of its many lodging-houses, was admitted by an untidy servant, and entering the front parlour, found John Luan there reading the *Lancet*.

"Why, little mother, where have you been all this time?" he asked, good-humouredly. "I came in early, just to spend an hour with you, and, lo and behold, you, the bird was flown!"

"I went to take a walk," replied Mrs. Luan, sitting down—"why, you are pale, John," she abruptly added.

"Pale!" he echoed, with a hearty laugh, which showed, at least, the soundness of his lungs——"pale, little mother!—why, surely you do not call me pale?" he added, walking up to a low looking-glass above the mantelpiece, and surveying therein his florid, handsome face with that candid admiration which most handsome young men feel for their own good looks.

Perhaps seeing him so gay and happy smote her—perhaps the knowledge of the wrong she had helped to do him was too much for her; at all events, Mrs. Luan could not bear to think of Dora, Mr. Templemore's happy wife, and to look at her son, whom that day had robbed for ever of his dear young mistress. She flung herself on the sofa, and burst into sobs and tears. Now, indeed, John Luan was pale—pale as death.

"You have had a letter?" he said—"news—

bad news!" And he bent over her with an eager, questioning gaze, that seemed as if it would have snatched and devoured the very words from her lips.

"No," sulkily replied Mrs. Luan, recovering her self-possession, and sitting up.

"Then, in heaven's name, what is it?" asked John, still anxious.

"I saw a child run over," she stolidly answered.

John Luan looked profoundly indifferent.

"That," he said, coolly, "is an every-day matter in London. I thought you had better nerves, little mother. I wonder Dora does not write," he added, a little impatiently; "you have been here three days, and I think she might have written.'

Mrs. Luan replied that Dora had no time—Eva took all her leisure.

"Well, well," good-humouredly rejoined John, "I trust she will not long be a governess—I am almost sure of that appointment, and—and I'll marry Dora as soon as I get it."

He looked at his mother rather doubtfully. He knew, though a word on that subject had never passed between them, that since the loss of Dora's fortune, she was no longer a daughter-in-law after

Mrs. Luan's own heart. But this was a matter in which John was quite resolved on having his own way, and he thought the present opportunity as good a one as any to announce his determination.

"You can't marry," eagerly said Mrs. Luan; "you are first cousins."

"Come, come, little mother, kings and queens marry their first consins, and why should not doctors have the same privilege?"

"You can't afford it," urged Mrs. Luan, shaking with emotion; "you can't, John."

"Yes, I can," he wilfully replied; "I tell you, I am almost sure of that appointment. The place is pretty, and the cottage simply delightful. You and Mrs. Courtenay shall have two such nice rooms, little mother. And Dora and I another, not so good as yours, but quite good enough for young people. Then the parlours are so cheerful, and the garden is one mass of flowers; and do you think that being rent free, and having a hundred a year salary, besides such practice as I shall be sure to come into—do you think, I say, that I, a man of twenty-six, cannot support wife, mother, ay, and child too, if need be," he added, with a secure smile, though something in the bright

vision he thus called up made his blue eye grow dim as he spoke.

Dream away, John Luan! See that cottage with its low, pleasant rooms, and its blooming garden, and put Dora there, whilst the dream is on you. Never, save in that dream, shall her feet cross that lowly threshold; never shall child of yours rest on her bosom, save in the fancy of this moment. Even now, and whilst you are speaking, her hand is clasped in Mr. Templemore's hand, and her happy face looks up to his. These two are now taking together that journey of love to end in a happy home, for which you have saved twenty pounds. "Yes, we can do it upon that," thinks John Luan; and he does not know that the rich man has robbed him, and that the woman who sits by his side and looks at him with so scared a face, has more than abetted the despoiler. But for her his prize would have remained untouched, and not be now another man's darling; but for her he would have had his chance and won, perhaps from sad weariness, what that other happier man owes to love.

"So you see," resumed John Luan, following aloud the train of his reverie, and still thinking of

the twenty-pound note upstairs, so safely locked in his desk—"so you see, little mother, that I have plenty of money. Dear Dora, I know, will never grumble at our poverty."

A light seemed to break on Mrs. Luan's mind. She seized it eagerly. She did not repent, she felt no remorse, but it would be a relief if Dora had been faithless and perjured herself.

"Then she promised!" she exclaimed, clenching her hands; "she did promise!"

"Promise to marry me!" repeated John; "what if she did?"

"How dare she!—how dare she!" cried Mrs. Luan, working herself up to a sort of frenzy; "how dare she do it?"

"Come, mother," resolutely said John, "you must not talk so. Dora and I have a right to please ourselves in this. Your only objection is her poverty—well, then, I say I can support a wife."

"But how dare she promise?" continued Mrs. Luan, stamping her foot in her rage; "how dare she?"

John had a mind to say the truth—that Dora had not promised. "But if I tell her that," he thought, "it will be all to begin over again another

time, better she should make up her mind to it now."

If Mrs. Luan's anger had not been too great for utterance, she would in her wrath have told John Luan that Dora had that very morning become Mr. Templemore's wife; but by the time that her rage no longer impeded her speech, she remembered that if she spoke she must account for her own treacherous silence—and she was mute.

She looked sullen and conquered. John felt rather uncomfortable, but putting on a cheerful look, he kissed her, said briskly it was time for him to go, and humming a tune to show how unconcerned he felt, he walked out of the house, and thought when he got out into the square, "She took it better than I expected."

The door had no sooner closed on her son than Mrs. Luan's frenzy broke forth anew.

"She promised—she dared to promise!" she said, rocking herself to and fro on the sofa. And every fond word and look of John Luan's, every happy blush and smile of Dora's that morning, every sign of love she had read on Mr. Templemore's face, came back to her then, and exasperated her. She had wanted to save her son, but Dora had betrayed and Mr. Templemore had plun-

dered him. She thought of his jealousy and grief if he had known that this was their wedding-day, and the thought appalled her, and filled her with wrath for their happiness and his despair. How dare they be blessed at what would wring her son's heart within him? "Let them take care, that's all!" thought Mrs. Luan, as she sullenly calmed down. "They are happy to-day; but let them take care, that's all!" she added, nodding grimly.

She did not question John when he came in to dinner. She did not ask to know how and when Dora's promise had been given. Mrs. Luan wanted to know nothing; she had moved the intolerable burden of guilt from her own shoulders to that of another, and perhaps she dreaded whatever could enlighten her.

John, who was an arrant domestic coward, felt much relieved at his mother's silence, and like most cowards of his sex on such occasions, he took some glory in it.

"There is nothing like pluck," he thought complacently; "women like it, and they need the strong hand, the best of them. Your health, little mother," he added gaily, lifting up his glass and drinking to her.

Mrs. Luan said nothing, but turned sallow, and looked at him coldly; it was as if, gifted with second sight, she had seen Mr. Templemore that very same moment raising his glass to Dora with the same act, and saying with mingled pride and fondness, "Your health, Mrs. Templemore."

"My little mother has not got over it yet," thought John; and he prudently walked out into the square to smoke a cigar. "But she will," he continued in his mental soliloquy, "because she must. I say it again, the best of them need it—their nature requires subjection. Even my little Dora, good as she is, has a saucy tongue at times, and needs control!"

And then, as he walked slowly in the dusty square, and looked dreamily at the stars that came out in the dull London sky, he again went to the cottage, and there indulged himself in a conjugal quarrel with Dora, which ended happily with a reconciling kiss, and of course with the assertion of John Luan's manliness, and of Mrs. Luan's wifely subjection.

Alas, poor John, your little Dora has already found her master!

CHAPTER III.

THERE is a cruel superstition amongst sailors. If one of the crew should fall overboard and be drowned at the beginning of the voyage, it is a pity, to be sure, but then it is also a sure token that the weather will be fair, and the journey prosperous. That ship can never be wrecked which has witnessed such a catastrophe.

Even so it seemed to be with Mr. Templemore and his wife. Death had taken her brother, and a stormy wave removed his betrothed from their ken, whilst John Luan went adrift all unconsciously; and now their two barques could sail side by side on smooth seas, beneath a serene sky, with the gentlest winds to speed them.

Did they think of this as they entered Deenah together? Oh! for the mutability of the human heart! The woman for whom Mr. Templemore had prepared that home was now forgotten, and as he had given every passionate emotion of his heart

to that bright-haired girl by his side, so had she surrendered her whole love to the happy rival of her own adored brother. Yes, spite all the wrecks and ruins of the past, spite its sorrows, and a lonely grave, they were blest. Dora felt it as they walked through the grounds, and she saw the sky, the mountains, the woodlands, all in a flame with the burning radiance from the west, whilst the whole house glittered afar like a fairy palace, in the hazy glow of the setting sun. She felt it as they passed beneath aged trees, through the waving grass, and the blackbird and the thrush sang so sweetly above them. She felt it as they entered the house together, and she stood in a large, bright room, with pictures, and flowers, and books, a luxurious room, but also a genial one, made to live in, and which seemed to echo her husband's welcome.

Mr. Templemore watched Dora's eyes as they scanned this room, half shyly, half freely. He saw her look wander from a large view of Venice on the walls, to a glowing sketch of the eastern desert, and thence again to the exotic flowers blooming in one of the windows, beyond which spread a grand view of heathy mountains.

"Well?" he said, gently drawing her towards him.

"Well," she replied, looking up at him with proud humility, "King Cophetua has married the beggar maid."

"I hope she had brown hair and fine eyes," he replied, with tender admiration.

Dora shook her bright head, and the eyes which her husband praised, and which were indeed very fine eyes, took a tender and wistful look as she replied demurely:

"I know nothing about that; but this I surely know—that beggar maid was a very happy woman!"

Yes, she was a happy woman, and as wedded bliss rarely wanes during the first week of the honeymoon, it is no great wonder that Dora's little planet of love and happiness was still in the ascendant a fortnight after her marriage. Mr. Templemore was out, though it was early, and Dora was alone. The morning was bright, and she felt as bright and as gay as the morning. With a sweet clear voice she sang aloud to herself as she went through the sunlit rooms of Deenah. She sang an old Irish song, full of sorrow, but her heart was light. Suddenly she was mute. She had heedlessly entered a room where dark blinds shut out

the light, where the air felt chill, and her heart failed her as she recognized Mr. Courtenay's collection.

Dora had visited this apartment since her arrival in Deenah, but she had seen it with her husband; alone she had not ventured within it, and now that she had crossed its threshold, she knew not how to retreat or advance. Her heart beat, her head swam; a chair was near her, she sank down upon it, and looked around her. Every country and every civilization, Christian and heathen, had contributed to Mr. Courtenay's collection; the history of mankind was in all that Dora saw, but she only read in it the story of her brother. Her eye wandered from one end of the room to the other. Specimens of Palissy, Majolica, Etruscan, mediæval and antique, were there before her, some perched aloft on marble columns, others more precious in black cabinets, with glass fronts and brass locks. Here and there a gold or silver cup shone, or a piece of carved ivory gleamed faintly, and Dora, looking at these things, saw herself a girl again in her old home near Dublin. She saw herself sitting up for Paul, aad preparing a meal for his return, And she saw him too! She

heard his voice, she sat at his feet and looked up in his face, on which the firelight shone; but the bitterness of these recollections was too much for her. Dora buried her face in her hands and wept. When, by a strong effort, she at length compelled her tears to cease, and looked up, she saw Mr. Templemore standing before her with a letter in his hand, and eyeing her thoughtfully.

She reddened as she rose, and went up to him with some embarrassment.

"I could not help it," she said, deprecatingly, "I could not, indeed. I entered this room unexpectedly, and everything I saw was too much for me!"

Her quivering lip showed him that her emotion was not over.

"How much you loved your brother!" he said, gently.

"Much!—oh! Richard, the word is cold; he was everything to me."

"Are you sure you have quite forgiven me, Dora?" he gravely asked.

She looked at him in some wonder.

"Forgiven you, Richard!—if I had Paul's death to forgive you, it would have been easier for me

to die than to enter this house as your wife. Forgive that!" she impetuously added—"I fear I could not. I fear I never forgave Mr. Courtenay, who lured my brother, and Florence Gale, who urged him on, till he died of the anxiety, the labour, the suspense, and, last of all, the disappointment these two inflicted upon him. She would have been his wife if he had won the day, but he had scarcely lost it when she married another. Perhaps you did not know this," she continued, seeing the look of surprise that passed across Mr. Templemore's face, "and perhaps I should not have told you; but it is true. She was faithless to him, and though, if I am your wife, it is her doing, not mine, I cannot help feeling that I am Paul Courtenay's sister, and that all unconsciously and unwillingly I have avenged him. I have striven against the feeling again and again, and again it has come back, and been too strong for me."

She was very pale, and she shook from head to foot as she uttered this resentful confession; but Mr. Templemore only kissed her soothingly, and smiled as he led her out of the room, and locked the door behind him. He could read Dora's heart

better than she read it herself, and he saw there more jealous fondness of a living husband than angry memory of a dead brother's wrongs. The greatest sin of Florence Gale was ever to have been loved by him. This Dora never could forgive, and never could she cease triumphing in her heart over her defeated rival. She might, being a generous woman, strive against the feeling; but whilst she loved her husband, jealousy would be too much for her, and she would strive in vain. It is not in a man's nature to be severe against such sins, and Mr. Templemore felt wonderfully lenient on hearing Dora confess her triumph over Mrs. Logan. He was not so vain, moreover, as to consider that lady plunged in irremediable grief for his sake, and he could not help thinking that, as he had had predecessors in her heart, so might he have a successor there too. But as he needed no protestations from Dora to convince him that he was her first love, so he required no vows to feel certain that no other image would replace his in her heart. He had known in his boyhood a white-haired woman, bright, gay, and cheerful, who had been three weeks a bride and fifty years a widow. She was witty and lovely, and was ad-

mired even to the brink of age; but none of her lovers—and they were many—could ever win her. Her young love had outlived both grief and youth. And as Mr. Templemore looked at his wife's pale face—as he heard her boast with involuntary frankness of her triumph over Florence—as he took her away with a smile from the dark room which had evoked all this, down to the cheerful room below, he thought, "Dora is such another woman as my great-aunt; if I were to die to-morrow, and she to live till three-score, I should still, dead or living, be her husband." And we need not wonder that, if Mr. Templemore was not so inexperienced or so exacting as to expect this exclusive affection, which is not, indeed, a very common sort of thing, yet he was not either so careless or so cold as not to feel mingled joy and pride in having inspired it. Never, therefore, could his wife have read more kindness in his looks than she could have read then—never could she have found more boundless indulgence for her imperfections than such as he was now willing to extend to her for this venial sin of loving him too fondly.

"I have had a letter from Eva this morning,"

he said, as they sat down on the sofa; "she mentions Mrs. Courtenay's safe arrival in Les Roches, with Mrs. Luan, I believe; and here is, I suppose, Mrs. Courtenay's own letter."

He handed it to her, but she gave it back to him.

"Read it to me," she said; "you will not be vexed if mamma says you took me away from her, like one of the Sabine maidens?"

Mr. Templemore smiled and obeyed.

"My dear child," began Mrs. Courtenay, "I really wish you would soon come back. Ever since your wedding-day, as I already told you, Mrs. Luan is unbearable. I CANNOT MANAGE HER! I must say I think it hard that Mr. Templemore compelled you to leave me in that cruel fashion. I cannot imagine why he thought *me* in the way. I wonder how he will like it when some man comes and whisks off Eva from *him?*"

"I shall not like it at all," candidly remarked Mr. Templemore, "but I shall have to bear with it."

"Eva was very glad to see me," resumed Mrs. Courtenay's epistle; "but is longing to have you and her father back. Miss Moore is prosy and

stupid, as usual." Dora rather regretted having told Mr. Templemore to read her mother's letter, but took comfort on seeing him smile. "However," kindly resumed Mrs. Courtenay, "I attribute that just now to the fact that there is a host of horrible childish diseases about Les Roches. Croop, measles, and scarlatina," says Miss Moore.

Mr. Templemore read no more. His very lips had turned white with emotion. "I must go—go at once, aud take Eva away," he said, scarcely able to command his voice.

"*We* must go," eagerly said Dora.

"No—no—I cannot make you travel so fast," he said, speaking more calmly; "you must stay here!"

"Stay!—have you so soon forgotten your promise?" asked Dora, with a reproachful frown.

Yes, two days before she had extracted from him a fond pledge that he would never ask or expect to leave her. "I do not say that I shall never let you stir without me," had said Dora; "but I must have the right of going with you." If Mr. Templemore's honeymoon had been over, he might have demurred, but having been only thirteen days wedded, he knew not how to resist this charming

despot, and he yielded all the more willingly that in the intoxication of his new passion it seemed impossible to him ever to cease to wish for the society of one so dear. So he promised, as most men in love would have promised, and now he was pledged to his word.

"And I shall not set you free," now said Dora, with a bright, fond smile; "I will be as exacting as any sorceress with any knight of romance. So let us go at once, and find Eva sound and well at the end of our journey."

"She *is* a sorceress," thought Mr. Templemore, as he left her to give orders for their journey. "She is not beautiful, she is not even what people call very pretty, and yet—and yet." He needed no words to complete the picture his fancy called up. A face bright as sunshine, happy, radiant eyes, a light young figure, told him Dora's spell more potent than mere beauty, and infinitely more seducing.

But that bright face was clouded, and these happy eyes grew dim when he left her. Dora stood by the open window, and she looked out sadly on the verdant wilderness below her. She could not bear to leave that Eden—not, at least, to leave

it so soon. Spite all her husband's fondness, Dora did not feel sure of him yet. She wanted time to become to him something more than a bright-haired girl, with fine eyes. She wanted to grow identified with and to be a portion of his daily life. She wished for nothing, and no one to break the fond spell she was weaving around him daily, alluring him from that other charm she had involuntarily cast upon him to a surer and more durable tenderness. Already she had by gentle arts won her way to some of the chambers of his heart. Already she knew thoughts which Mr. Templemore had never told another, and which had escaped him in fond and happy hours; but Dora felt that there lay more behind, and that a road, not arduous indeed, but mysterious, and with some perils, still divided her from the goal it was her fond ambition to win. She had no wish to rule, no wish even to influence, but she wished to be as near to Mr. Templemore as one human being can be to another, and it had rather disconcerted her to find that the very passion she inspired was an obstacle which retarded her progress. If even in perfect solitude, in unrestrained liberty, she could not have her husband

as she wished to have him, how much harder would it be to have him thus with Eva to share his love, and others to divide his attention!

"And yet I shall prevail," she thought, rousing herself from this passing despondency; "I shall prevail. Eva loves me so dearly, that he cannot divide us in his affection; and I am too fond of her to be jealous. She is mine now—mine as well as his, and the love he gives her he also gives to me. Les Roches is not so beautiful as Deenah, but surely my lot is altered since I beheld it first. Those trees, those alleys, that old house, are mine now—mine at least whilst they are his. And in Les Roches, because I have suffered so keenly, must Fate atone, and I shall be fully blest."

There was a triumphant gladness in the thought which conquered fear, but not regret, for solitude is sweet to love. When they left Deenah that afternoon Mr. Templemore saw the fond, wistful look his wife cast back towards the house, and as he happened to share her feelings, he said with a smile,

"I shall take Eva and Miss Moore to some safe spot, and then we shall come back here for the summer."

"Will you—will you!" cried Dora, with sparkling eyes; for she thought, "I have a whole summer before me."

They travelled fast, and reached Les Roches towards noon on a warm day in June. Dora's heart ached for Mr. Templemore, as she saw the agitation he could not repress when the château came within view. But as her glance wandered along the road, she uttered a sudden and joyful:

"Look—look!"

For there, walking with Miss Moore in the shade was Eva herself, and Fido behind her. In a minute they were down, Eva sprang towards them with a joyful cry, and it would have been hard to say which of the two, Mr. Templemore or his wife, looked the happier, or kissed the child more fondly. For as she felt Eva's little arms clasping her neck so fondly, and heard her half sobbing, "Oh! Dora—Cousin Dora!" Dora thought with a beating heart—

"Yes, you love me, Eva—but can you ever love me as I love you—you who, though you do not know it, have given Cousin Dora the great, the perfect happiness of her life. Poor Fido, you gave me nothing save your little honest heart—but I love

you, too, so do not whine. Oh! that the whole world, that every creature could be as blest as I am now!"

She looked so bright, so joyous, so like the poet's "phantom of delight," as these thoughts passed through her, that Mr. Templemore, looking at her with charmed eyes, exclaimed, in very unpoetic fashion, however,

"Dora! I am a lucky fellow."

Dora had no time to answer, Miss Moore now came up to them.

"It is such a comfort to have you here, Mr. Templemore," she said with a sigh, meant to express her satisfaction on his return, "we had such a dreadful day yesterday."

"My mother is surely not ill!" cried Dora, with a sudden alarm.

"Oh! dear no, but that poor young man is raving. He got a sunstroke on the way, I believe, and he was raving before night. He is very bad to-day."

Dora grew white.

"What young man?" she asked.

"Doctor Luan," composedly replied Miss Moore; "he arrived yesterday afternoon, looking very odd,

and flushed with that sunstroke—gentlemen ought to have parasols, in my opinion—and when he asked after you, and Mrs. Courtenay told him you were on your bridal tour, the surprise was too much for him. I never saw anyone look so bad. I assure you, Mrs. Templemore, it made me feel quite concerned for him, poor young gentleman! Well, before half an hour was over, he was violent, but he is not so now—only quite delirious."

Mr. Templemore looked at his wife. She seemed overwhelmed with confusion and grief, and could not bear her husband's fixed gaze. He withdrew it, and they all walked in silence towards the house, Mr. Templemore thinking,

"This John Luan loved her—but surely Dora never cared for him, and yet how white she is!"

Some men are flattered to be the cause of infidelity, but Mr. Templemore was more jealous than vain, and the thought of a rival, even of one whom he had supplanted, was hateful to him. Was it possible that his wife had given to another those looks, those smiles, that shy fondness which were his now? He did not believe it, but the mere suspicion made him tremble with jealous resentment.

"Oh! what calamity brought John here?" thought Dora; "and how is it his mother never told him? But I know what *he* thinks, and he must not—oh! he must not!"

"Let Miss Moore and Eva go in without us," she said in a low voice to her husband, "I have something to say to you."

Mr. Templemore's colour changed, but he complied with her request, and instead of entering the château, they stayed out in the flower-garden. Dora's heart felt very full. John, her cousin and her friend, was dying, perhaps, and Mr. Templemore suspected her of having jilted him. She forgave him, but she would not enter his house and cross his threshold with that suspicion upon her.

"I have something to say to you," she said again.

Mr. Templemore winced, and prepared himself for indulgence and forgiveness, but his wife asked neither from him.

"Richard," she said, "you told me that you married me for love, not for honour; let me tell you that if I, too, had not liked you, I could never have become your wife. I could no more sell myself for fair name than for money," she added, with a sudden light in her eyes.

There was a pause.

"Is that all you have to tell me, Dora?" asked Mr. Templemore.

"No; I am twenty-four, and I am not aware that if I had felt affection for any other man before I met you, it would have been a wrong in me to do so, provided such affection was true; but it so happens that I never did—never for one second—for one moment. I am content to be your last love; but it may be right you should know you are my first."

She spoke with a sadness that tempered the fondness of her confession. But the words she had uttered sent the blood up in a burning tide to Mr. Templemore's dark face. That last love of his, as Dora called it, was surely not the weakest. It was jealous and exacting. It would be denied nothing; and on learning that it had all, the past as well as the present, it was glad and triumphant, even though John Luan might be dying. But Dora could not forget the lover of her youth—the poor man who had come to woo with his cottage and his hundred a year; and her voice was subdued and low as she said,

"That is all I wished to say. Let us go in now."

CHAPTER IV.

THE cards spread on the table before Mrs. Courtenay must have been going all wrong, for Mrs. Courtenay looked troubled and sad as Dora entered her room. On seeing her daughter, however, she uttered a joyful cry, and looked beaming.

"My dear child, I am so glad!" she exclaimed, running up to her; "how well you look!—and where is Mr. Templemore?"

"He is with poor John. Oh! mamma, what is the meaning of this?"

"We should have sent him cards, I suppose; he had a sunstroke, and hearing of your marriage finished it. Oh! what a life we have had of it. Miss Moore has so worried about measles, that I wished we were all dead and buried. I told her so; also, that it was a mistake of hers about measles, and that I did not believe in them."

Dora sighed; she had left Paradise for earth and its cares.

"Have you seen your new room?" asked Mrs. Courtenay—"such a lovely room! Such beautiful things, all new—come and look at it."

She rose and led her to the apartment which had once been intended for Mrs. Logan. It had altered its aspect for Dora. She saw so at once, and the change smote her.

"I do not like her," she thought, "but why must I be happy at her expense! Why must John suffer because I am so blest?"

"Is it not pretty?" asked Mrs. Courtenay; "and Miss Moore cannot leave off wondering how fond he is of you! Every time something new came for you she cried, 'Why, he dotes on Miss Courtenay!'"

"Oh! I am happy—very happy," replied Dora; "but my heart aches for poor John."

"And so does mine; only, you see, you could not marry them both," innocently remarked Mrs. Courtenay.

"Oh! how good—how kind he is!" exclaimed Dora, looking around her and seeing with every glance new tokens of her husband's affection;

"only why cannot we be happy but that others must suffer?"

"I wish John would get well, and would marry Florence," gravely said Mrs. Courtenay; "it would be so nice, and so like a novel, where people change about, you know!"

If Dora could have smiled then, she would have smiled at the suggestion. Florence losing the master of Deenah, and taking up with a poor doctor! It was like her innocent little mother to think of such a thing!

"And where is John?" she asked with a heavy sigh; "I must go and see him."

"In the room next his mother's; only, my dear, you must go alone, please—it makes me miserable, and does poor John no good—besides, Mrs. Luan, poor soul, is so fierce that I am afraid of her."

Again Dora sighed, for again she thought, "Oh! why must my happiness cost others so dear!"

Mrs. Luan's room was vacant, but through the half-open door of the next apartment Dora saw her aunt sitting alone by a large white bed. That room was darkened, and though Dora saw her aunt's bending figure very plainly, she guessed more than she perceived, that the bed was occu-

pied. Mr. Templemore she did not see. He was already gone. With something like hesitation and fear, Dora entered the sick-room; and standing on the threshold she said: "Aunt, may I come in?"

Mrs. Luan raised her head, and Dora started back at the sight of her face. It is said that criminals shrink into old men within the few minutes that precede their execution; and even so had age —decrepit age—overtaken this sullen, heavy-looking woman within the last few hours. She stared at Dora with a dull, vacant stare; then suddenly recognizing her, she started up, and walked up to her with an aspect so fierce that Dora involuntarily shrank back.

"And so you come to look at him," said Mrs. Luan, with rage sparkling in her eyes, "you come to look at him, do you?"

"Aunt, I am grieved to the heart."

"Grieved!" interrupted Mrs. Luan, stamping her foot and shaking her head at her—"grieved, are you! Then how dare you marry Mr. Templemore, when you knew it would kill John?"

Dora could not answer one word.

"And that is my reward," continued Mrs. Luan, her wrath rising as she spoke. "I made you all

you are, and all the time you had promised to marry John! I tell you you had—I tell you you had!" she cried, her voice rising as she read denial in Dora's eyes, "deny it if you dare—deny it if you dare!" she repeated defiantly.

"If I were on my deathbed I would deny it!" cried Dora, roused into self-defence. "You wrong me—you wrong me! Why did you not tell John I was married? Why did you let him come here? Aunt, I know you did not wish John to marry me since I lost my money; but I say it is you, not I, who have been pitiless to him."

Mrs. Luan stared at her. It was this girl whom she had raised to her present height who could thus taunt and reprove her.

"Oh! you are very grand and proud because you are Mr. Templemore's wife," she said, nodding at Dora, "but you might remember you would not be his wife but for me."

Dora coloured deeply. "I know you must have told him where he could find us in Kensington," she faltered.

"Oh! pretend you do not understand—do! Pretend you do not know who told Mrs. Logan he was with you that night. Eh!"

Dora looked petrified. Her lips parted, her eyes were fixed on Mrs. Luan, then a dreadful light seemed to break upon her.

"And was it you who did that?" she said at length—"was it you?"

The question enraged Mrs. Luan.

"Ask me—do!" she cried; "ask me!"

"Aunt," piteously exclaimed Dora, "can this be? Did you do it to make Mr. Templemore marry me?"

"I did," replied Mrs. Luan with a sort of shriek—"I did!—and because I helped you to a rich husband, to fine clothes and houses and money, my boy must die—he must die!" she repeated, with a low, wailing moan; "and hear how he laughs at it all!" she added, as a loud fit of laughter came from John Luan's bed, "hear how merry he is!"

"No, I do not believe you—it is not possible. I cannot be so miserable—Heaven is too just to allow such things," cried Dora in the despair of her heart. "Aunt, you are ill, quite ill with grief—you have dreamed all this—you never did this thing—never—never!"

"I did."

"But why did you do it? Oh! why?" asked

Dora in a voice full of agony. "Why do it, aunt —why do it?"

"Because I never liked Florence—and because he was rich."

"And because you did not wish me to marry John," said Dora, in a transport of anger she could not repress; "you ruined Mrs. Logan's happiness, you risked my fair name, you robbed Mr. Templemore of his liberty—and all that I might not marry John."

"And so you taunt me with it!" sullenly said Mrs. Luan; "wait awhile, my lady—wait awhile! I have been silent, but I can speak. I wonder what he will say when he knows it. Ha! ha! I have you there. You have robbed me of a son, but perhaps I can rob you of a husband. He will turn me out of the house, bnt I don't care—you and he shall not be happy whilst John is dying."

She spoke calmly now, but her calmness was more terrible than her wrath. A great agony came over Dora as she heard her, and she was seized with a faintness as that of death. Her husband loved her, but how would he feel if he learned that he had been cheated into marrying her!

"Aunt," she said, recovering by a strong effort,

"you must not do that, you must not. God knows, if I could repair Mr. Templemore's wrong, ay, or even Mrs. Logan's wrong, I would do it, though my heart-strings should break; but I cannot—we are married, tied for life—you must not speak—you must not."

She raised her hand with a quiet gesture of command, like one who has uttered an unanswerable proposition. But Mrs. Luan shook back two dark locks which had fallen over her face, and looked at her with the defiance of a tigress whose cub has been wounded.

"Think of my boy," she said, "and expect no mercy. I have given you a rich husband, and you only mock and upbraid me for it. Do you think I will see him die," she added, nodding towards the bed, "and see you both sleep sound and live happy? No—no!"

It was useless to argue with her. This was not remorse, repentance, or even sorrow, it was the madness of despair. It was useless to argue, but it might not be useless to entreat. Dora felt distracted with fear and grief. She went up to her aunt, she caught her two hands, she pressed them to her bosom with passionate emotion.

"Aunt, spare me," she said; "what have I done that you should hate me? Was I not like a daughter to you?"

"Why does he rave about you?" interrupted Mrs. Luan. "I bore him, I suckled him, I reared him through privation and sorrow, I would have died for him, and it is you whom he raves about. Would he be lying there in brain-fever if he had found *me* dead?"

"Then you will have no pity," said Dora, dropping her aunt's hands.

Mrs. Luan looked at her in sullen silence. All the passionate Irish vehemence of Dora's nature awoke within her. She sank on her knees before her aunt, she raised her clasped hands.

"Have mercy!" she cried, "for John's sake have mercy on me. Be silent, in order that heaven may hear your prayers, and grant us both his life. Leave me my husband—leave him to me. He is my life, my only supreme good, and he loves me—he loves me. Do not shake that love in his heart by so cruel a confession. Remember that he is my husband; he must forget Mrs. Logan now, and love but me. I know that as yet his is only a man's passion for youth, and what he thinks

beauty—but give me time, aunt, give me time, and that love shall be more. I shall have his whole heart yet. I will be his friend, his companion, his mistress, his wife, everything which a woman can be to her husband, if you will but give me time!"

Oh! if he had seen her then! If he had seen that pale face, breathless with entreaty, those deep impassioned eyes—if he had heard that pathetic voice vainly imploring one who knew not mercy! Dora saw she had failed, but she still prayed.

"Give me a few days," she said, "just a few days, aunt."

Mrs. Luan laughed bitterly.

"Well, then, aunt, give me one day, give me one," entreated Dora; "let me be happy and beloved till to-morrow." Mrs. Luan shook her head in obstinate denial; but Dora clung to her with ardent importunity. "Give me one day," she entreated. "Oh! aunt, give me one. I have not been married three weeks. Let me be happy a few hours longer. Let me—let me. And—oh! if prayers are heard in heaven, how I will pray that John may live!"

Poor Dora, she asked to be happy when her happiness was her sin.

"Let me go!" said her aunt, sullenly. "John wants me."

Dora rose without a word, she released Mrs. Luan from her clasp; she compelled herself to say calmly,

"Aunt, I trust you will meet with more mercy than you show to me;" and with these words she left the room and went down stairs.

She walked out into the garden bare-headed, and reckless of the hot sun. She felt distracted with sorrow. Her pride was stung to think that she had been forced on Mr. Templemore, and her heart was tortured beforehand at the thought of what his feelings would be when he knew it. Would his love go back to the wronged woman, whom her aunt had betrayed, and leave her, his wretched wife, all plundered and forlorn. It was agony to think it—an agony so keen that she stood still, and wondered she did not expire with grief at the thought.

"Dora," said a fond, reproving voice.

She turned round with a thrill of joy. He knew nothing; he loved her still. Yes, for a few moments, for a few hours, perhaps, her husband was her own.

"What brings you out here bare-headed in that hot sun?" he asked, with gentle chiding.

"Yes, he loves me still," thought Dora, looking at him with sad, earnest eyes; but her only answer was: "Have you seen him?—how is he?"

"In great danger, I fear."

"And Eva—when do you take her away?" she asked, almost eagerly, "she must not stay here, you know."

"No, she must not. Miss Moore is getting ready. They leave this evening."

"But you go with them—do you not?—you go with them."

"Not whilst that poor fellow is all but dying in my house."

A sort of anguish passed over Dora's face, but Mr. Templemore did not read its meaning.

"He may live," he said kindly.

"God grant he may!" she replied in a low tone; "but what good will your presence here do him?—I shall not feel happy if you do not accompany Eva and Miss Moore." Mr. Templemore looked so amazed at this speech that Dora added, "I have a presentiment of evil—a foreboding I cannot conquer."

She looked so deadly pale, that Mr. Templemore was filled with concern.

"You have seen that poor young man, and it has been too much for you," he said.

"No, I only saw his mother. How strange and wild she is!—don't you think she is mad?" she added, standing still in the path they were following.

"Mad!—she was perfectly calm half an hour ago, Dora."

"Yes, she is always so with you," replied Dora, with involuntary bitterness.

Mr. Templemore did not answer, but he thought his wife's manner strange. They walked on in silence till they reached that old bench on which Dora had seen her husband and Florence sitting side by side. Never had the quiet spot looked darker or cooler than it did now. Never had its green shade been more delicious and alluring than it was on this warm afternoon.

"Let us rest," she said.

He sat down, nothing loth. Later, he knew the meaning of a change in his wife's manner which now perplexed him—later, he knew why she passed thus suddenly from the sadness of de-

spair to this feverish joy. He would not go—he would not believe anything she could urge against Mrs. Luan; she was doomed, she was hopeless, then let her be happy and beloved whilst happiness and love were still within her grasp. She rested her head on his shoulder with unwonted familiarity; she looked up at him with sad though undisguised affection, and she said, with the daring of despair,

"It seems impossible sometimes that you should like me—do you? Tell me so, that I may believe it, and feel sure."

Mr. Templemore was not given to the language of protestation or endearment, but something in her look and tone now stirred the very fibres of his heart. He answered her question as a man in love might answer it when such a question is put by a wife young and fondly loved—half in jest, half in earnest, yet with unconscious and involuntary fervour. Dora heard him in silence. The spot was beautiful, and cool, and lonely, but she could not forget that a month before she had seen Mr. Templemore there with another woman. The birds who sang so sweetly above them had not changed their mates, the young leaves on the trees

had not lost their spring beauty, and yet his love for that woman was sere and dead.

"How will he feel when he knows he was cheated into marrying me?" thought Mr. Templemore's wife. Then she remembered her dead brother, whom this man, now so dear, had supplanted in his fortune, in Florence Gale's love, and lastly, in her own heart; she remembered John Luan lying upstairs, and raving about her, and his mother mad with grief; and thus surrounded with calamities, past or present, or yet to come, she felt like the ancient criminals before whom a delightful feast was set, because they were to die. "Why should I not do like them?" thought Dora —"the past is irrevocable, the future is uncertain, but the present is mine. I may be a beggar to-morrow, but I am a queen to-day."

She roused herself, she compelled herself to be happy and gay, and, above all, she put by the silent shyness of her usual manner with Mr. Templemore, and she did her best to charm him. The task was an easy one. This bright young creature, so full of life and gladness, enchanted him. Few men like tame happiness, and most are pleased with variety.

"I have got a new Dora to-day," he could not help saying to her—"I have had a silent Dora, a shy Dora, a proud Dora, and to-day I have a brilliant Dora."

"A proud Dora!" she repeated—"when was I proud?"

"You will not let me give you anything."

"You have given me a wedding-ring," she replied, with sudden emotion; "provided you never repent it, I shall be happy."

Repent it!—he seemed amused at the thought; but he again reproached her for her pride.

"Oh! give me anything you please," she said, a little carelessly—"diamonds, if you like."

"Why not?" he asked, a little shortly—"why should I not give you a diamond bracelet?"

Dora looked at him very earnestly.

"Not a bracelet—give me a cross; it is an emblem of suffering, and when I feel too happy, it will help to subdue me, and remind me of to-day."

Mr. Templemore smiled, and replied that she should have a diamond cross to wear around her neck.

"Yes, I believe I have a pretty neck, and that he admires it," thought Dora, with silent despair; "but what will he care for that to-night?"

She could not forget it, and when Mr. Templemore rose from the bench, and said it was time to go in, she gave a start of terror. She had but one thought—to delay the fatal moment. To some extent she succeeded; she never left his side. At first Mr. Templemore did not object to this fond inquisition, but it was inquisition, and he soon felt it, and wondered at it. He wondered, too, at Dora's silence; her fitful spirits were fled, and she looked deeply depressed.

"You are as mute as a bird when the storm is coming on," said Mr. Templemore, who little knew how apt was his simile. "You are tired. Lie down on the sofa."

They were in her old sitting-room on the ground-floor when he spoke thus.

"Yes, I shall lie down," said Dora, languidly. She closed her eyes in order not to be obliged to speak. He thought she was sleeping, and soon rose to leave her; but ere he had reached the door she had started to her feet and stood before him in breathless fear. "Do not leave me," she entreated. "I cannot bear it."

Mr. Templemore could scarcely believe his ears. Fear, real fear, was in her whole aspect. It was

very unlike Dora Courtenay, so proud, so brave, to be thus childishly afraid of solitude.

"I shall ring for Fanny," he said.

"No, no, stay with me. I want you."

She was petulant, wilful, and yet fond, and she had her way. Mr. Templemore was ashamed and vexed to yield. He began to think that he had a capricious Dora as well as a charming one; but her tender and obstinate entreaties prevailed. Mr. Templemore chid her, but he did not go; that reprieve was granted to her.

"What if I were to tell him myself?" once thought Dora, seeing how kind and indulgent he was; but her heart failed her at the thought—besides, faint hope crept into her heart as time passed. If John got better her aunt might relent, and she might yet be saved.

CHAPTER V.

MR. TEMPLEMORE'S sister-in-law wanted to speak to him, and Mr. Templemore, it was found, after a quarter of an hour's search, was with his wife in the room which had been the governess's sitting-room. But Miss Moore had good reason for not choosing to speak to him there, and she sent a civil message, full of apologies, but implying plainly her wish for a private interview. Dora, who held her husband's hand, as if she had feared he should escape her, was obliged to relinquish her hold. She could not go with him, she could not bid him stay, she could only say:

"You will soon come back?"

"Very soon," he replied, cheerfully.

He went, rather pleased at having made his escape, for he wished to see John Luan again, and he did not want his wife to accompany him and encounter that sad sight. "Shall I go and see

him first?" he thought, as he went up the staircase. "Miss Moore can wait a few minutes." So instead of entering the drawing-room on his right, he turned towards Mrs. Luan's room on his left.

But scarcely had Mr. Templemore entered the sick-room when the door which he had closed opened again, and Dora appeared, pale and breathless. She had guessed all, and followed him.

"My darling, what brings you here?" he asked, with gentle reproof. "It is a sad, a very sad sight for you."

A loud, appalling fit of laughter from the sick-bed confirmed his words.

"Mrs. Luan raised her bowed head and looked at them. Dora stood near her husband. His arm was passed around her with protecting tenderness; her eyes were raised to his with something beyond love in their gaze—something of the worship and despair of a lost spirit looking her last of paradise, for she thought: "Now the time has come!"

John Luan's mother rose on perceiving them, and Mr. Templemore saw aunt and niece exchange a look so strange that it amazed him. Why did Mrs. Luan's eyes gaze so fiercely on his wife, and why did Dora turn so deadly pale as her own eyes

met them? He began to understand that something which concerned him, but of which he was kept ignorant, lay hidden under those silent looks —some war, some contest! What could it be? Why had Dora followed him?

"How is your son, Mrs. Luan?" he asked gravely.

"How is he!" she angrily echoed. "Why do you ask? Why do you come? What brings you both here? Could you not stay away? Is it to taunt him that you come? Look at them, John, look at them!"

"Is that woman mad, as Dora says," thought Mr. Templemore, "or what is it?"

She stood by the bed looking at her son, and pointing with a scornful forefinger to Mr. Templemore and his wife. Then turning upon them with sudden fury,

"Begone!" she said; "begone, or I will make you repent having come near him!"

Mr. Templemore did not move, and Dora only clung closer to him; but she looked at her aunt with mingled dread and entreaty.

"Ha! I can make you quake, my lady!" said Mrs. Luan, nodding at her pale niece. "I gave

you a husband, and you robbed me of a son in return—but I can make you quake!"

"Aunt—aunt!" implored Dora.

Mrs. Luan laughed, and John Luan, who had been silent awhile, tossed restlessly in his bed, and laughed with his mother.

"You hear him!" she cried, stamping her foot and looking angrily at Dora; "go, I say!—go both of you this moment!"

"Richard, let us go away!" entreated Dora; "oh! let us go away!"

But no more than before did Mr. Templemore stir. He darted piercing looks from Mrs. Luan to his wife. There was something—some hidden quarrel between these two women—a threat on one hand and fear on the other, for he felt Dora tremble in every limb. What was it?—what could it be?

"Dora," he said, in a low, kind tone, and drawing her more closely to him as he spoke thus, bending over her—"Dora, what is it? Trust in me."

The words were like dew from heaven. She threw her arms around his neck. "Oh! forgive me!" she cried; "forgive me!—I could not help it!"

He returned the caress, and again he said, "What is it?—trust in me."

Mrs. Luan answered that question.

"So you could not help it, forsooth," she said, her eyes sparkling with rage. "Are these my thanks for making you Mr. Templemore's wife?" she added, rolling her head from left to right, as if confounded at Dora's ingratitude. "Are these my thanks for parting him from Mrs. Logan, whom you so hated?"

Mr. Templemore, who had listened astounded, now started as if he had been stung.

"You part me from Mrs. Logan!" he cried, his eyes flashing; "'tis false!—you dare not!—you could not!"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Luan, with a sullen nod, "you always scorned me—I was stupid, was I? But I could make you put by one woman and marry another, clever man though you were, and foolish woman though you thought me."

The insolence of this boast exasperated Mr. Templemore. "I tell you 'tis false!—false!" he said sternly; "you never did it!"

"Did I not, though? Who made Florence jealous? 'Twas I, Mr. Templemore. Who gave

something to Eva that made her ill, and who told you to go to Dora that night whilst Florence was watching? 'Twas I. Ask her, ask Florence, ask Mrs. Logan, if you do not believe me."

Mr. Templemore looked thunderstruck.

"No, you could not be so base," he said; "you could not be so cruel as to tamper with my child for that object—you could not. I had heaped you and yours with benefits—you could not pay me back thus!"

"Benefits! Yes, you robbed me and John and Paul and Dora of my brother's money, and you threw us a bone in return. And you wanted to marry that Florence Gale who jilted Paul. No, no, Mr. Templemore, I said you should marry my niece, and you did—you did!"

Dora, overwhelmed with shame and grief, hid her burning face in her hands. Mr. Templemore could not speak.

"You thought me stupid," said Mrs. Luan again; "you thought me stupid, eh?" She said no more, but sat down again by her son.

There was a brief silence. A sorrow too keen for anger or indignation had fallen on Mr. Templemore.

"Poor Florence!" he said, with a quivering lip; "poor, foolish Florence!"

His troubled eye fell on Dora as he spoke. Perhaps he did not see her, but that look, so far away, so remote, cut her to the heart. She withdrew from his side, and he did not detain or call her back; he stood as the blow had struck him—pale, motionless, and, save those words, silent. Dora forgot her own grief in the sight of his.

"Richard," she said, coming back to him, and her tears flowing, "forgive me if I cannot set you free!—forgive me!" Her eyes were raised to his, tears were on her cheeks, and her look seemed to say, "Oh! dare I be happy again?"

He laid his hand on her shoulder, he looked down at her very sorrowfully, but with returning tenderness, and that sad look seemed to reply: "Be happy, my darling, be happy!"

John Luan's mother stared at them with jealous, angry eyes. Her son, whom the happiness of these two had brought to death's door, lay on his sick-bed, pale, breathless, exhausted with delirium, and they stood there happy and fond, braving her with the insolence of their love.

"You little hyprocrite!" she cried, starting to

her feet, and shaking her resentful hand at Dora, "how dare you make me do it? How dare you, and be jilting John all the time?"

"I!" cried Dora, amazed at the imputation; "I made you do it?"

"Yes—deny it now—do!"

"Oh! Richard, Richard," said Dora, with sudden anguish; "you will never believe that, will you?"

"Believe that *you* could abet this miserable woman," he replied, with scorn; "believe *that*, Dora!"

"And so I am to bear the burden of the sin, and you are to reap the benefit!" cried Mrs. Luan enraged—"you who made me do it. I say it again!"

"Peace!" said Mr. Templemore, turning sternly upon her. "But for your son's sake you should leave the house this instant. As it is, I forbid you from this day forth ever to address my wife again."

"Of course not," answered Mrs. Luan with much scorn; "I am too wicked, and she is too good. I promised her she should become your wife, and now that I have kept my word I must not speak to my lady!"

Mr. Templemore looked both indignant and incredulous.

"Dora," he said—"Dora joining in a plot so shameful!—Dora abetting you in entrapping Mrs. Logan!—Dora helping to work her own disgrace! It is false!"

"'Tis true," doggedly replied Mrs. Luan.

Dora turned crimson with indignation and shame. She left her husband's side. She went up to her aunt, she laid her hand on Mrs. Luan's arm, and looking her steadily in the face, she said firmly,

"Aunt, how dare you say it?—how dare you say it, with John Luan lying there?"

"And how dare you deny it?" cried Mrs. Luan, placing either hand on Dora's shoulders, and looking at her wildly; "did I not promise the first day we all entered this house—did I not promise you should become its mistress? Deny that if you dare!"

Mr. Templemore looked at Dora; she was ashy pale, and her lips quivered, but she was mute.

"And did you, or did your mother, ask me how I was to make you Mr. Templemore's wife?—how I was to part him and Florence Gale? Did

either of you question or try to know, or say, 'Do not do it?' Not once—not once."

Mr. Templemore again looked at his wife. She could not bear that look; her eyes sank before his.

"She can't deny it!" triumphantly exclaimed Mrs. Luan. "You know," she added, turning pitilessly on Dora, "you know you taxed me with it the next morning. 'Aunt,' you said, 'who did this?' You knew 'twas I, but you said nothing to Mrs. Logan—you liked Mr. Templemore. Deny that—and also that you hated Florence?"

Dora denied nothing. The net that ensnared her was drawing so close around her that she felt both fettered and tongue-tied. No, she could not deny her aunt's predictions, she could not deny her love and her hatred, now both turning against her with such vengeful power. She had boasted of both to him, and both now stood up as implacable witnesses to condemn her. She felt it, and she also felt lost, ruined, and undone.

Cold drops of perspiration stood thick on Mr. Templemore's brow. Once more he had been cheated and betrayed, but this time how frightfully! He had been robbed of the woman he loved, and entrapped into marrying another, and

the best feelings of his nature—generosity, pity, honour—had been enlisted to work out his undoing. A colder man, or a less generous one, a man of inferior nature, could never have thus succumbed nor fallen into this mean trap. He had been duped by the contemptible woman before him, and Dora had been her tacit accomplice. An innocent though foolish woman had been driven into the madness of jealousy that this family, whom he had treated with romantic generosity, might fasten upon him for life, and he, the rich man, might become the poor girl's husband. And Dora had shared the baseness even as she had reaped the benefit.

She had not laid the trap; no—but she had let him fall into it, and never, by helping hand, or even by word or sign, tried to save him. She had done nothing deliberate, but she had allowed another to act; and when all was ready—when Florence and he had become her victims, when pity and honour had made him turn to her, she had appeared before him with the pale and troubled beauty of a proud and fair martyr—she had ensnared him with her youth and her hidden love, and wakened in his heart a passion so violent and

so engrossing, that it completed her double triumph over Mrs. Logan. Yes, and as these thoughts passed through him with the cruel rapidity of lightning, it stung Mr. Templemore to feel that she had robbed Florence of her lover, even more than of her husband. He turned upon her, wrath and grief in his looks.

"Madam, speak!" he said impetuously and imperiously. "Do you not hear that you are accused?—speak, I say!"

Thus adjured, Dora looked up.

"I am innocent," she said.

"Innocent!" said her aunt; "yes, you never questioned—you did not want to know—you let me do it, and now, like a coward, you want to escape the blame. Let Mr. Templemore ask your mother if I did not promise that you should marry him, that's all."

Dora saw the angry light that passed through Mr. Templemore's eyes as her aunt uttered these words; she looked from him, her judge, to Mrs. Luan, her accuser,

"I am innocent," she said again.

Mrs. Luan laughed scornfully, and Mr. Templemore was mute. For a while she too stood

silent, then a coldness as that of death seemed to fall on her heart. She turned away and left the room without a word.

Mr. Templemore walked up to Mrs. Luan, and seizing her arm, he looked down in her face, and said sternly,

"What was your motive?"

His look, his tone, alike mastered her.

"I did not want her to marry John?" she answered.

He smiled bitterly. He had been sacrificed that John might be safe.

"And what was *her* motive?" he asked again.

"You know it," sulkily replied Mrs. Luan; "she liked you."

Yes, some men are betrayed for their money, but Mr. Templemore had been cheated out of his liberty for love. For love! He bit his lip till it bled, and he grasped Mrs. Luan's arm so tightly that she said with some anger,

"Let me go; you hurt me. Why do you put it all upon me? Mrs. Courtenay was always talking about it, and Dora was fretting to have you. I did you no wrong, after all—you liked Dora, you know you did."

"I liked her! you dare to tell me that. I liked your niece whilst I was pledged to Mrs. Logan."

"Never mind, you like her now," was Mrs. Luan's ironical reply.

"I like her now?"

"Yes, and let me go—I say you hurt me."

"Let you go?" he replied, dropping her arm with a look of the deepest contempt. "Mrs. Luan, I leave the house to-day—let me not find you here, or your son, or your sister, when I come back."

"And Dora," defiantly asked Mrs. Luan, "are you going to turn out Dora?—you can't, you know—she is your wife."

"She may rue it yet," he said, his eyes flashing with anger, "but she shall stay here, of course; as for you, Mrs. Luan—do not trust to my forbearance for your son—leave soon—leave quickly."

He left the room as he uttered the words. As he closed the door he met Mrs. Courtenay. Without a word of preface or courteous greeting, with a sternness which she had never seen in him, he stopped her and said,

"Mrs. Courtenay, is it true that when I brought you to this house, with your sister-in-law and Dora,

you contemplated that I should marry your daughter?"

Mrs. Courtenay knew nothing, but Mr. Templemore's manner and looks frightened her.

"Oh! Mr. Templemore," she implored, "do not be angry with poor Dora, do not."

"Oh! I am not angry—not at all, Mrs. Courtenay, I only want to know if Mrs. Luan did really, as she tells me, promise Dora that she should become my wife."

"She did," eagerly replied Mrs. Courtenay, by no means loth to throw all the blame on her sister-in-law, "she did, as soon as she found out you were Mr. Templemore."

"Oh! of course not before," ironically replied Mr. Templemore; "and your daughter, Mrs. Courtenay, she raised no objection?"

"Mr. Templemore, she liked you."

"Ah! to be sure; an excellent reason. Thank you for your candour, Mrs. Courtenay," he added sarcastically.

He turned away, but his mother-in-law followed him anxiously.

"Then you are not angry with Dora?" she said.

"Oh! not at all," replied Mr. Templemore, "I

am too happy to have your daughter on any terms!"

The words were very bitter, if Mrs. Courtenay had but understood them rightly, but the mood in which they were spoken was far more bitter still. Love, tenderness, passion, everything that had once made Dora dear, seemed to have vanished in the humiliation of his betrayal. To be duped, to be deceived, to be made a tool and a jest of—such had been Mr. Templemore's lot.

CHAPTER VI.

"MISS MOORE is very anxious to speak to you, sir," said Fanny, meeting her master.

"Very well," he replied, with bitter impatience, and, retracing his steps, he went back to the drawing-room.

Miss Moore was not alone. A lady stood in the middle of the room, attired in a travelling dress, with a shawl on her arm, and looking as if she were going to step that moment into a railway carriage. And that lady was Mrs. Logan. She laughed at Mr. Templemore's amazed look, and curtsied to him with mock politeness.

"Oh! but I must see Mrs. Luan too," she said, nodding ironically. "I am not afraid of her now, though I was so silly as to think her mad, you know. I must see her with you, Mr. Templemore."

"Never!" he answered angrily. "Mrs. Luan leaves this house to-day, and never will I address

her, or willingly remain five seconds in the same room with her."

Miss Moore clasped her hands and said pitifully, "I knew it could not end well;" whilst Mrs. Logan exclaimed scornfully, "Poor Mrs. Luan! is it so soon over?"

Mr. Templemore looked angrily at these two women. His blood was boiling within him, and seeing Florence fresh as a rose, and taunting him so lightly with his lost liberty, he forgot her wrong, and only remembered that her folly had abetted Mrs. Luan's cunning, and helped to his undoing.

"Dear me, Mr. Templemore, how odd you do look!" ironically said Florence. "Well, I shall not trouble you long. I owe you an answer to a question, and I come to give it. I have been waiting for your return this fortnight. I would not write—letters get opened by the wrong people, and not delivered sometimes to the right person. I am getting shrewd and clever, you see. Well, I must not miss the train, so you will excuse me if I come to the point. You wanted to know, when I last had the pleasure of meeting you, through whose agency I had entered this house and surprised you with Miss Courtenay on the night of

the storm. You were kind enough to suppose that I bribed the servants. Allow me now to tell you that the person who admitted me, who received, and guided, and helped me, was your wife's aunt. To her, Mr. Templemore, you thus owe your present happiness, and I am not so cruel or so unjust as to rob that good and kind Mrs.Luan of your gratitude."

"Yes, Mrs. Logan," replied Mr. Templemore, with emphatic bitterness, "you fell into a trap, and now that you see it, it is too late."

"I can't help it," she said, desperately. "You might as well tell a bird not to be caught as tell me not to be deceived. Besides, why did you let them deceive you, Mr. Templemore?"

His colour deepened, his dark eyes flashed, he bit his lip to check the angry words that might have come up as she put the taunting question. Ay, he too had been snared by the net of the fowler, and its meshes were woven thick around him. Adieu to a noble life, adieu to liberty, ay, and almost adieu to honour! Never more should his footsteps be free, never more should he know the happy solitude of his own thoughts; he was tied, till death should part them, to that girl who, innocent or guilty, had stepped in between him and

all his desires. What though she had wakened in him the folly of a moment? Was he the man to go on loving a woman for the soft shy look of her eyes and the pretty turn of her neck? She loved him, perhaps—she had said so, at least, and he remembered her fond confession with a sort of fury—but had she entrapped him because of that love? Had he given her a double triumph over him? That of first deceiving his judgment, then of conquering his proud heart?

"Yes," he said, "you are right, Mrs. Logan—I, too, have been cheated, and where is our remedy?" he added, the veins in his forehead swelling with anger, as he felt both his wrong and his powerlessness to avenge it. "Where is our remedy? We have been deceived and betrayed. Mrs. Luan was the arbitress of our fate, though we knew it not, and we must bow to her decrees."

"Yes, it was Mrs. Luan's doing, but it was Dora Courtenay's too," cried Mrs. Logan, with her old jealous anger. "She planned it, and she did it, Mr. Templemore."

He turned pale as death, and moved away from her side; and when he came back he looked at her and Miss Moore, and said,

"Do not say it—do not believe it, Mrs. Logan. She is my wife. You made her such, remember that, and also that her honour and mine are one."

"You want me to be silent," she cried. "I will not—I will not, Mr. Templemore. The world shall know, and the world shall judge between her and me."

"Do as you please. You will find my wife guarded by something to which the world, sceptical though it may be, ever adds faith—the respect of her husband."

"Your wife!" repeated Mrs. Logan, turning pale at something in the tone with which he uttered the word "wife." "Yes, I know she is your wife, Mr. Templemore, and you are newly married, too, and, of course, your honeymoon not being over——"

She ceased and looked at him. The blood had rushed up to his very brows—his very heart was thrilled at the remembrance of his lost happiness. He could not help it. A passion, even though it be but two weeks old, cannot be conquered at once in a man's heart; and as Florence spoke, there came back to him, not the remembrance of the love which had bound them—not the resent-

ment of the fraud by which they had been divided, but fervid and sudden, like the glimpse of a warm summer landscape, the memory of those two impassioned weeks which he had given to another woman. Florence stood before him, beautiful, angry, and jealous, and he saw Dora, pale, beseeching, and sorrowful—Dora, with love in her upraised eyes and her parted lips. He saw her, do what he would; but with angry wonder he also asked himself what brought her image before him then, why days had been stronger than years, and why he thought of the girl who had ensnared him, whilst he looked at the chosen one of his heart?

"She is not innocent!" cried Mrs. Logan, breaking off from sarcasm into impetuous accusation. "Did I not say to her, 'Tell me how it happened—explain it, Dora, and I will believe you,' and did she not turn away without a word—without a word? I tell you, Mr. Templemore, that she plotted to marry you from the moment she entered your house."

"She did not," he said, sullenly.

"Then why did she marry you?"

"She had her fair name to redeem, thanks to you."

"Ay, she risked much, but she won—she won, and I lost; but it is not all gain to her, Mr. Templemore. The world will have something to say to her yet."

"Then the world will lie!" cried Mr. Templemore, his dark cheek crimsoning, and his voice trembling with passion as the pure and pale image of his young wife seemed to rise before him. In all his misery it was something to know that—so far, at least, she was innocent. Of that knowledge nothing and no one could rob him. Mrs. Logan looked at him, then clasped her hands in indignant amazement.

"Mr. Templemore," she said, "were you Mrs. Luan's accomplice, and was all this a plot to make me break my engagement, and set you free?"

He gazed at her more in sorrow than in anger. She was unchanged, after all. She read the meaning of his cold, grave looks, but she would persist in this new outrageous fancy.

"I know what you think," she said, speaking very fast—"you think she is the same silly creature she ever was; but I am not so foolish as you imagine me to be, Mr. Templemore, and I say that you always liked her—always, Mr. Temple-

more—and that, if she had been a plain girl, you would not have married her from honour."

"If Dora Courtenay had been a plain girl, you would never have suspected her, Mrs. Logan."

"Yes, yes, I know; but tell me, if you can, 'I did not marry her for love'—just tell me that, if you can, Mr. Templemore."

"I decline your right to put such a question," he coldly answered; "you broke our engagement, Mrs. Logan."

She sank down on a chair, and burst into tears. Mr. Templemore stood by her side, and as he beheld her sorrow, he looked around him with mingled grief and shame—the shame which a noble heart feels at its own frailty. That room, those pictures, those familiar objects, all seemed to upbraid him with infidelity. Here he had been calmly, purely blest. Here gentle love, not feverish passion, had held him in tender bonds. Here an innocent, though not brilliant woman, had loved him—here it had been sweet to sit with her day after day, forestalling the peace of marriage, and not taking into marriage the troubled joy of unwedded love.

Florence wept on as if her heart would break,

but dull and heavy felt Mr. Templemore's heart. He did not love her—he did not love his wife—he loved no woman then. Twice love had cost him so dear, that now he felt as if he were too poor ever to buy it back again. The tears of Florence pained him, but so would those of Eva if they had had the same bitter cause to flow. With a sort of wonder at his own coldness, he remembered how dear this wronged woman had once been, and now he could gaze on her as if from a remote shore. His love was dead, and dead, too, felt that other love which had suddenly flowed between them, and wrought in a few weeks the work of time.

"I must go now," said Mrs. Logan, rising as she spoke.

Even as she said it, the door opened, and Dora entered the room. Miss Moore looked scared, Florence defiant, and Mr. Templemore turned crimson. Dora looked at them quietly. Whatever she might feel, no token of it appeared on her pale face. No wonder, no anger, no jealous indignation were to be read there.

"I beg your pardon, Richard," she said, with a proud and tranquil smile; "I did not know you

were engaged." And, bowing to Mrs. Logan, she passed on. Slowly and leisurely she crossed the long drawing-room, leaving it by another door than that through which she had entered. Mr. Templemore could not help looking after her. She might be an adventuress and a schemer, but she would never, if jealous, have betrayed that jealousy by watching her lover; she would never have come to that lost lover's house and humbled her pride so far as to reproach him, or to accuse her more fortunate rival. Yes, she still had, even in her humiliation, that cold charm which reserve and pride give a woman, and which allures man far more than the fondest seduction. Florence felt stung, for she saw that look, and half read it. Dora's sun might be under a cloud just then; but a wife's day is a long one, and in how calm, how cold a voice she had called him "Richard."

"I beg your pardon!" exclaimed Florence, bitterly; "I came to enlighten you, but find you enlightened. I might have spared myself the trouble of coming; but you see, being silly and foolish as ever, I thought I had but to speak to confound Mrs. Luan and justify myself, even though it was too late."

Mr. Templemore could not help feeling a pity both tender and deep for this beautiful but very foolish creature as she spoke thus. She had no judgment, no pride, no dignity, no generosity even, but she had been shamefully wronged, and it stung him that he, who had once so loved her, should have been made the instrument of that wrong. Dora would never have acted thus. But surely her very folly ought, like a child's, to have made Florence sacred to generous hearts, for how could a creature so frivolous resist even the most transparent artifice, or save herself from perfidy? There was indignation, there was sorrow and emotion in Mr. Templemore's voice as he now said to her,

"Good-bye, Florence—God bless you! We are cousins; we have been friends, and we were to have been more. Let not the baseness which parted us so prevail as to break the old tie. You have no brother to protect you, no near relative to befriend you, but remember that you have me."

Mrs. Logan did not answer, but her colour deepened, and as she stood with her hand clasped in his, she thought, looking at the floor, "Ah! if Dora were to die—but she is sure to live. Good-bye, Miss Moore," she added aloud.

Miss Moore, who had prudently kept her handkerchief to her eyes, sobbed a good-bye, which darkened Mr. Templemore's face. How he hated all this! How bitterly he felt his lost privacy! He said not a word to detain Florence. He went down with her and accompanied her to the gate, where a carriage was waiting. She entered it, he saw it drive away, then he walked down the sunburnt, dusty road, brooding over his odious, intolerable wrong. He had been cheated to save John Luan from a poor marriage—also for his money. Such things take place in life daily; Mr. Templemore had often seen them, and looked on with mingled scorn and pity for the victim. And now the case was his. These three women had ensnared him as only women can ensnare man, with the subtle arts which nature has given their sex as the compensation for weakness. Mr. Templemore had a credulous, generous nature, loath to suspect; a nature which made him liable to deceit, and he knew it, and could laugh at it once the first vexation of discovery was over. But he had never thought the deceit would take this aspect, or that the deceiver could wear Dora Courtenay's face. The anguish of that thought overpowered his for-

titude, and conquered even wrath. His whole flesh quivered with the pain, and he stood still, mastered by grief, and unable to go on. When he looked around him, Mr. Templemore found that, led by habit, a more faithful guide than love, his steps had brought him to Mrs. Logan's door.

Again the house was closed and silent. Florence was really gone this time—she was gone, after having made Dora's guilt deeper and plainer. She was gone, and never, unless in some great crisis, must Dora's husband cross that once friendly threshold, or enter those once-loved rooms, now haunted with the spectre of the past. With cold and gloomy eyes he looked at that silent dwelling. If Florence could have seen him then, she would have known it was not her loss that had brought that dark meaning to his face; if she could have read his heart she would have felt more jealous of his grief than she had felt of his brief happiness.

Dora had said it truly—his love for her was man's passion for youth and that beauty which his eyes see in a loved woman; but a noble nature is the alchemy which transmutes the baser metal into pure gold; and Mr. Templemore's love for

his young wife could not live on the fleeting charms which had subdued him. He wanted to revere, he wanted to trust; and now that he could do neither, his love felt expiring—but in what throes—in what agonies! He roused himself from that mood, both passionate and bitter—he walked back to Les Roches. He had thought enough over his wrong. It was clear, it was certain, it was irremediable.

"Now I must see my wife," he thought.

His wife! Oh! bitter, insupportable thought! She was his wife. It was the fondest name she had heard from him—the most tender he had found it possible to give her, and now it sounded so dreary, so ominous, so fatal!

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN Dora left John Luan's room she tried to think, but she could not. She went down to the garden, and walking along one of its gravel paths, she bade herself be calm—and calmness would not come at her bidding. Her misery was so new that she could not believe in it yet—not at least with that settled belief which we give to great and undoubted calamities. It flowed upon her like a torrent, stunning and overwhelming her, ere it carried her away down to the dark deep waters whence there was no returning. For if Mr. Templemore believed her guilty, she could see no escape from her grief—nay, she would accept of none. He could not more detest the profaned tie that would bind them than she would. If love be not reverence and honour, it is nothing to the pure and the proud. But could she have

lost his esteem? Was it possible? No, he was staggered and deeply hurt, and perhaps even he could love her no more, so great was his sense of his wrong—but how could he doubt her? It was a sweet and avenging thought, that though no longer adored, she must be honoured. Let love be lost—there are many such bitter wrecks in life—but let her innocence be confessed.

"His liking will go back to Florence," thought Dora, and tears rushed to her eyes, and her heart swelled; "but he must do me justice. There will be a great darkness between us—it may last years—but light will return, as morning follows night; and though age should have come and youth fled in the meanwhile, his love shall be welcome were it but for the sake of the two happy weeks he has given me. But he must do me justice—oh! he must!"

She turned back towards the house. She wanted to see him—to speak to him that moment. She felt upon her a flow of proud and tender eloquence—of words that would come from her heart, and must needs reach his. She asked where he was. In the drawing-room, said Fanny; but she did not add that Florence was with him.

The blow fell full upon Dora when she saw these two; and calm though she looked, her heart was bitter to overflowing when she left them. He was with Mrs. Logan! If she could have avoided one enemy, she could not, it seems, escape the other. If her aunt had not spoken, Florence would. She went up to her own room—it was vacant. The sun shone in through the open window, and the breeze fluttered the muslin curtains; but no fond husband sat in the arm-chair waiting for his wife's return! He was below with Mrs. Logan!

"I must dress for dinner," thought Dora with a sigh.

She shook out her long hair, and began combing it slowly. A gleam of sunshine fell on the glowing tresses and turned them into gold, and Dora remembered how one morning, at Deenah, her husband, coming in upon her and finding her thus, had admired that beautiful hair, and lifting it up with a caressing hand, had said it was matchless.

"He loved me then!" thought Dora. "Yes, he loved me then!"

And was all that over? She could not believe it. It is so hard to fall asleep a queen, and waken a beggar. She hoped, but that hope died as the

door opened and Mr. Templemore entered the room. With her two hands she parted her long hair, put it back from her face, and looking at him calmly, she said,

"How ill you look, Richard! What ails you?"

She could put the question.

"Something does ail me," he replied, "something which I need not tell you, Dora."

"You have seen Mrs. Logan," she said, wilfully misunderstanding him, "but I am not jealous."

She said it, and she looked it so thoroughly that he felt strong.

"Mrs. Logan told me nothing I did not know," he said very coldly.

"And what do you know?" asked Dora, with a proud, sad smile.

"I have no wish to enter on that subject," he replied; "I do not wish to wound, or offend, or even seem to accuse you, Dora."

"Accuse *me!*—of what, Mr. Templemore."

"Of nothing. I tell you I do not wish it. You are my wife—I do not forget it!"

She clasped her hands and looked at him. Was this her fond, impassioned husband? Was this the man who for two weeks at least had adored

her? She was his wife, and he did not forget it. That was the end. She had been the toy, the pleasure of an hour, the sultana of a day, but he was no Eastern depot, he was a Christian gentleman; and there was the law, too, and she was his wife, and he did not forget it.

"God help me!" was all she said, or could say.

He looked at her. He had denied her guilt to Florence; but in his heart he believed it. He believed that she had been her aunt's tacit accomplice, and that she had betrayed him, perhaps for ambition, perhaps for love. Whichever it was, he felt her prey and her victim. It was not in Mr. Templemore's nature to think that, and not resent it. He almost hated her just then, not merely for the fraud which she had abetted, but because she had shaken the very foundation of faith within him. If she was false—who was true? But bitter though his resentment was, he was master of himself now, and he scorned to betray it; the magnanimity of his nature revolted at the thought of crushing that humbled woman, and there was pity in his tone—a pity which stung his wife, as he said,

"Dora, this is a severe trial, let us go through

it as wisely as we can—we have a whole lifetime before us. Let us be patient !"

"I would give my life to set you free," she replied in a low tone, "I would give my life, Mr. Templemore, that the last three weeks had never been!"

No other word of deprecation or regret passed her lips. Mr. Templemore saw no signs of genuine sorrow or repentance in his wife; nothing but pride and sin—defiant, though conquered and revealed.

"Dora," he said again, "this is a cruel trial; perhaps we could not pass through it safely if I were to remain here. I do not wish the wrong I have suffered to make me forget the relation in which we stand to each other. Therefore I shall go away for a time. When I return we shall both have learned to be silent on a subject which must never be mentioned between us."

He spoke very coldly, "When I return!" No gleam of joy shone in his eyes, but dull and heavy remained his look, as the words were uttered. He bore his burden as patiently as he could, but it was a burden, and in his heart he hated it. Again she clasped her despairing hands; she raised her eyes to heaven in wondering appeal at his injustice and her misery.

"I am not jealous," she said, "but there are wrongs beyond endurance, and this is one. You married me two weeks ago, and now my presence is irksome to you, and you go. I am not jealous, but if you had married Florence, would you treat her so?"

"If I had married her," he sternly replied, his cheek flushing with anger, "I should not at least have been cheated into it."

Dora felt tried, judged, and condemned, everything which a human being can feel in the way of condemnation, as he said this. Duty would bring him back to her, but love was over. She had no hope to win that back, bnt she made a desperate effort to save her honour.

"Mr. Templemore," she said, "your wrong is great; but so is mine. I am a proud woman! Then imagine if you can my shame and my humiliation. Your gifts, your caresses, your tenderness can only sting me, now that I know treachery and fraud made them mine. I have said it already; I say it again—I would gladly die to give you back your liberty."

Her pale face was very fine; there was a light in her eyes, and a proud smile on her lips, which

went to her husband's very heart. The embers of love were there still, and it would have taken very little—a few caresses, a few fond words—to kindle the old flame anew, and subdue him. But Dora was a proud woman, as she said—one whom suspicion wronged, and she could not do that. Not to secure an eternity of love could she now have thrown her arms around the neck of the man on whom she had been forced, and who so plainly thought her an accomplice in the fraud. Some questions are not questions of will merely, but also of power, and the power to do that was wanting. Her coldness was fatal to her cause. Mr. Templemore could reconcile all she said with guilt, and though the thought of that guilt wrung and tortured him, he could not dismiss it. Had not her aunt declared it?—had not her mother betrayed it?—had not Florence asserted it? and did not his own judgment confirm it? Was it possible that such a plot could be carried on under her eyes for her benefit, and that, though warned from the beginning, she should never suspect it? Oh! that he could believe her to be so simple and so guileless! But he could not, and his agony spoke in the very tones of his voice as he said,

"Oh! Dora, Dora, how could you allow it?—how could you die so to your better self? I had such faith in you! If there was a being whom I respected, it was you; you seemed to me so pure, so stainless. I could have placed my honour in your keeping, and placed it blindfold. And oh! that you should have come to this! Would to heaven that all else had perished, and that I stood a ruined and penniless man, with Eva and you, so I still had that innocent wife, whom I looked at sleeping this morning!"

She could not bear this. Her pride melted before the sight of his grief. Looking up to Heaven, she said, passionately, "I am innocent!—oh! believe that I am innocent!—only believe that, and love her, if you like. Look at me, Mr. Templemore, and believe that I am innocent."

He looked at her as she asked, but he only read love and despair in her face; he did not see innocence there, but with a deep, sad sigh, he made one desperate effort for belief.

"Dora," he said, "I do not wish to wound or offend you, but tell me this: Is it true that when you came here for the first time, Mrs. Luan promised that you should become my wife?"

Dora felt the blow, but she replied, calmly,

"She predicted—she did not promise it."

Her lips quivered as she uttered the words. He pitied her, and made no comment upon them.

"Is it true," he continued, "that when Florence asked you what had taken me to you that night, you refused to reply?"

"It is true," she answered, and she smiled rather proudly.

There was a pause, then he said, gently,

"Good-bye, Dora."

As he uttered the word, the smile passed from her face, as sunshine passes from the sky. Her eyes darkened in the intensity of their gaze; her lips turned white, and her features grew rigid as stone or death. From head to foot she shook like an aspen leaf in a strong wind, but she looked bravely in his face. The storm that might rend her asunder should not, at least, conquer her.

"Then you are going?" she said—"on such testimony you condemn me! I am a schemer and a plotter in your eyes—a woman who will do anything to win a husband! Did I ever seek you, Mr. Templemore?—was I forward or alluring?"

"No," he said, with sudden energy. "If ever a girl was free from that vice, you were. If ever I saw modesty in woman, it was in you."

"That much justice you do me," she said, and her lip quivered a little as she spoke; "but perhaps you think me mercenary—perhaps you think that, being a poor girl, I must needs covet being a rich man's wife, Mr. Templemore? Mr. Templemore," she said, the tears rushing to her eyes, and her voice broken by the weeping she could not check, "I know a poor girl who met a poor man, or one who seemed such, and who liked him though he looked a man of broken fortunes. I know a poor girl who thought that, if he liked her too, it would be pleasant to lead a life of toil and poverty with him, and whose heart ached sorely on the day that proved him wealthy. That girl——" She could not go on; she buried her face in her hands, and when she looked up, she was in her husband's arms, and his eyes were dim. "No, you must not kiss me," she said, turning her head away; "I will not be caressed if I cannot be loved, and I will not be loved if I am not honoured. I am a proud woman, Mr. Templemore, and I warned you not to take me. I did

not want to marry you—it frightened me—I ran away from you, and you followed, and persuaded me, and now I am your wife. If heaven and earth were to tell me that you had broken your honour, would I believe them? Then, as I trust you, so must you trust me—so must you think me incapable of a falsehood, implied or spoken. You must trust me even though every voice should condemn me—do you?"

She turned upon him suddenly, with a flush on her cheek and a light in her eyes, that made him feel both dazzled and bewitched. He had never loved her more than at that moment. He could not resist her—he felt subdued and won over. With tears and caresses he said he loved her—that he believed in her; in her his wife dear, honoured, and beloved.

"And you will not go?" said Dora, smiling through her tears.

Go! he had forgotten all about going—all about doubt and estrangement. He was her lover once more—her fond, enamoured lover, and what could part them? But there are many jealous recesses in a woman's heart. This sudden return of tenderness was not what Dora wanted—for this, per-

haps, she had never lost. She gently moved away from Mr. Templemore's side; she put her two hands on his shoulders, and looked up in his face. Never had he seen that piercing glance in her soft bright eyes.

"Mr. Templemore," she said, "give me your word of honour that there is not a doubt left on your mind against me."

Honour! there is something strangely solemn in the word. It is more than a mere appeal to truth, and sacred though that be, it is more than truth. Honour! it is the pure stream from which some of our noblest virtues spring—it is the grace of manhood. It is what neither man nor woman can sully or taint in vain. We can sin, repent, and be forgiven; but, upon earth, at least, a lost honour can never be restored. Mr. Templemore would have given anything to be able to comply with his wife's request. Some of the words she had spoken had stirred the very depths of his heart. He would have given her anything—done anything to please her but this. And this he could not—he could not. He could not give her his word of honour that no shadow of doubt remained on his mind against her.

"Dora," he said, "is not all this over?"

"Yes," she replied vaguely; "it is."

She had seen and read his troubled face, and she could read, too, the very tones of his voice, so fond, and yet so hesitating.

"Dora," he said, "have pity on me. I believe in you; I know you are innocent and good."

"But you cannot give me your word of honour!" she said.

He took a few turns in the room. He felt dreadfully agitated.

"Have pity on me," he said again, coming back to her. "You would despise me if I could utter the shadow of a lie to please you."

"Yes, I should," she replied calmly. She did not reproach him—she did not even look at him; but Mr. Templemore felt that a wall of ice had risen between him and his wife. He could better forgive the sin than she could forgive the doubt.

He looked at her very moodily.

"I see I must go after all," he said bitterly.

"I suppose so," she replied apathetically.

"I shall soon return," he continued, looking at her; but she did not answer.

And so they must part! These two, who had

but a while back had been clasped in so fond an embrace, must part. One had split on the rock of pride, and the other was lost in shoals of doubt, and the waves of life must, for a time, at least, flow between them. The bond of love was strong still—strong and fervent; but the nobler bond of faith was broken.

"Yes, I must go," he said desperately; "it is best."

Dora had not believed she could suffer so much. She had been married two weeks—not three—and he left her either because her presence was an infliction he could not bear, or because the conviction of her guilt was one he could not conquer. All wish of justification died within her. She felt turned to stone. He might go, he might stay; not another protest of innocence could now pass her lips.

"Good-bye," he said again, and he kissed her; alas! how coldly now, and he left her.

"He will go soon," she thought; and having locked herself in, she went to the window, and stood there waiting. She looked down the road. How often had she watched for his return when he had no thought of her! She remembered how

he and Florence had once entered the house together. She remembered how her laughing face was raised to his, and how their two sunlit figures dazzled her with their brightness. The jealous thrill that shot through her as she looked at them, the flush of pain which rose to her face as she turned away from the sight, and Eva's wondering, "Oh! how red you are, Cousin Dora!" She remembered them every one, and thinking of all she had suffered for the sake of that man, and how she was requited, she passionately wished that she had never been born.

No one came near her. Solitary was her bitter hour. Its keenest pang was soon over. She heard the carriage-wheels grinding on the gravel, she saw it going down the steep road. She sank on her knees and looked at it through blinding tears, and when it had vanished she remained there still weeping, how long she knew not.

When Dora rose, at length, her heart felt changed within her—a bitterness, a resentment were there which even his accusation had not wakened. "Deserted," she thought, "betrayed, wronged, and cast away at the end of two weeks!"

CHAPTER VIII.

IT was thus Mrs. Luan kept her promise of making Dora Mr. Templemore's wife; but her boon had been fatal—like that of the evil spirit in the legend, it had turned into calamity, and only led to the deepest woe. Mr. Templemore was gone; he had left his wife. Whether in doubt or in weariness, in coldness of heart or in aversion, for howsoever short or how long a time, he had left her. It was best, no doubt, not to pass from such fervid affection to the desolation of coldness and doubt; it was best, but, oh! how dreary!

"And Miss Moore and Eva are gone too, and they have taken away Fido," indignantly exclaimed Mrs. Courtenay.

Dora smiled bitterly. The dog too! And the child had not so much as bid her good-bye. She was an outcast in her husband's house. But she did not complain. She felt wrecked on a shore which no joy could reach, and no murmur passed

her lips. It was so useless to repine. "I suppose it is all right, after all," thought Mrs. Courtenay, seeing her so calm; and when they met that evening in the garden, whither Dora had wandered to seek that peace which came not, Mrs. Courtenay's mind was full of another theme.

"Dora," she said, mysteriously, "I met Mrs. Luan here awhile back. What ails her? How came she to leave John?"

"I don't know," apathetically replied Dora. "What should ail her?"

"Why did she creep along that avenue, Dora? And, when she saw me, why did she smile, and look as cunning as a fox?"

Dora put her hand on her mother's arm and looked at her. Each saw what the other meant, and Dora at length said it in covered speech.

"If she be so," she said, "she has been so years."

"But surely—surely," gasped Mrs. Courtenay, "Mr. Templemore would have seen it."

"Has John seen it? I gave him a hint once, and he received it with scorn. No, Mr. Templemore could not see it. She was never the same when he was by—never. Everything was against me—everything."

"But, Dora, what are we to do?" asked Mrs. Courtenay, looking frightened. "What are we to do?"

"Nothing," said Dora.

"I wish Mr. Templemore were here," said Mrs. Courtenay, looking wistfully at her daughter.

Dora could not answer this. Even her mother felt how desolate they were without him—how his presence would have brought security with it, how his absence meant uneasiness and dread.

"The first time he took me in his arms," thought Dora, "I felt, 'Now have I found a refuge against every ill man can inflict, now God's hand alone can reach me here!' That was on our wedding-day—not a month back—and now where is he?—where am I?"

"Dora!" cried Mrs. Courtenay, for Dora's tears were flowing.

"I did not know I was crying," she said, trying to smile. "Do not mind it, mamma."

"I am afraid it is not all right," began Mrs. Courtenay, hesitatingly.

"Hush!" whispered Dora. "Look at aunt!"

She did not see them. She was going down an avenue, peeping first on one side then on the

other, evidently seeking something or some one.

"Why has she left John?" asked Mrs. Courtenay.

"I don't know," replied Dora, with a wearied sigh.

At that moment Mrs. Luan turned round and saw them. She immediately came towards them with a cheerful aspect.

"John is so well," she said, "that I have come out for a walk."

Her manner was calm and composed. Dora looked at her, and thought bitterly: "Mad! she is not mad; but she hated me with a deadly hate, for John's sake."

They entered the house together. Dora neither looked at nor spoke to her aunt, and Mrs. Courtenay whispered confidentially, as Mrs. Luan left them to go back to John,

"I daresay she is all right after all."

The two ladies retired early; but Dora did not retire in order to sleep. She long stood on the balcony of her room, looking at the sky, black and starless, and when she came in she did not go to bed at once. She sat by her toilet-table, undid her hair, and looked at herself in the glass. It already seemed so long ago since the sad face she

saw there had had so bright a story. Was this indeed the beggar-maid, the girl with grey eyes, and hair of brown gold, whom King Cophetua loved? Was such a change possible—was it credible? "I know he will come back," thought Dora; "but that is not it. I do not want Mr. Templemore, I want my husband, and something tells me that I shall find him no more. If he could forgive—I cannot. And yet, who knows? If he should come back as he said he would—if sitting thus I were to see the door open—"

She paused in her thoughts. The door was opening—she did not hear it, so softly did it move on its hinges—it was known later that they had been oiled—but a wax light burned on her toilet-table, and its pale gleam reflected in the glass showed her, though dimly, every corner of the vast room. Thus she saw the door open—her heart beat—could it be her husband?—no, it was Mrs. Luan's head she saw in the aperture. A sudden and deadly fear paralyzed Dora. Her heart beat no longer, her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth, she was voiceless and motionless. The door continued to open, Mrs. Luan stepped in, but no velvety-footed creature could have made less

noise than she did. Swiftly she shut the door behind her, and, as Dora, who had not stirred, saw distinctly, she bolted it. "She has come to murder me!" thought Dora. She did not look round, she did not cry, but as Mrs. Luan slowly crept towards her with the serpentine motion of a feline beast, she suddenly blew out the light, and stepping round the toilet-table, was out on the balcony in a moment.

A baffled cry of rage burst from the mad woman when she thus suddenly found herself in the darkness of the vast room. She groped about for Dora, shrieking in her frenzy; and Dora, standing on the balcony, never moved, never spoke, never by the slightest motion gave her enemy the least clue to the spot where she stood sheltered by the darkness of the night.

But Mrs. Luan's screams had roused the house. Dora heard exclamations of alarm in the garden, on the staircase, but she also heard her aunt saying, "I shall get you!—I shall get you!—you are out on the balcony!—I shall get you!"

She heard her groping near the toilet-table—within a few paces of her—she felt the window move, and still she had self-command enough to

keep in the wild scream of terror which nearly passed her lips. Meanwhile the sounds of help came nearer, they gathered round her door, it was tried, shaken violently, then burst open. Mrs. Courtenay and the servants rushed in, and with them came a flood of light. Pale as death, but still calm, Dora stepped out from her hiding-place, and standing with the crimson window-curtains behind her, she said, pointing to Mrs. Luan, who crouched and cowered in a corner of the room, "She has gone mad!—take care!—she wanted to murder me!"

There was a pause of wonder, of fear, and doubt; then the men approached the mad woman. The struggle was violent, but brief and silent. Neither Mrs. Luan nor the men who tried to master her uttered one word. In a few moments they had succeeded, and Mrs. Luan, firmly bound, sat silent and sullen in Dora's chair. Dora stood and looked at her, and as she looked, she could hear John laughing upstairs. That fierce, wild creature, as dangerous as a wild beast, and as fell in its instincts, was the mother who had borne John Luan, reared him, and loved him with such passionate tenderness, that it had helped to make her what Dora saw. As she stood thus gazing at

her moody aunt, with the dishevelled hair falling around her sullen face, Mrs. Templemore heard a voice near her saying, "Please, ma'am, here is a letter Mr. Templemore left for you. Jacques was to give it, but forgot it."

Dora started, and waking from her dream, she saw Fanny. With a trembling hand she took her husband's letter and broke the seal. A bundle of silk notes fell out, and fluttered on the floor; but Dora did not heed them. With feverish eagerness she read the first letter Mr. Templemore had written to her since their marriage. It was brief, cold, but strictly courteous. Mr. Templemore placed a large sum at his wife's disposal, and informed her that he should expect to find her alone on his return to Les Roches. Dora turned very pale. Money and her mother's banishment!—this was her sentence. He had gone to seek his pleasure, and place his child in safety, and he had left her at the mercy of whatever sorrow or evil chance might come in his absence. Was this what he had promised on their wedding-day? Fanny had picked up the notes, and she handed them to her mistress, but even as she put them back in the envelope Dora felt that her re-

solve was taken. "I will die before I eat his bread or live on his money," she thought.

Mrs. Luan now spoke for the first time.

"I have made a lady of you," she said—"I have made a lady of you, Dora."

"You have," answered her niece, looking at the madwoman with a passion of grief she could not control—"you have, and I know the cost."

Even as she said it, John laughed again in his room. He, too, had paid the price of Dora's elevation to the rank of Mr. Templemore's wife.

"Oh! Dora, Dora," pitifully exclaimed Mrs. Courtenay, "what does it all mean?"

Dora looked at her and smiled—oh! how sadly! —how drearily!

CHAPTER IX.

WE may decree a thing in the first bitterness of our resentment, and Providence may so far favour us, that we shall not be able to fulfil our angry desire; but it was not so with Mr. Templemore's wife. The day after he had left Les Roches, Dora received a letter from Mr. Ryan enclosing a cheque for fifty pounds. The shares of the Redmore Mines had turned from so much waste paper to gold, and Mr. Ryan, in the exuberance of his joy, wrote to Miss Courtenay, advancing a sum which he considered that she might need. That she had left Les Roches, and gone back to Madame Bertrand's, he knew, but happiness is selfish, and Dora had forgotten to tell him of her marriage.

"People should send cards," very sensibly remarked Mrs. Courtenay.

She said this by John's sick-bed, where a nurse had now taken Mrs. Luan's place. The young

man's case had been pronounced desperate, and for his sake Dora had resolved to wait till all was over. But neither was that to be. The peril which had cost her so dear passed away. John's life hung on a thread for a few days, then youth and strength prevailed, and he came back to life, and, alas! too, to grief. He bore his sorrow manfully, but the place where he had suffered so terribly was hateful to him. He would not wait till his recovery was final to leave Les Roches, and Dora did not detain him. The sooner all was over the better it would be.

Mrs. Courtenay had been very unwell since the terrible evening on which her sister-in-law's insanity had broken out, and Dora went no further than the gate of Les Roches with her cousin. There they parted. He was going to resume a life of labour shorn of every hope which had once made it dear, and he looked at her in sad silence.

Mrs. Courtenay's querulous complaints that Mr. Templemore did not write, had told John a sad story, which Dora's pale face now completed. He knew nothing of the circumstances which had attended her marriage, nothing of the causes which had estranged her husband, nor of his own connec-

tion with her grief; but that grief he saw, and when she stood so wan and languid before him, he looked at her with sullen and jealous sorrow. Who was that cold husband, that Dora should love him thus? What right had that stranger, that man whom she had detested years, the successful rival who had laid Paul Courtenay in his grave, thus to go robbing other men, snatching the sweet prizes of life from them—then casting them away so ruthlessly? For a moment John Luan was his mother's son; if a thought, a wish of his could have annihilated Mr. Templemore, Dora's husband would have ceased to exist. What! had he lost her for this? Was the girl whom he had loved years, about whom he had dreamed so fondly, whose loss had brought him to death's door, was she to be treated like a cast-off mistress by the man who had deprived him of all joy? "If I could kill him I would!" thought John Luan, setting his teeth. Yes, he would gladly have murdered Mr. Templemore just then, and, of course, have married his widow.

It is well that a man's feelings are not always spoken; it is well, too, that the thoughts and wishes

which enter his heart when he has left the door open to the tempting devil who comes to all in such evil hours—it is well, we say, that these abide not, unless with the dangerous and the bad. John Luan was neither. But neither was he very good, for good-nature is not goodness. He could be sullen and revengeful when he thought himself wronged, and from that hour he hated Mr. Templemore, whom he had not loved before.

Something of this Dora saw, for she thought: "Yes, John, the living husband has avenged the dead brother on the faithless sister;" but all she said, as she looked down the road was,

"I envy you—I envy you, John Luan. Your cares are heavy, your sorrows are cruel, and you are alone, and yet I envy you. You can go forth and strive. You can go forth and conquer, perhaps."

"Conquer what?" he asked, moodily.

"What you need, John—forgetfulness."

With what passionate longing she looked down that white road which wound away to the busy city below. If it had led to that ancient world of the poets, that world where Lethe flowed, her gaze could scarcely have been less intent and yearning than it was. It could scarcely have taken less

heed than it did of him. He saw and felt it.

"I must go," he said, a little hurriedly. "Good-bye, Dora."

"Good-bye," she replied, listlessly.

She gave him her cold hand. He might go, he might stay—John felt it changed nothing in her life. He walked down the road, followed by the servant who carried the carpet-bag, and he never looked back. Yet Dora long watched him. Even when he was out of sight she stood there envying him. He might go away and strive, as she had said, and forget. "If I could but forget," she thought, as she at length turned away. "Oh! if I but could!" Her heart beat—her whole being trembled. "Forget!" she thought. "Oh! God, forbid that I should ever forget!"

And she was right. There is something both passionate and sweet in the memory of lost happiness. It is one of the few sorrows to which we cling. Proserpina never forgot, we are told, the flowers which she was gathering in the plains of Enna, when the dark king bore her away. If he had taken her to Olympus itself, and not to Hades, she could not have forgotten them. Never again should there have been such perfumed violets and

anemones so fair. Goddess though she was, and immortal, she, too, had a youth, and looked back with vain yearning to its golden gates closed for ever. Time could not wither, age could not fade her beauty, but something there had been for her, something which there could be no more. But to remember is not to forgive, unfortunately, and though there was a smile on Dora's lips when she went back to her mother, there was also a settled resolve in her heart. She found Mrs. Courtenay much depressed.

"I cannot get over it," she said plaintively, in answer to her daughter's question. "Poor Mrs. Luan! I miss her so, Dora. And then Mr. Templemore stays away so long."

Dora did not answer at once. She sat with her look fixed moodily on empty space. The walls with their pictures, the brown and grave furniture of her mother's room, the window and the landscape it framed, had vanished from her view. She saw a sea-beaten shore, a rocky coast, a low village straggling along the beach, and there she made a refuge and a home, far away from Mr. Templemore's house and his money.

"Mamma," she said suddenly, looking up at

her mother, "you want a change, and you must take one."

"Of course I want a change," said Mrs. Courtenay a little peevishly; "and if, instead of running away, Mr. Templemore had stayed here, he could have taken us somewhere."

Never was unconsciousness of the offence of her presence more complete than Mrs. Courtenay's.

"Mr. Templemore is enjoying himself in London, I daresay," replied Dora; "and London would not do for us, mamma. You want rest and quietness, after the shock you have had. Why should we not go to Ireland?"

"My dear!" cried Mrs. Courtenay, much startled, "what would your husband say to that?"

"Why should he say anything?" composedly replied Dora; "I have no reason to believe that he misses me just now. He will come and look for me when he wants me, mamma."

She spoke so calmly, with so little appearance of resentment, that her mother was deceived. She did not, indeed, yield an immediate assent to Dora's proposal; she hesitated and demurred, but Dora's quiet arguments conquered her resistance in the end. Little by little she gave way, and

finally she saw nothing that was not right or feasible about this expedition to the Irish coast.

"A child could cheat her," thought Dora, looking at her guileless little mother with tears in her eyes; "and it is this innocent being—my mother, too, for whom there is no room in Les Roches! It is she whom Mr. Templemore could believe an accomplice in a base plan to rob him of his liberty. If his heart had not already been turned from me, would my poor mad aunt's story have prevailed against us?"

It is dangerous to sting a woman's pride, and most dangerous of all when she loves. Indifference is a wonderful peacemaker, and there are few wounds it will not heal. Dora longed, though perhaps she did not know it, to pay Mr. Templemore back in coin, and to show him that she, too, could live without him. And yet she prepared but slowly for their departure, and lingered over the task; perhaps she had a secret hidden hope that her husband would return suddenly, and prevent her flight, but he did not. Slow though Dora was, everything was soon ready, and she said gaily to her mother one evening,

"We go by the first train, and I am so

glad; the change will do us a world of good."

"I hope so," answered Mrs. Courtenay rather languidly.

"I am sure of it," said Dora, still cheerful; and she went out for a lonely walk, but looking "as bright as sunshine," thought Mrs. Courtenay. The evening was fair and still. A dewy freshness was falling on the garden. Never, it seemed to Dora, had its flowers sent forth a fragrance so penetrating. She bent to gather some, then turned away, leaving them on their stems. "Stay here," she thought—"stay and blow and wither here. If I leave this place, what have I to do with you?"

She entered the shady grounds. How cool, how fresh, how mysterious they looked—but how sad, too, was their loneliness! In these alleys Eva's loud joyous laugh had rung. On that old bench Mr. Templemore and Florence had sat and talked of love. Dora stood before it, looking at it as moodily as if it were an altar on which her youth had been laid and sacrificed by some pitiless Calchas.

"Why did I ever come between them?" she thought; "why did he ever seek me? The sordid

cares of life would have saved me from love. I daresay I would have married John Luan in the end—out of very weariness, as so many girls do marry. And I would have read novels, and wondered at that happy love-match one reads of so much and sees so seldom, and my life would have been as a quiet dream. And now it is all woe and bitterness. I am as a usurper who cannot abdicate. I cannot set him free—and he cannot love me. For a few days he was bewitched; something was on him which looked like love, but was not it; and now that something has left me, and his heart has gone back to her. And I must either see it and suffer agonies, or leave him, as I do—and suffer still. Never again can I be happy—never, and I am not twenty-five! Paul—Paul—my brother, why did I forget you!"

She sank on her knees on the damp earth, and laid her fevered cheek on the stone bench. She could not weep, but she let the flood of bitter thought rise and overwhelm her; and when remembrance returned, and she left the past and its dead for the present and the living, she was shivering, and the chillness of the spot and the hour seemed to have reached her very heart. She

went back to the house and entered it, but she did not go to her mother's apartment. She took a light and went over every room that had once been dear and familiar to her. "After all, I could stay," she thought, "and he would come back. I could stay, but I will not; and when he returns, he shall find that solitude he went so far to seek. No more need he leave his home to shun me."

Dora was standing in the school-room as she came to this bitter conclusion. Eva's globes, her books, her piano were there, and Dora's own chair by the window. Some pleasant and some severe visions haunted this apartment. She had been very happy here, but here too she had suffered keenly. Well, both that joy and that sorrow were over now. She had entered a dull, cold world, where neither abided, where all was shade and endurance. "I will write to him here," thought Dora. She sat down, and taking up the pen which had so often corrected Eva's exercises, and lay there unused, she wrote to Eva's father. She did not complain, she did not reproach, but she refused to accept the fate he laid upon her. It was a proud, cold letter, but it was also, though Dora did not think so, the letter of a woman who still loved

the husband whose house she was leaving. It lay before her, and leaning back in her chair, she looked at it, thinking, "This is my first letter to him. I wonder what love-letters are like, and how they feel who write or read them?" She wondered too how he would feel when this letter was placed in his hands. Would he seek and follow her, fond and repentant? Would he come and claim his wife, angry and authoritative, or would he simply leave her in scornful silence? "I could burn it and stay," she thought; "nothing compels me to go—nothing. It is time yet, and to-morrow it will be too late." But what avails time when we will not take that inestimable boon? Nine times out of ten that Fate, of whom we speak with mysterious dread, lies in our hand, and is the servant of our own will. "He left me," thought Dora; "days and weeks have passed, and he has not written, not made a sign—I do not know where he is—I do not even know the abode of his child. His last act was to signify my mother's exile, and to give me money."

She rose as this stinging thought came to her, she went up to her room, she took out the bank-notes from her desk; she enclosed them with her

letter, sealed the packet, then rang for Fanny.

"We leave early to-morrow morning," she said, trying to speak calmly; "Mr. Templemore will soon return. It is not worth while sending this by post—you will give it to him when he comes back, Fanny."

The girl held out her hand, and mechanically Dora gave her the packet; but, after a few moments' pause, she took it back, and put it in the drawer. "You will find it there to-morrow," she said.

"Very well, ma'am," replied Fanny. She looked as unconscious as she well could look, but she had felt the soft, limp notes through the envelope, and she knew the meaning of Dora's journey.

"He may follow me if he chooses," thought Dora; "but never unless he seeks for me shall I enter the house where he left me after we had been married a fortnight. The sin, if sin there be, lies with him, and not with me."

CHAPTER X.

THE long sleepless night was over. A dull grey light told of coming dawn when Dora rose and dressed. It was too early, and she knew it, but she was wearied of her own restlessness, and it seemed as if motion alone would calm the fever within her. Besides, she wanted to go to Rouen before leaving Les Roches with her mother.

The porter at the lodge was taking what he called his morning nap when the voice of his young mistress unexpectedly roused him by requesting the iron gate to be opened. The porter's conclusion was that he was dreaming, and that this was not his morning nap but his midnight sleep, and he made no attempt to stir; but Dora's voice rose higher, and by knocking at his door she convinced the porter that he was not asleep and dreaming, but that Mr. Templemore's wife wanted to leave Les Roches. So he rose wondering, and let her out, and looked after her as she glided

down the grey road where the light of morning was gradually stealing, wakening the tall trees from their long, calm sleep, and giving a token to the closed daisies in the dewy grass that the sun was coming fast.

Swiftly and with a sort of longing Dora went on till she reached her old home and Madame Bertrand's house. Madame Bertrand was in the act of opening her shutters, and she still wore the cotton handkerchief around her head, preliminary to the donning of the close white cap by which it was to be succeeded. She smiled brightly and nodded cheerfully on seeing Dora.

"Good morning, Mademoiselle—Madame, I mean," she added, correcting herself, "for I have been told you are Madame now, the wife of Doctor Richard."

Dora stood like one transfixed. The wife of Doctor Richard! How much happiness had once seemed comprised in these words; and now what was their meaning?

"Will you not come in?" asked Madame Bertrand, still bright and cheerful; and as Dora nodded consent, she came and opened the door to her with a look that had a world of knowing and

shrewd congratulation in it. Dora soon recovered herself, and tried to look like a happy bride.

"I have come to bid you good-bye, Madame Bertrand," she said; "we are leaving Les Roches, and as I do not know when we shall return, I would not go without seeing you once more."

Madame Bertrand was very grateful, and made a few inquiries which showed that she concluded Mr. Templemore to be bent on the same journey with his wife. Dora did not undeceive her, there was no need to do so, but after a brief pause she said,

"I see your rooms are not let. Will you let me see them again? I always intended drawing the view from my room window, but I never did; I fancy that if I look at it now I can make a sketch of it."

Madame Bertrand felt delighted and flattered at the request. She always had said the view from Mademoiselle's room was a pretty view, but a Parisian family who had looked at the apartment yesterday had declared it was *triste*, and enough to give one the spleen, and had gone to live near the Rue de l'Impératrice, which was so glaring that it was enough to dazzle one's eyes out, in Madame Bertrand's opinion.

Thus she chattered as she went upstairs with Dora, but luckily she did not stay. The baker and the milkman summoned her below. Her sabots clattered down the staircase, and Dora was alone in her old room. Madame Bertrand had opened the window; the sun was up now, the outlines of the grey old church were cut on a blue sky, and though its body was still in shadow the flowers that grew in the buttresses stirred gently in the little wind that came from the river, and had an air of young, bright morning life about them. How gay they looked on that carved stony background, from which centuries had taken away its first hardness, giving instead a tender though massive grace. How pure and transparent was the green of the vine leaves through which the fresh morning breeze was playing, as if to toy thus with nature's beautiful things were the end of its being, and how everything she saw seemed to Dora to be telling her again the story of her lost happiness! She stood and looked with a beating heart. Her hand was idle, no pencil traced that view on paper, and yet she was drawing it all the time—drawing it in outlines which man's hand could never efface, in colours which time could not fade, on a poor, frail

mortal tablet, indeed, but one which would last as long as her own being.

"Doctor Richard's wife," she thought, turning away as she remembered how she had sat waiting, watching and dreaming too, by that window. "Yes, thus it might have been well; but I am like you, Griselidis, I too have been taken from low estate, and I too must pay the cost, for the full price is not told yet; but oh! how bitter these first instalments have been!" She lowered her veil and went downstaire hastily.

"Good-bye, Madame Bertrand," she said—"good-bye. God bless you!"

Madame Bertrand looked for the drawing; she uttered an exclamation. She wanted to see it, also to send her respectful compliments to Madame Courtenay, but Dora was gone. Swiftly though she went away, however, Madame Bertrand had seen tears glistening on her cheeks through her veil.

"The dear young creature!" she said, when mentioning the fact of Dora's visit to one of her gossips. "She was so affected at parting from me, that she wept. But all my lodgers doted on me, excepting Monsieur Theodore."

Another errand, besides the wish of seeing Madame Bertrand, once more had brought Dora to Rouen; but this was soon fulfilled, and Mrs. Courtenay had only finished dressing when her daughter entered her room.

"My dear, where have you been?" said Mrs. Courtenay. "Fanny told me you were out—I got quite uneasy."

"I went to order a carriage," replied Dora, calmly; then, seeing her mother's amazed look, she added: "you know how particular Mr. Templemore is about his horses. I cannot say what the coachman would do, once he had put us down at the station."

Mrs. Courtenay supposed her daughter was right, but it was plain that, as the hour for leaving Les Roches drew nigh, she felt bewildered and perplexed. Dora looked very cheerful, though she also looked very white. She was lively and talkative, but she ate no breakfast; yet Mrs. Courtenay was lulled to sleep, and she innocently said, as she looked out at the garden from the breakfast-table,

"I like going, because I like a change; but do you know, Dora, I shall also like coming back to

Les Roches? It looks so bright and gay this morning."

A strange expression passed across Dora's pale face, but she sat with her back to the light, and Mrs. Courtenay's sight was not very good, so the meaning, which a person of keener mental and physical vision than she was might have read there, escaped her. Jacques came, with the intimation that the carriage had arrived, breakfast was over, and it was time to go. Dora went up to her room to put on her bonnet, also to give the letter, which had lain in the drawer all night, into Fanny's hand. The girl noticed how cold and pale her mistress looked, also how her little, nervous hand shook; but well-bred servants have eyes, and see not, and nothing in her pretty, stolid face betrayed that she had guessed Mrs. Templemore's secret.

This was the end of the long, bitter struggle. It expired with the last pang. What remained to be gone through was mere mechanical endurance. Dora went down to her mother; they entered the carriage, it wheeled round the gravel path, passed through the gates, then went down the road at a rapid pace. The trees, the hedges, the villas on

either side rushed past them. Children in gardens, servants at bedroom windows, were seen, then vanished. The cool streets of Rouen were entered. Sunshine stole down the roofs of houses, lit up dark alleys, and poured in full broad radiance on church fronts, rich with carving.

"That is Saint Ouen," said Mrs. Courtenay, looking out of the carriage window. But Dora leaned back and closed her eyes. She would not see the entrance to the Gallery. She had gone through sufficient bitterness that morning, and needed no more.

The rest was nothing. It was merely getting into a railway carriage, and being conveyed through a green landscape, which Dora's eyes saw not, whilst Mrs. Courtenay made pretty childish remarks, or uttered little screams of wonder, which her daughter did not hear. Both speech and exclamations ceased rather suddenly, and Dora did not miss them. She was again going through that meeting in the parlour at Kensington, when, reading sudden and unexpected love in Mr. Templemore's eyes, she had placed her hand in his. Had she been all deceived, then? Surely he had cheated himself before he had thus con-

vinced her, and led to their mutual loss and betrayal. But even if it had been so—even if he had loved her for a few hours—what mattered it now? Was not every second of time separating them, and had she not herself done it, and did she repent it?

Dora roused herself, and compressed her lips, and kept in the quick, troubled breath that would come with that vain yearning towards a broken past. The tame, common-place parlour, the trees, the grey twilight, all faded away, and the bright green landscape, and the railway carriage, and her mother's presence came back. Suddenly she uttered a sort of cry.

"Mamma! mamma!" she said, seizing Mrs. Courtenay's hand, "what is it?—what ails you?"

"I—I am not very well," faintly said Mrs. Courtenay.

The change in her countenance was so striking and ominous, that a cold terror struck on Dora's heart. This was no trifling ailment, no passing weakness or fainting fit.

"Mamma," she cried, her voice rising with sudden anguish, "mamma, do tell me what ails you?"

"I—I don't know," stammered Mrs. Courtenay. "I felt very strange all night—but I thought it would go."

She leaned her forehead on her hand and seemed unable to say more. They were alone in the carriage.

"We shall alight at the next station," said Dora.

Mrs. Courtenay did not answer. Her countenance was vacant, and the hand which Dora held was cold and clammy. How drearily slow felt the motion of the train, yet it soon slackened its speed and stopped at a branch station. The line here passed through a green park, at the end of which Dora could see the closed windows of an old château; no other dwelling was visible, yet Dora remembered the place at once. She alighted, put a few questions, and learned that they were, as she thought, within a quarter of a mile of that village inn where they had once dined with Mr. Templemore. Mrs. Courtenay was helped down, and a messenger was despatched to the "White Horse" for a vehicle; it came, after a brief delay. Mrs. Courtenay was lifted up into it, and they drove slowly through a green, happy landscape, that made Dora's heart ache. Yet her mother was no worse

when they reached the "White Horse." She even said she felt better.

"The doctor is waiting," said the landlady, coming out to receive them.

Nothing was changed about the old place, and this homely woman's face was not altered. Time had told her no sad story, her bright blue eyes and ruddy cheeks spoke of unbroken content and steadfast cheerfulness. That gulf which existed between Mr. Templemore's wife and her lost happiness had all been smooth level ground to her. Small cares and daily tasks had filled those days which Dora had found so dreary and so eventful. But she had no time to linger over these thoughts; her mother was conveyed to the best room of the house—she remembered it too—and there they found Doctor Gentil, a brown old man, a real village doctor, rather rough of aspect, but kindly in manner. He put a few questions to Mrs. Courtenay, wrote a prescription, and left, saying he would call in the afternoon. Dora followed him out.

"Is it a serious case?" she asked, in a low tone.

He read her face. It was pale but brave.

"Very serious," he replied, gravely, "but not hopeless."

"Not hopeless!" The words seemed to stun Dora; but she rallied at once, and returned to her mother with a smiling face.

"We shall have to stay here a few days," she said.

"I suppose so," vacantly replied Mrs. Courtenay. "Yet I feel better—only so strange, quite stupid."

Dora looked at her silently. She had never before seen Mrs. Courtenay with that pinched face and those sunken eyes.

"I do believe I could not make out a patience," resumed Mrs. Courtenay; then she added, with sudden liveliness: "Did you bring the cards?"

"If I did not we can buy some, mamma."

"Buy!—why buy? Why not use our own?" But she could not follow out this train of thought. It proved too much for her, and she shook her head rather drearily. "It is no use," she said. "I am getting stupid."

In the afternoon Doctor Gentil came again. He found Mrs. Courtenay neither better nor worse, and still he said, "It was a serious case, but not hopeless." Two wearisome, anxious days passed thus. On the third Mrs. Courtenay was slightly better, but also very restless, and towards evening

she insisted that her daughter should go out. Dora resisted, then yielded to please her.

"You want fresh air, you know," said her mother, "and that good old soul, the landlady, will stay with me. You know I like old people."

Dora went, but her heart still felt heavy and sad as she walked up a green, winding path that led to the church. Her mother was not out of danger, and she feared the worst. It seemed as if some terrible doom weighed upon her, and as if every step she took in life only helped to work out its fulfilment. The strong wind of calamity, division, and impending death was sweeping everything and everyone from her side. A little more, and she would stand alone, with the great desert of life around her.

It might have been better for Dora's nature if her lot had not been so hard a one just then. We are not always the wiser for sorrow, for we do not always know how to receive that severe chastener, grief; and there was too much resentment, not against Providence, but against one of its human instruments, in the heart of Mr. Templemore's wife. She could not forgive her husband. He had left her for a few days only, but

these had been calamitous as years, and by giving her no clue to his whereabouts, he had signified very plainly that he wanted to forget as well as to leave his wife. "Be it so," she thought; "it is his act, not mine—the separation, the forgetfulness, shall be as deep as ever he can have wished them to be."

She was walking with her eyes bent as she thought thus. She looked up as the path widened. The village was far behind her, and before her stood the little grey church, with its churchyard around it. "I have been here once before," thought Dora, with a pang, "and shall I soon come here again?" Yet she could not resist the bitter temptation of surveying the spot that might soon be her mother's last home. A few graves were scattered within the narrow space which a low wall enclosed around the ancient edifice. Through the open door Dora could see the altar, and above it a richly-painted glass window. Purple hues, with bright streaks of ruby and emerald, fell on the white altar-cloth, and on the cold stone floor. But not a soul was visible. No old woman had gone in to say her prayers; no lingering urchin had strayed in to loiter away time. Equally silent

and lonely was the little churchyard. Tall trees rose everywhere around it, making a background of green gloom, and shutting out from the dead the friendly aspect of human dwellings. But to Dora, in that dark hour, it seemed well that it should be so. Such a mound of red earth as that of a new-made grave, which her eye fell upon, might soon hold, if not all that had been dear, all at least that now faithfully loved her. "One in Glasnevin and one here," she thought. "Oh! if I could but go down there with you, my poor darling—if, when he comes back, he could but learn that mother and child are lying in the same cold bed, he would be free at last—free and happy, who can doubt it?"

She could not weep, she could not pray—there are thoughts too bitter for tears, feelings too earthly to soar on the strong wing of prayer. She could only stand there looking at that grave, and brooding over a blank future. For a blank it must be. "Never, if I leave her here," thought Dora, "never shall he find me. I will vanish from his life, as she will have vanished from this earth. I will beg my bread, I will toil like a hireling before I go back to his house and live on his money."

Suddenly a keen, remorseful thought smote on this resentful mood. What was she doing here brooding over irreparable wrongs, when her mother might be dying? Eagerly, swiftly she retraced her steps. She hurried down the path, through the village, and she was breathless when she reached her mother's room. On seeing her, the landlady rose, and looking mysterious, made a sign. Dora followed her out. With many needless words the good woman informed Dora that an English lady, young and richly-dressed, had come to the inn in consequence of an accident on the line, but that on learning Mrs. Courtenay's presence and illness, she had looked alarmed and left hastily.

"She thought it was some contagious disease," said Dora.

"No, no, mademoiselle. I am sure she knew you," shrewdly answered the landlady; "I saw it in her face."

"You are mistaken," sadly said Dora; "no one knows me." And she went back to her mother.

"I am glad you came back," said Mrs. Courtenay; "I want to sleep, and I did not like to do so whilst you were away. Of course the poor old

thing is honest; but having all that money——"

"What money, mamma?"

"All those notes Mr. Templemore sent you."

Dora said nothing. Where was the use of enlightening and troubling her.

"And so I am glad you came back," resumed Mrs. Courtenay, "for I am very sleepy."

Dora smoothed her mother's pillow. Mrs. Courtenay's head sank back upon it with a luxurious sigh, and, saying languidly, "Oh! what a sweet sleep I am going to have," she closed her eyes and fell into a deep, calm slumber.

Dora looked at her in a sort of dream. Forth from the recesses of memory there came to her an Eastern saying which Doctor Richard had once told her— "It is better to sit than to stand; it is better to lie than to sit; and better to be dead than lying."

A fatalist first said this; and yet how it answers to a feeling within us—to a weariness, a languor, and craving for repose, which nothing mortal can content, and which goes forth to meet that something more than mortal, of which death holds the keys.

"My poor little mother!" thought Dora, look-

ing at her with dim eyes and quivering lips. "She is so innocent, so guileless, so childish, that if she were to pass away thus from life like a sleeping baby, I could feel no uneasiness, no fear—no more than if she were a child, indeed. And for her it would be well, but oh! for me—for me!"

She could not bear the thought. She rose and went to the window, and stood there. The summer beauty of the day was gone. Sullen clouds were gathering in the sky. A south-westerly wind bent the summits of a few tall trees that rose above the village. Dora knew them by the church spire which rose amongst them—these were the trees that overlooked the churchyard. The inn was very quiet; the village, indeed, looked lonely and almost deserted. There was a great fair in the neighbourhood, and the men and women had gone to it. A few old people and young children alone had remained behind. One house facing the inn attracted her attention by a group at the door. An old man and two children stood looking up the road. Presently the elder of the boys ran towards a man and a woman who walked slowly. They were heavily laden, and the woman looked footsore; but she put her hand in her pocket and

drew out something, which the boy flourished aloft like a prize till his brother came jealously forward to claim his share. Then they all mingled and entered the house together; and presently a bright fire sprang from the kitchen hearth; and through the open window Dora saw them all on the vivid background, and as she looked a feeling of great desolation fell upon her heart. She thought of her husband, of Eva, of the home she had left, of her mother, who might die in a village inn, and be buried with unknown dead in a village churchyard—and the bright happy picture before her was lost in tears.

The clouds broke into rain—soft summer rain, that would renew the drooping aspect of nature, and give it a more brilliant beauty; but the tears which Dora shed, as she thought over the bitterness of her lot, brought no relief to her full heart. For her there seemed no bright, no happy morrow in store—no renewal of love and joy. Nothing but a long sad darkness, deep and melancholy as that of the coming night.

CHAPTER XI.

IT might have softened the bitterness at Dora's heart, if she had known how keen an agony it was for her husband to doubt her, and leave her with that doubt upon him. He had told her, and told her truly, that the loss of Florence had been to him as the lopping of a limb; but to lose his wife thus was like death itself. Life and health do not perish because of the pangs of amputation, and Mr. Templemore, once the surgeon's knife had gone through him, had felt a sound and living man again. He would not, indeed, have chosen such a time to love and marry; but marriage having seemed compulsory to him, he had neither wished nor sought to avoid love. And love had come to him delightful and engrossing as a second spring. Dora had gifts which he had always appreciated, but which he prized keenly and very fondly when they became his. He liked her bright, youthful aspect, her warm heart, her joyous

laugh, and her fine clear mind. He admired her, he was tenderly proud of her, and he loved her with a passion as sudden as it was engrossing. She was his wife—his dear wife, linked to him by ties sweet, sacred, and indissoluble—linked to him for years, for life, and with no parting possible but the bitter inevitable parting of the grave.

And now this fervid dream was over. Love, honour, admiration were dead. It was over, and he left her stung and mortified with his wrong, ashamed and humbled at his mistake, and even at the gleam of passion which had survived it, and nearly betrayed him anew, and again made him her slave. He left her, angrily feeling that he must return to her some day—yes, this guilty wife, whom he had thought to go on loving less passionately, perhaps, as time passed, and youth fled, but not less truly, held him fast, and he must return to her. He was thrown on a life-long companionship, from which the soul of love had departed. Bitterness and indignation availed him nothing; he was Dora Courtenay's husband.

Passion is like a stormy sea. It has waves that rise high or fall back as with the breath of the tempest. If Dora had but known it, there had

been a moment when, innocent or guilty, she had prevailed—when a word, a look, a caress, would have kept Mr. Templemore for ever. But she had let him depart, and when the door of her room closed between them, his longing for faith, her charm, and her power had all vanished alike. She had allowed those full waters to go back to their fountain-head, and the doubt and anger, allayed a while by the seduction of her presence, to rise anew when she was seen no more. She had allowed Mr. Templemore to remember that a fraud had made him her husband, to believe that she had looked on and accepted all passively, the sin and its reward, and the higher had been the tide that bore him to her, the stronger was the receding power of that which now carried both love and him away from Dora.

To give and to receive is one of the strongest of human ties, and perhaps because man and woman can never give or receive more than in the marriage state, is that link held so sacred, and felt to be so potent. The more is given, and the dearer grows the bond; but woe to the day when the once generous supply is stinted—when the heart has no more to bestow, and feels no joy in

receiving. That sad day now seemed to have come for Mr. Templemore.

"Never, never can I love her again!" he thought, as he leaned back in the railway carriage that took him on to Paris, after he had left Miss Moore and Eva at St. Germains. "And yet I must go back to her, or take on myself the frightful responsibility of utterly forsaking a young and attractive woman, who has not been my wife three weeks."

The alternative sickened him. If he left her to her fate, might she not, in the bitterness of her heart, turn desperate, and give him cause to rue his abandonment? Mr. Templemore was not of a jealous nature, and he did not even then doubt his wife's virtue; but he remembered that John Luan loved her, and that Dora never forgot a wrong. His conscience and his pride alike told him that he must return to her if he wished to avoid for both the risk of ruin and shame. Yes, he must go back, and though he had never contemplated not doing so, the necessity galled him. He must go back to the woman who had entrapped him, and who had now a legal right to his name, his home, and his love. The thought chafed him,

and added its irritation to the despair of that dark hour.

Two ladies—well-dressed women—were Mr. Templemore's travelling companions. He had not seen them at first, but now he became conscious of their presence. They were young and pleasant-looking. They were cheerful, too, and seeing him so gloomy and absorbed, they talked pretty much as if he were not there. The younger one of the two took off her gloves. He saw her rings flash on her slender fingers; the scent from her little perfumed handkerchief was that which Dora used; the rustling of her silk dress reminded him of the pleasure with which he used to hear his wife move about the house at Deenah. Something in her attitude, as she looked out on the green landscape, made him remember with a sharp pang his happy wedding-day, and Dora's radiant face as they journeyed together, and Mr. Templemore felt the happiest of bridegrooms. And now, what was left to him of all the dreams he had that day indulged in? The graceful, elegant woman whom he had wedded was his still—the woman who had a charming figure, a pretty hand, fine eyes, and hair

of a beautiful colour—yes, she was his till death should them part, and long after those fleeting charms should have faded she would still be his. But that other dearer woman, the companion and friend—she who had already made him feel that there is a tie stronger than blood, more potent than the affection of habit, sympathy in some of the noble things for which God gave man life—she was gone—she was lost; and seek for her long as he would, he could find her no more.

Oh! if he could have believed her to be guiltless! If he could have forgotten how she had tried to prevent her aunt from speaking and him from hearing; if he could have forgotten her pale face, and her silence, her weak defence, her assertions of innocence, unsupported by proof; if he could have forgotten all those tokens that had condemned her, and risen before him to say, "Whether from love, or hate, or vengeance, or cupidity, she has abetted it—she let it be done, and she reaped the gain!" But he could not. He tortured his mind to acquit her, and he could not. She had not warned him, she had refused to answer Mrs. Logan—if ever silence was guilty hers was. But if the cloud which doubt had called up would not

be dispelled, if it ever floated between him and his wife's image, and only grew darker and denser with every effort he made to break it, so there also rose in his heart a bitter resentment against every human being connected with his wrong. He hated Mrs. Luan and Mrs. Courtenay for having plotted it, and he could scarcely forgive Miss Moore or Mrs. Logan for having helped to reveal it. Towards Dora his feelings were too implacable for either hate or forgiveness. She was the embodiment of his misery—the being whose betrayal had caused it, and whose falsehood had given it a more cruel and a keener pang.

On reaching Paris Mr. Templemore went to one of the hotels in the Rue de Rivoli, where he was in the habit of stopping. "And now," he thought, as he entered rooms gay with sunshine, and beyond which he caught a bright glimpse of the Tuileries gardens, "now how am I to get rid of this pain?" Question hard to answer. Pleasure, which had never had any charms for Mr. Templemore, was now odious. He hated crowds, and solitude he knew is cruel and dangerous. He would not have Eva or Miss Moore with him, for one could only remind him of his fond illusion, and the other of

its bitter wakening. So, as he suffered cruelly and keenly, he did what the intellectual and the strong often do in such emergencies, he took refuge in study from his pain.

There were few branches of knowledge which he had not already tried, but for some he had never felt any ardent devotion. Statistics and political economy had been least favoured by him. He now took to them with a sort of fury. Population, shipping, standing armies, disease, had their turn; he heaped his room with blue-books, and covered quires of paper with estimates, returns, and calculations; he worked night and day, not caring all the time for the result of his labour, and he succeeded in bringing on himself a fit of illness which lasted a fortnight, and from which he issued languid, listless, and more unhappy than ever.

Neither time, nor work, nor illness had cured him. Time had only added to the resentful bitterness of his feeling, and to the severity of the condemnation his judgment had passed on the offender; but it was still the same wound which bled inly, it was still the cruel thought that Dora was his wife, and that she was worthless of a man's love. Integrity, honour, delicacy, were the ruling

feelings of Mr. Templemore's mind. The woman who had failed in these, even though for love of him, could never be again to him the woman whom nothing and no one could have tempted to sin. And yet, and though his sense of her error grew keener daily, his feelings had undergone a change. If he still thought of her guilt, he now thought very little of his wrong. He did not regret Florence, he scarcely regretted his liberty, but he passionately regretted his wife, that innocent being, all love and brightness, whom he had had for a few days, and who had so soon worn the common hues of mortality. Oh! to go back to that time of dear illusions, to possess a girl so happy, so fond, and so true! To feel bound to her for life, to dread no wakening, to look forward without fear to the long future!

But it is no relief to think a once loved being unworthy, and these thoughts seemed so bitter to Mr. Templemore, one evening as he sat by the window of his room looking out on the stirring scene in the Rue de Rivoli below, that he could endure them no longer. He rebelled under their torture, and taking his hat walked out.

He went forth idly, neither knowing nor caring

whither his steps took him. On turning the corner of a street, he suddenly found himself on the Boulevards. The night was black, not a star shone in the cloudy sky; but the two rows of lamps made an endless avenue of light before him. The shops were brilliant and gay; cafés glittered like fairy palaces, and crowds were abroad to enjoy what freshness there was in the stormy air. Mr. Templemore found none. Close and sultry felt the atmosphere. The young trees which rose dimly before him, their trunks and lower branches lit, and their summits vanishing in gloom, seemed to him as oppressive as the roof of a forest. Yet he went on, leaving boulevard after boulevard behind him, and he never thought of stopping till a dense group suddenly checked his progress. Mr. Templemore then looked up. Before him he saw the rising steps and the columned front of a theatre. People were going in eagerly. He hesitated a while, then he too went up the steps, paid for his place, and within five minutes he was seated in one of the galleries.

Mr. Templemore had not gone to the play for several years. He liked none save the finest acting and singing, and, being a man of fastidious

tastes, he did not admit the existence of such very readily. Weariness of spirit had alone tempted him this evening to enter a second-class house, where the actors were probably suited to the plays they performed in. He wondered at himself for having done so; he looked around him, and wondered still more at the gay, eager faces he saw. The musicians in the orchestra were talking and laughing together as they tuned their instruments —he wondered at them too. Amongst them was a lively little dark man, who could not be quiet a moment; he shook his black head of hair, he rolled his eyes, he screwed his mouth, and looked very like an animated nut-cracker. Mr. Templemore watched him with a sort of interest; the vitality of that swarthy little musician was attractive to one whose present mood was so drearily languid. The curtain rose, the performance began, the actors spoke, and still Mr. Templemore's eyes were fixed on the orchestra, and he thought, "What a curious idiosyncrasy that man must have!"

"How charmingly she is dressed!" whispered a voice near him. He glanced towards the speaker. She was a girl of eighteen or so, plump and good-humoured-looking. She addressed another girl,

her sister, evidently, as plump, and seemingly as good-tempered as herself. Beside them sat their mother, a bourgeoise of forty, who had been at twenty what they were now. What absence of all care appeared in these three faces! Nothing was there, not even the excitement of pleasure; nothing beyond the calm, sensual content of satisfied animal existence. Mr. Templemore turned back from them to the musician, but in so doing his look passed across the stage, and he uttered a deep, startled "Ah!" which was heard over the whole house, and drew every eye upon him.

But Mr. Templemore saw and heeded but one thing; for there, on the stage before him, stood his wife, dressed in white muslin, gay, young, and lovely. She stood alone in a gloomy room, with a dim and sombre background behind her solitary figure, and her head half averted. It was she—so said the first look; that was the turn of her neck, her figure, and her attitude; but she looked round, and the charm was broken; she spoke, and it was gone. But the shock which that momentary illusion had caused could not vanish with it; nor the subtle thrill of joy it had wakened, cease. When this girl looked at the audience, Mr. Templemore

could not look at her; but when she turned away and became once more the image of his young wife, in her light motions and easy attitudes, he leaned forward, with his elbow resting on the crimson velvet of the balustrade, unconscious of the observation which his eager gaze altracted. His very heart was moved within him with a soft and delicious emotion. It was like going back to the first wondering happiness of his marriage to feel as he now felt. All that love, which had seemed buried in arid desolation, like sweet waters beneath the sand of the desert, welled back to his heart with tenfold power. Mr. Templemore did not strive against it—he let that full tide come and rise and master him, and he felt blest to the very core in his subjection.

When the curtain fell on the first act and she vanished, he breathed deeply, and for the first time he tried to think and be calm. Vain attempt; thought would not come at his bidding—nothing came but a vague, passionate yearning to be gone, and be with her once more. He could scarcely resist the desire which bade him rise and depart that moment. An express train left in the middle of the night. It would take him to Rouen in

little more than two hours; he could be at Les Roches before dawn—long before Dora had wakened!

The two plump girls and their mother gave him wondering looks, and he did not heed them. The little fantastic musician played strange tricks with his violin, and Mr. Templemore had no eyes for him now. His thoughts were far away in a large room, hushed and dim, where his wife lay sleeping. A lamp burned faintly on a white toilet table, and was reflected in its oval glass, half veiled by lace and muslin. A far door opened, and he saw himself enter slowly, with step that fell noiselessly on the carpet. He saw that wraith of his own being approach, then stand still, and look at Dora's face as it rested on her pillow. And now the vision swiftly became retrospective. He remembered looking at her thus once in Deenah. He remembered wondering, as he looked, at the childish calmness of her slumbering mien. The bright hair which had strayed on her pillow, the closed lids, the calm breath, came back to him with a sense of pain. He felt as if he had wronged and deserted a child entrusted to his keeping.

"I should have stayed with her," he thought; "innocent or guilty, I should not have left her."

"Innocent or guilty?" repeated a secret voice.

"Oh! my God, if she be guilty, what a lot is mine! Am I tied to treachery, to sin so perversely allied with that look of innocence? Am I tied to grace and youth, it is true, but also to horrible iniquity?"

All his old anguish came back at the thought. If his passionate nature, ardent and susceptible to loveliness—as indeed is that of most men—felt but too keenly the power of his young wife's bright face, the nobler nature within him made him revolt from the thought of this ignoble bondage. He could not endure the contrast between that fair outside and the sullied soul. Ay, truly, it is hard to us all to think that sin can abide behind the roses of those cheeks and the star-like radiance of those eyes. It is hard that we should not ever find the breath of innocence on those fresh young lips, which give us heaven when they smile. It is a cruel case, but Mr. Templemore had not reached thirty without knowing that it is a frequent one—only he had never thought it would be his. The bitter doubt now waxed higher and higher, sweep-

ing away before it every tender fancy, every flower of love or hope. His neighbours watched his darkening face and gloomy eyes with something like uneasiness. What had brought him here, a sullen, uncongenial stranger, freezing the mere thought of pleasure away!

The curtain rose, the second act began. At first he heeded nothing, but the girl who reminded him of Dora appeared again, and again the subtle thrill ran through his veins and subdued him. This time, too, he paid some attention to the play. It was a love drama, with many a passionate scene, and no doubt some pathos, for the two girls next Mr. Templemore brought out their pocket-handkerchiefs, and used them freely. Indeed, he saw a good deal of this going on around him, but he remained callous and unmoved, till, all unwillingly, he was conquered. This heroine had married a man whom she did not like, and her husband, discovering it too late, felt and said, "I shall never be loved—never!" The curtain fell as he uttered the words, which rang through Mr. Templemore's brain, wakening a whole train of fond recollections. Dora was his wife, but she loved him. Ay, though her sins were of the deepest and the darkest dye,

she loved him and she was his—for better, for worse, she was his. He could not renounce her or exclude her from his life and his heart. Religion, duty combined with love to say to him, "Why did you leave her? Had you not vowed that your arms should be her shelter from every ill; and is it not her right to live and die by your side? You cannot banish her thence without sin—then thank heaven that her affection, her youth and its attractions, make obedience to this duty so easy and so sweet."

Mr. Templemore heard this secret monitor, and he did not answer it at once. He leaned his forehead on his hand, and let a vision come before him—a vision of a tearful yet happy Dora, who welcomed him back with a smile and a kiss. Often had she come thus to him before this hour, and as often had he banished her with a stern "Begone!" But now he could not—he would not. She was his wife, and there was a protecting tenderness in his embrace. She was his wife, and his heart yearned towards her with infinite charity. His love should cover all her errors, and lead her back to those pure paths whence she had strayed; his love should be to her as a human re-

demption, making more easy her return to the divine source of all goodness. She was his erring lamb, who had wandered in the wilderness, and whom he would bring back to the gentle fold of love and home. He remembered the solemn precept, too, much forgotten by a passing world of the great Apostle of the Gentiles:

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church."

He remembered it in that vanity fair of pleasure and its votaries, a theatre. For what spot, howsoever profane, is there which the voice of God will not pierce to reach man's heart? And if human passion and tenderness still mingled in Mr. Templemore's breast with holier feelings—if he could not forget a fair face and a soft voice—if one was the joy of his eyes, and the other the sweetest of music to his ear, yet over all ruled that feeling of duty that had been the great guide of his life, and which had given him in Dora Courtenay its mingled joy and torment.

How long these thoughts kept him, Mr. Templemore did not know. The third act was progressing, and had reached its great crisis of despair and passion, when he looked at his watch,

rose, and left the house. The two girls and their mother looked after him in some wonder, and exchanged puzzled glances, then placidly returned to the play. Truly they little guessed what a drama of doubt, and love, and regret—ay, and of passion too—had been silently enacted near them that evening.

CHAPTER XII.

THE night was darker than ever when Mr. Templemore went out once more on the Boulevards. The crowd was thinning, in expectation of a storm. Mr. Templemore's mood was not one which such contingencies affect. He had but one thought, and that mastered him; yet he suddenly paused, as he reached the Rue de la Paix, and saw its shops alive with light. He remembered the diamond cross he had ordered from one of the jewellers there, and he wondered if it were ready. It was only ten o'clock; he had time to go and try.

These jewellers' shops in the Rue de la Paix were a wonderful sight at night during that year. Crowds gathered around them evening after evening, gazing in eager admiration at the treasures displayed within. One diamond shop outrivalled all the others, and outrivals them still. Tiaras, necklaces, bracelets, earrings, blazed there in their

immortal splendour. Fair brows and fairer bosoms, on which they glittered once, have shrunk into dust, and it matters very little. They will outlive generations; that gorgeous bracelet will clasp the slender wrist, that diadem will shine all light in the dark hair of some beauty yet unborn, and flatterers will tell her, "Your eyes are brighter by far than these," and—who knows?—perhaps she will believe them.

As to that, all the diamonds in this shop, which he now entered, could not have matched Dora's eyes in Mr. Templemore's estimation just then. He knew, indeed, that their lustre would grow dim—that the blooming cheek would fade, and the fair skin lose its youthful beauty—but all the better reason was this for holding them dear, and adorning them whilst they lasted. With something like eagerness, he now asked if the cross he had ordered was ready.

This temple of the god worshipped in Golconda had a high-priest worthy of his office—an aged man, with a lofty brow, white hair, that flowed from beneath a black silk cap, and eyes which had gazed so long on diamonds that they could see little else in life. On hearing Mr. Templemore's

request, he opened a drawer near him, and produced a small morocco case, which he handed to his customer. Mr. Templemore opened it. On a bed of blue velvet lay a diamond cross, consisting of eleven perfect diamonds, not of large size, indeed, but of such exquisite water, and such dazzling lustre, that he uttered an exclamation of pleasure and admiration, qualified, however, by the words,

"This is surely more expensive than the one I asked from you?"

"It is," mildly replied the jeweller; "double the price, I believe; but, then, it is three times more beautiful than you expected it to be."

Mr. Templemore could not deny that. He took the cross and looked at it in the hollow of his hand. Each of its eleven diamonds was pure and clear as a drop of morning dew sparkling in the early sun. "Will you take a cheque for this?" he asked; "I have not money enough to pay you—besides, I am going off at once."

"A cheque will do very well," replied the jeweller, in his mild tone. "This is tne fifteenth, sir—the fifteenth of July."

And as Mr. Templemore sat down to fill up the

blank cheque which he took from his pocket-book, the jeweller opened the drawer again and took out another morocco case, which he silently placed before him.

"I only ordered the cross," said Mr. Templemore, looking up, puzzled.

"Perhaps you would like a necklace," suggested this mild tempter; and he opened the case and stepped back.

Mr. Templemore was dazzled. He had never seen such a necklace as this. A queen alone could have worn it. This was no conjunction of small diamonds artfully mounted in leaves, and flowers, and pendants, and spread out to the greatest possible extent. No, it was one plain row of large stones, every one of which seemed priceless to Mr. Templemore. Dora had a beautiful neck, soft and white, truly these diamonds would look well upon it. But was he a nabob, that he should even ask to know the price of a gift so costly?

"I chose every one of those stones myself," said the jeweller; "I went to Russia for this centre one, and to London for that, one of the smallest, but, as you see, it matches the ninth stone perfectly, and unless in London I could not have found

it. It cost me three months to negotiate for it, for it was in hands that were reluctant to part with it—they knew its value and its beauty, and it is one of the smallest in the necklace. Guess from that, sir, what toil and trouble the other stones have given me."

"It is a wonderful necklace," said Mr. Templemore, taking and handling it—"a wonderful necklace; only there is no art in it. It is plain and gorgeous."

"There should be no art in diamonds," replied the jeweller, with a strange light in his eye. "They are above and beyond it, sir."

"Well, perhaps they are," said Mr. Templemore, but he put down the necklace and did not ask to know its price.

"I believe, sir, you are newly married," continued the jeweller, in his mild tone; "this would be a beautiful wedding gift."

Mr. Templemore felt almost provoked at this cool seducer, who spoke of a priceless necklace as a "beautiful wedding gift." He little knew that its owner offered it to every one of the customers who entered his shop, pressed it upon them even to importunity, and yet would not have parted

to a monarch with one of its smallest diamonds. He little suspected that these glorious bits of liquid light, all fire and pure effulgence, slept every night in the bed of that white-haired man—that he loved them with something of the guilty, insane love which two hundred years before made Cardillac murder the men and women who bought his jewels; and that when they were stolen from him a few months after Mr. Templemore's visit, the shock of their loss, though they were recovered within the week, sent him to the grave a maniac.

Unconscious of the strange love which was to lead to so tragic an ending, Mr. Templemore only felt provoked at the persistence with which the jeweller pressed this necklace upon him, and putting the cross in his breast coat pocket, he left the shop. The jeweller, however, followed him to the door, and still said in his mild voice,

"It is a rare necklace, sir. You will never get another like it—better have it."

Mr. Templemore walked away without giving him any answer. "The man is crazy, and I am crazy too," he thought, taking the direction that led to his hotel; "I suppose those glittering pebbles have bewitched me, for here am I foolish

enough to wish I could buy them and throw them round Dora's neck.

It was folly, no doubt, but it did not go away at once. He saw the diamonds glittering before him like stars in the darkness of the night. He saw them sparkling on his wife's bosom, and if diamonds look strange and ominous on yellow necks and bony shoulders, who can deny their fitness and their beauty when they rest on a satin skin and rounded outlines like Dora's? Mr. Templemore was fascinated with the vision. He felt almost tempted to turn back and ask the price of this wonderful necklace; but he checked himself in time, and indeed waxed wrathful at his own folly. A year's income of his fortune could not pay for the bauble. Had he lost his senses that he even contemplated this act of madness? Alas! it was not all madness—there is a fond, passionate instinct, which is a very part of love—the wish to fling all that there is most costly, most precious, and most rare, at the feet of the loved object. For many days Mr. Templemore had struggled against his love for Dora, and spite his doubts and his misgivings, that love now came back to him powerful, mighty, and triumphant. It came back to him

not as it had left him, conquered and sorrow-stricken, but like the spirit in Scripture, who, after wandering midst barren places, returns with seven-fold power.

Mr. Templemore had not walked far, still thinking of his wife and the diamond necklace, when the long threatening storm broke forth. Drops of rain, large as crown pieces, dotted the white pavement of the Place Vendôme, which he was crossing. Then a lightning flash pierced the sky, and lit the dark column cast in cannon won from many a battle-field, and whence the first Napoleon looks down over his capital, still seeming to triumph alike over foe and subject. A deep echoing thunder peal followed, then came a very deluge of rain, and long before he reached his hotel, Rue de Rivoli, Mr. Templemore was wet through. The rain was summer rain, mild and soft, and he cared not for it. He packed his trunk hastily, secured a carriage, and drove off to the station, whilst the storm was at its highest. It was a gale, too, as well as a storm; a furious tempest, which might leave its traces on many a bleak coast, as well as in crowded cities. Mr. Templemore had seen a shipwreck once, and who that has beheld the

ominous sight can ever forget it? He remembered it now; the noble vessel struggling gallantly against the waves that drove her on, the long line of shore and cliff vanishing in spray and in the darkness of the tempest; the pale moon looking down from a cloudy sky, the silent crowd, and the fearful roar, as waves and ship all came tumbling together on the beach, whilst through all the din was to be heard the faint, shrill cry of a woman. They found her on the sands the next morning, a pale corpse, with wet hair. Mr. Templemore wondered why that scene come back to him now, as if he had beheld it but yesterday?

"How do I know," he thought, "that this summer storm will be so fatal as that never-to-be-forgotten equinoctial gale on the shores of the Atlantic! Its roaring wind may indeed uproot the mighty forest tree, or its lightning kill helpless flocks on distant moors; but truly I hope and trust that no drowning wretch will call on heaven this night in his agony!"

Mr. Templemore reached the station as the express train was going to start. Within five minutes he sat alone in a railway-carriage, and was going at full speed through the drenched land-

scape. And now he had time to think over a subject of some importance.

How would his wife receive him? He returned to her as he had left her—at his pleasure. He could give no motive for the one act, save that he did not choose to stay with her, and for the other that he could do without her no longer. Would Dora, a proud woman, accept either explanation? Had he not, then, best be silent, and take upon himself that law of *bon plaisir* which every now and then comes up in the heart even of the best of men. For after all, Mr. Templemore could not ask his wife to forgive him. If his passion for her, supported by necessity, was so strong that he could not resist it, and must needs go back to her, innocent or guilty, yet, spite all the diamonds he had wished to give her, he was not a convinced and converted man. He would have given anything to believe in her innocence, and doubt still forbade belief—even though his whole heart yearned towards the one and revolted against the other. With a sort of despair he went over the whole sad story again, and wearied, but still perplexed, he came back to the old thought: "She is my wife; I cannot help that no more than I can help loving her

—I must keep to that and let the rest be."

But can love endure when its foundation of reverence is wanting? And if the fever which was still so strong upon him ceased, would not the final wakening be horrible? Alas! he thought of that too; but that time, which it was so gloomy to foresee, had not come yet, and as he reached Rouen, and, leaving the train, entered a carriage which was to convey him to Les Roches, he wilfully shut his eyes to all the bitterness that had preceded his departure, and only remembered that he was going to the home where his young wife lay sleeping, unconscious of his return.

The porter at the lodge had to be wakened to let in his master, and Jacques to leave his attic in order to admit him within. The clang of the great bell, the grinding wheels of the carriage on the gravel, made a loud noise in the stillness of the grey morning; but Mr. Templemore looked in vain for signs of light behind the window curtains of his wife's room. Jacques, who let him in, seemed stupid with sleep. His master did not question him; he took the light from the man's hand, merely saying:

"You may go. I want nothing."

Jacques was a plethoric young man. He liked his sleep above all things. He now thought himself ill-used by his master's return at such an hour, and he went back to his room grumbling all the way. He had scarcely reached the upper floor, however, when a furious ringing summoned him below. He found Mr. Templemore on the landing at the door of his wife's room, pale as death, and with the light still in his hand.

"Where is your mistress?" he asked. "Where is my wife?"

His looks, his tones so confounded Jacques, that he could scarcely reply. At length he said,

"Madame is gone."

"Gone!" He was going to ask "With whom?" but he checked himself. "Tell Madame Courtenay I wish to speak to her," he said.

Jacques looked very odd.

"Madame Courtenay is dead, sir."

"Dead?"

"Yes, sir. Mademoiselle Fanny brought the news when she came back for Madame's things. Madame Courtenay died on the way."

"And Madame Luan and her son," exclaimed Mr. Templemore—"where are they?"

Jacques looked very odd again.

"Monsieur Luan is gone, sir, we do not know where, and Madame Luan is dead too. She died in a madhouse the very morning Madame Templemore went away. She had attempted to kill Madame one evening."

Mr. Templemore felt as if he were going through a dreadful nightmare. Death, madness, danger had visited his deserted home during his absence; and now where was Dora? Where was the wife whom he had left to trials so fearful, and who had passed through them alone?

"Where is she now?" he asked, much agitated. "Where did she go to?"

"Monsieur Luan took her to an asylum, and she died there."

"I mean your mistress. Where is your mistress?"

But Jacques knew nothing. Madame had not said anything. She had left no letter? No—nothing that could give a clue. Mademoiselle Fanny, when she came back for Madame's things, had said they were going to England, and the servants had supposed it was to join Monsieur. The servants had all noticed that Madame looked very miserable. Perhaps she felt nervous, and afraid

to remain alone after having run the risk of being murdered.

So said Jacques, in a heavy, stupid, monotonous voice. Mr. Templemore shuddered with horror as he heard him talk thus stolidly of his wife's peril. Yet he could not help asking to know the particulars of this domestic drama. Jacques, nothing loth, and indeed quite lively, went through the scene for his master's benefit. "Madame was so by the toilet, when she heard the door open and saw Madame Luan enter. At once, and with great presence of mind, Madame put out the light and stepped out on the balcony. And so," continued Jacques, assuming the part of Mrs. Luan and groping with outstretched arms, as if in the darkness towards the window, "so I try to get at her and kill her. Though I cannot see, I know where she is, and she is as mute as a mouse—but I know where she is—now I am at the window, and the moon is shining—now I have her!"

But as Jacques, outstripping truth in the fervour of his acting, was stretching his arm towards an imaginary Dora, a hand of iron seized his own throat and held him fast.

"How dare you? How dare you?" asked Mr.

Templemore, shaking with anger; then recovering his composure, he said, not without some shame at his own violence, "You may leave me now, Jacques."

"And I can tell you I left him pretty quickly," was Jacques's comment as he related this incident to the porter the next morning. "For if ever man looked like a tiger, it was our master as he held me then."

Mr. Templemore remained alone in his wife's room, and locked himself up with this new trouble.

He sat down and looked around him. Was this indeed the return to which he had looked forward? This cold, vacant chamber bore no likeness to that which his fancy had conjured up a few hours before in the theatre. Dust had gathered on the mirror of the toilet-table, and thus told him how long it had ceased to reflect Dora's image. No token of her presence lingered about. It was as if Mr. Templemore had never seen her there, sleeping or waking. The very air of the unused apartment had grown chill. Ah! this was not the meeting he had imagined as he came up the staircase with a beating heart. Where were the tears and reproaches he was to silence with caresses?

His wife was gone, and, insupportable thought! she was gone with just anger and bitterness in her heart against him. Was she innocent or guilty? He did not think of that now. He only thought that he had forsaken her, and that she had gone alone through frightful danger and bitter sorrow. Where was he when the madwoman attempted her life?—when her mother's eyes closed in death? His eyes grew dim, his lip quivered at the question. Oh! fatal error, ever to have left her—fatal, and in one sense irreparable. She was his wife, the law gave him full power over her—he could pursue the fugitive and compel her return; but could he make her forget that he had believed a madwoman's story against her?

And these were not Mr. Templemore's only thoughts. If Fanny's assertion were to be believed, his wife had gone to England after her mother's death. What for, and to whom? Surely not to John Luan! Yet Dora had no friends in England—at least, she had often said so. Then what took her there?

Mr. Templemore could not bear to wrong her in this matter. And yet the thought that she had gone to England, that she was near John Luan,

that she had her cousin to comfort her in her sorrow, and to sympathise with her in her wrongs, was more than he could endure. It revived his lurking jealousy, and gave it both form and substance. This young man loved Dora; and it is not pleasant, even to the least jealous of husbands, to think that the wife whom he has injured receives consolation from a rejected lover. And this had been going on for days and weeks! The thought stung him. She was his wife, after all. What right had she to leave his home without a word, spoken or written, and go to a strange city and stay there? What right had she to expose their domestic differences to the world by a flight he could not attempt to disguise? Gradually Mr. Templemore forgot the wrongs he had inflicted, and only remembered those he had received. He remembered them; and with something like wrath he resolved to set off for England at once, follow his wife, and bring her back without delay. "Whether she likes it or not she shall return," he thought, ringing the bell angrily for Jacques, who had just fallen into a pleasant doze. "She shall return to this house, which she should never have left."

But of all men Mr. Templemore was the last who could stifle the voice of conscience. He had left both his wife and his home. She had only left the house whence her aunt had been removed insane, whence he had banished her mother, where not even his child had been trusted to her care.

"I have been to blame," thought Mr. Templemore with a sharp remorseful pang; "but I will make amends—I will make amends."

How many an erring heart has uttered the words, and, alas! to how few the power to fulfil them has been granted!

CHAPTER XIII.

A DISTANT church clock was striking eleven when Dr. John Luan turned the corner of Bedford Square. He had scarcely walked a few steps towards his dwelling when a hand was laid on his shoulder. He looked round sharply, and by the light of a gas-lamp he saw Mr. Templemore. They had never met, yet John Luan knew at once this was Dora's husband.

"Good evening," gravely said Mr. Templemore. "I believe you know me. Your servant told me you are going away early to-morrow morning, so I shall not detain you long. My errand is quickly told. Mrs. Templemore forgot to leave her direction when she went away from Les Roches. May I trouble you for it?"

John Luan had got over the shock of unpleasant astonishment he had felt on seeing Dora's husband, but this abrupt demand startled him anew.

"You want Dora's address from me!" he said sharply.

"Why not? You do not mean to say, I suppose, that your cousin is here in London without your knowledge, Mr. Luan?"

"And do you mean to say that your wife is here in London without *your* knowledge, Mr. Templemore?"

He spoke with bitter emphasis, but Mr. Templemore had come resolved not to lose his temper.

"Am I likely to put such a question without need?" he said gravely.

And so she had left him! His cruelty and his unkindness had compelled her to leave her home and her husband. And her wronger now applied to the man whom he had robbed of his treasure for information concerning the spot where it lay concealed! John Luan's blood boiled within him —but he was not given to express anger, and he only said with sulky bitterness,

"I know nothing about your wife, Mr. Templemore."

He turned to the house, as if to end the matter; but Mr. Templemore quietly stepped between him and the door.

"I will not be balked thus," he said doggedly. "I impute no wrong to her or to you, but you know her address, and I will have it!"

"You impute no wrong," repeated John Luan, in great indignation; "and pray what wrong could there be? just tell me that, sir. And, moreover, what do you mean by coming to me to ask for *your* wife? Ask her mother—ask Mrs. Courtenay where she is, and do not trouble me with a matter in which I have no concern."

"Doctor John Luan," said Mr. Templemore, with some disdain, "Mrs. Courtenay is dead, and I daresay you know it."

"Dead!" repeated John Luan, with such genuine amazement that Mr. Templemore's heart fell. If the young man did not know that, he knew nothing. Where, then, was Dora?

The same question seemed to offer itself to the mind of Dora's cousin. He turned almost fiercely on Mr. Templemore.

"Where is she?" he said. "When and how did my aunt die? Where is Dora?"

"I was away at the time," answered Mr. Templemore, briefly; "I believe Mrs. Courtenay died in England, but I have no certainty."

"And why were you away?" tauntingly asked John Luan. "What! married a fortnight, and away so long that your mother-in-law is dead, and your wife has vanished when you return?"

"Why I went away your mother might have told you," bitterly answered Mr. Templemore; "but let that rest. I did not come here to account to you for matters of which you are no judge. You say you do not know where Dora is. Be it so. You can give me no information, and I have nothing to tell you."

He left him as he spoke thus; but John Luan soon overtook him.

"Have you nothing to tell me?" he said, losing all self-control in the bitterness of his feelings; "but maybe I have something to say to you. I tell you, sir, that if Dora does not soon appear, I shall hold you guilty of her fate, whatever that may be. I tell you there is a great fear upon me, and that if this double grief should have proved too much for her, I shall hold you guilty before God and man!"

"A fear—what fear?" asked Mr. Templemore, who was almost as angry as John Luan now.

"You know what fear," was the taunting reply,

"for you feel it too. You know what fear, for it brought you here to question me. I say it again, if it prove true, I shall hold you guilty."

He walked away abruptly, and Mr. Templemore did not follow him.

"I suppose he has a touch of his mother's madnes," he thought, trying to conquer his wrath by scorn.

He felt angry, and nothing else. The fear John Luan had alluded to could take no hold upon him. That Dora had left him in anger, he knew—that she could have left him in the despair which leads to the darkest end of a human life, he would not admit for a moment, and as he too walked away in hot indignation, he wondered that John Luan should have dared to suggest a close so cruel to Dora's brief wedded life. But if Mr. Templemore rejected with anger and scorn this torturing conjecture, he was full of perplexity and grief as he walked home to his hotel. He knew nothing, he had learned nothing, and he felt powerless. Reason, philosophy, and will had lost their boasted power over him now. The wife whom he had so injudiciously left had fled from him, and he knew not how to conjure her back,

how to charm away the sorrows he had caused, how to prevent the troubles, and perhaps the dangers, that might beset her path. He knew that if he could find her she would forgive him—he did not doubt that one moment; only where was the fugitive, and how far had she fled! But if Mr. Templemore felt troubled and perplexed, he did not feel despondent.

Money is a great magician, and he knew it. Money will unveil the most closely-guarded secrets, and light up some of society's darkest and most hidden nooks. It is the Sesame before which doors fly open, or at whose bidding they close again with inexorable sternness. And money Mr. Templemore had. With money he could soon be on her track, and arrest her flight. He was of a sanguine disposition, and he now felt certain of success. Perhaps he was rather pleased, after all, not to have found his wife through the medium of her cousin. Perhaps it was more soothing to his pride to have to go and seek and pacify her himself, than to have found her with scarcely an effort, but through that young man's means. However well he might think of Dora, it was not to John Luan's care that he would have

consigned her. But the fact that she had not sought this young man, who, though a lover, was also her only relative, showed Mr. Templemore that his wife was still all his. Her grief would admit no comforter, and had no need to be spoken. She could make a dreary companion of it, and take it with her to solitude.

"I shall soon find her," thought Mr. Templemore, as he paced his room up and down, for he was too restless for sleep; "she is either in Paris or in London. In either city money will command men whose scent, quickened by greed, is keener than that of bloodhounds, and who will detect her refuge, however close it may be. I shall soon find her, in a week—in ten days, perhaps—in a fortnight, at the utmost."

He looked out of the window on the gas-lit streets; he longed to detect a greyness in the black sky and be gone; but time and tide, which wait for no man, will also hurry their course for none. All Mr. Templemore's impatience only made the night seem more tedious, and took not one second's weight from its feverish hours. At length day came, and with it departure. The train flew through the country, the steamboat

crossed the sea; a few hours more, and Mr. Templemore, after stopping on a needful errand in Rouen, entered Les Roches. He met Jacques as he was going up the steps that led to the porch. A look at the man's face told Mr. Templemore that Jacques had no news for him. He put no questions, but said briefly—

"I expect a visitor this evening or to-morrow. Show him in at once, no matter what the hour may be."

He entered the house, and said no more; but Jacques knew very well what this meant, and when he went down to the kitchen, he commented upon his master's domestic misfortunes to the cook and the two housemaids, whom he found there. "Monsieur had just come back," he said, "and he had looked at him, Jacques, so."

And as the gift, or, at least, the taste for acting was strong upon Jacques, he rolled his eyes in imitation of his master, and bent them on the cook in a way that horrified her.

"You are hideous, Monsieur Jacques," she said —"do not, you are hideous!"

"I am only showing you how Monsieur looked," composedly replied Jacques; "upon which I

looked so," he added, putting on, with considerable success, the stolid, immovable face of a well-bred servant-man.

The cook looked at him with more favour, and said he was quite "*comme il faut*" when he looked "so."

Jacques received the praise with profound indifference (cook was forty-five), and continued his imitation of his master's looks, appearance, and language, ending with the significant comment, "And so, as he could not find Madame, he has sent the police after her. The 'agent' is coming this evening, and I am to show him in, no matter at what hour of the night."

This interesting piece of information caused some excitement in the minds of Jacques' three listeners. There never yet was a household without its factions, and Mr. Templemore's had been divided ever since his wife's flight had made his domestic troubles a subject of discourse amongst his servants. Jacques, the cook, and one of the housemaids, did not approve of Dora's elevation; the younger housemaid, on the contrary, admired so laudable a precedent, and gave it her warmest sanction. On hearing of the police agent, she

set up an indignant scream, and exclaimed that it was "*une horreur!*"

"Stop, stop, Mademoiselle, stop," dubiously said Jacques, who wished to impress this young lady with the extent of a husband's rights—hoping he might have to exercise them over her some day—to curb her ambition, which he considered dangerous, and yet, oh! difficult task, not to offend her. "Stop, I beg. If Monsieur has, as there is no doubt, the right to get his wife brought back by gendarmes, so has he the right to have her found out by an 'agent.' The only thing is, are they married? Rich gentlemen do not marry governesses every day. There was no wedding. We saw nothing, and there may be nothing. Her aunt wanted to kill her, her cousin has a brain-fever, her mother dies, and she runs away. I say again, are they married? Who saw it?—who knows of it?"

This daring hypothesis silenced them all for a moment. Jacques resumed composedly:

"My belief is that poor Mademoiselle, who was a good young lady in her way, promised her poor mother to behave better—and so she ran away."

The young housemaid, who had recovered by this, indignantly declared she did not believe a

word Jacques had been saying, and asked, with considerable asperity, what right Monsieur had to send gendarmes and police agents after Madame if she were not his wife? This logic being irrefutable, was met by Jacques with the masculine reply, "that women, though highly gifted, did not know how to reason;" and a quarrel, in which cook took her share, followed, and led to a considerable delay in the hour of Mr. Templemore's dinner.

He little thought, as he was pacing his study up and down in a fever of expectation and anxiety, waiting for news with alternatives of hope and fear, that he was acting his sad part just then to entertain, interest, and excite his own servants. They are the first spectators of that drama in which, at some time or other of existence, we all appear, for the benefit of our contemporaries. Whether they stand behind a chair in a black coat, or move about a villa in white cap and apron, they have the best places in all that wide audience which looks on so coolly whilst we strive and suffer. Oh! for the privilege of silence and solitude in these sad hours of life; for the right of hiding our agony, as the wild beast hides its death, in some dark hole or other. But from the days of the Roman Empe-

ror downwards, life and death are transacted on the system of fame or approbation. "Farewell, and clap your hands!" says a dying Cæsar, when his part is out; and the very wretch on the scaffold dies not for himself alone. He dies for the crowd, for the reporters, for the newpapers, for that world which will coolly read of, or which beholds his last pangs with a callous and a curious eye. And he knows it and does his best. The evil is beyond remedy, and we generally put a good face upon it. Ignorance, besides, helps us to endurance. We rarely know the precise spot or hour when privacy ceases and publicity begins. Human pity allows us a few illusions, and we may hug ourselves on the hiding of a pain which is world-known all the time. Mr. Templemore knew in a general way that his servants must be very busy with his concerns just then, but he little knew how far their comments extended. It surely would have added a new sting to his lot if he could have heard the construction Jacques put on his young wife's flight. And yet some of these comments showed Jacques to be gifted with the acuteness of his class. On the afternoon of the next day a handsome florid man was shown into Mr. Templemore's study.

He stayed five minutes, no more, yet so potent was his visit in its effects, that half an hour after his departure Mr. Templemore was sitting in a railway-carriage, going on to Paris at express speed. In his right hand he held a scrap of paper, which he read again and again. It ran thus:

"On the third of July a lady in deep mourning, with her veil closely drawn over her face, entered the Rouen station, and took one first-class ticket for Paris. The lady who delivers the tickets could not see her well, but feels sure that she was young. She also noticed this strange lady's right hand; it was ungloved, small, and remarkably pretty. She likewise remembers that the lady wore a peculiar ring—a small gold serpent, with an emerald head."

That ring Mr. Templemore remembered well. True, it might have been lost or stolen, and its testimony could not be trusted absolutely, but the pretty hand he had so often admired, and which none could see and forget again, convinced him that this was Dora. This much he therefore knew, but he knew no more. What had happened during that week which had elapsed from the day on which Dora left Les Roches to the third of July? Where was Mrs. Courtenay? Was she living, or

dead, as Fanny had said? Where was even Fanny? And what took Dora to Paris? These were questions which the florid gentleman had candidly declared himself unable to answer. With the clue in his hands—a frail one—Mr. Templemore was to find his wife in the great human ocean towards which he was speeding.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE hot sunset was filling the busy streets of Paris with a fiery glow, which shot up to their highest balconies, and turned the trees in the Tuileries into bronze and gold, when Mr. Templemore entered once more the Hôtel Rue de Rivoli, which he had left three evenings before. No other occupant had claimed his rooms, and he returned to them as a matter of course. He found on the table a torn newspaper he had left there, and in a drawer some cigars which he had forgotten. The arm-chair was as he had placed it, near the window, and when he sat down in it, his eyes beheld the same bright scene they had gazed on an hour before he went out on the Boulevards. The children and nursery-maids trooping out of the Imperial gardens, the tight little sentinel looking at them as they passed, the roll of carriages below, the loungers, all seemed as much the same, as unchanged as the glittering front of the palace itself,

and the rich masses of trees, with a white statue gleaming through their sombre depths, or the glimmer of a fountain shining far away. Nothing was altered save his own mood. He had beheld these things with a cold, dreary gaze, the gaze of a man whom love and life have wronged, and who cannot forgive his wrongers. He looked at them now with the feverish impatience of one who has wrought his own undoing, who has cast the rare pearl of happiness away, and who knows not whether this world's deep and troubled sea will ever yield it back again.

What if days, weeks, months, nay, years should pass, and he should not find Dora! It was possible. Cruel and torturing was the thought. It seemed to pierce his flesh like a sharp arrow, and make it quiver with the pain. And he was powerless. He might employ such agents as he had already used, but by his own efforts he could not hope to succeed. Regret and baffled hope were his companions now, and with their sad society he must be content. Day after day memory would haunt him with a fair face, and bright hair, and the soft look of deep grey eyes; and in the meanwhile time would wither, and death might destroy them—and

what could he do! The thought had something so cruel and tantalizing in it, that, unable to bear it, Mr. Templemore took his hat and went out.

He knew it was too late, that his errand was a useless one, yet he entered the gardens, passed through them, went up the quays, then crossed one of the bridges, and soon found himself at the dull building where the Parisian Police sits in state. But as Mr. Templemore had expected, the high official whom he wanted to see was gone, all the offices, indeed, were closed, and the *concierge* informed "Monsieur that he had best return the next morning at ten."

Twilight was filling the streets as Mr. Templemore turned away; a few pale stars shone in the summer sky, a faint breath of freshness came on the air, windows which had been closed during the heat of the day now opened, and laughing girls and women looked out. But to Mr. Templemore all was vexation, all was weariness of spirit. The noble river flowing through its quays, the distant towers of Notre Dame rising dark in the hazy air, the palaces and gardens and lines of trees fading away in the soft heights behind which lay Saint Cloud, the vast, murmuring city below, the calm

and silent heavens above, were nothing to him now. A thought was on him, consuming as a quenchless thirst. That passion which had risen so suddenly in his heart, which he had thrust away from him with cruel and remorseless power, now came back to him as the chastisement of his double faithlessness. He had loved two women, and he had been quite true to neither. He had forgotten his betrothed in his wife, and he had visited on his wife the sin of that forgetfulness. Yes, he knew it well enough now. Shame at his own weakness had helped to make him so prompt to judge and condemn. He knew it, and what availed the knowledge?—what good came of it through that dreary evening and long, sleepless night?

By ten the next morning, Mr. Templemore had seen the high official whose assistance he needed, and before noon he had received information to the effect that, on the night of the 3rd of July, a lady, who gave the name of Templemore, had slept at the Hôtel du Parc, Rue de la Vigne, which she had left the next morning. It was useless to go and seek her there, yet Mr. Templemore could not resist the temptation of trying to find out something beyond this meagre intelligence.

The Rue de la Vigne was a grave, lonely street, not far from the Havre railway-station. It had few shops, but many private houses, some of which were mansions, through whose open gates you caught glimpses of dull court-yards or green gardens. The Hôtel du Parc was a sober-looking house. No audacious dancing pagan nymph adorned its quiet court, but a modest, decorous muse stood in the centre of a grass plot, which, by its green tone, added to the cool, shady look of the place. A sedate, steady-looking waiter of fifty stood at the gate in a contemplative attitude—the house was evidently both dull and respectable.

"Madame Templemore," said Mr. Templemore.

The waiter shook his head. They had no such lady. But she had lived there. The waiter thought not, but was not obstinate, and referred Monsieur to the bureau. "There," he said, stifling a yawn, "Monsieur would get every information."

The bureau was a little dark office on the ground floor, where a decent-looking woman sat reading a newspaper. On hearing Mr. Templemore's request, she went to an old ink-stained desk, opened a dingy manuscript volume, a Babel of names, and whilst she slowly searched through its pages, Mr.

Templemore looked over her shoulder. Suddenly a fine, delicate handwriting, which he knew well, flashed before his eyes; there it was, clear and plain—"Madame Templemore, from Rouen."

"Ah! number twenty-one. The lady is gone, sir—she came on the third, and left the next morning."

"And can you give me no clue to her present abode, Madame?"

Madame feared not, but obligingly called the waiter. From him, however, nothing could be extracted. "Gone, sir," he mildly said; "that is all we know."

In vain Mr. Templemore questioned. What the lady was like, if she had any luggage, how she left the hotel, at what hour, on foot or in a carriage, were matters on which the waiter professed profound ignorance. He fancied, indeed, that the lady had no luggage, and that she must have walked out of the hotel after paying her bill, but he would not pledge himself to it. They were full about that time, and the matter had escaped his memory. The concierge, the chambermaid, when questioned, were as ignorant. They too remembered a lady in mourning, with her veil down, but

they remembered no more. Mr. Templemore tormented them all for an hour, and could get nothing else out of them. At length the waiter lost patience, and hinted that "Monsieur had better apply to the police," and, sick at heart, Mr. Templemore turned away from that house which had sheltered his wife for one night, and kept no trace of her presence save that written token. One thing, however, was beyond doubt, Dora had come to Paris alone. "Her mother is dead," he thought.

He went back at once to the high official whom he had seen that morning; and again, on sending in his card, he was admitted to the presence of a gentleman whose cheerful, good-humoured countenance gave not the faintest index to the nature of his professional duties. Surely those mild blue eyes might linger lazily over the daily papers, "Figaro" in especial, and take in accounts of theatres, dancers' quarrels, and the rest; but they had never gazed down the depths of social vice and crime. Such was the impression Mr. Templemore had received in the morning, and so strong was it still, that he reluctantly entered anew on the matter that had brought him.

"I acted on the information you kindly sent

me," he said, sitting down with a wearied sigh; "it certainly was my wife who slept on the third of July at the Hôtel du Parc; but she spent only one night there, and I can ascertain no more."

"Well, we know no more," said the high official, smiling; "we told you so."

"Yes; but surely you will be able to learn more than this?" urged Mr. Templemore.

"Oh! of course—with time."

The qualification was thrown in carelessly, as it were; but it made Mr. Templemore bend his keenest look on the man before him.

"I have great confidence in the Parisian police," he said, watching the high official, who leaned back in his arm-chair, and nodded every now and then a sort of assent to Mr. Templemore's words. "Their subtlety is unrivalled—nothing can equal their keenness when on the scent, save their dogged pertinacity in pursuit."

"Very handsome and complimentary," said the high official, smiling again, "and yet very true. Our men are first-rate, and not all French," he added. "We are cosmopolitan, sir."

"And I feel no doubt of success in the present case," continued Mr. Templemore.

"Nor do I; but I anticipate delay. I suspect we shall be stopped by the carriage, as usual."

"By the carriage!"

"Yes, in all cases of mysterious disappearance, there is invariably a carriage. You see, since *fiacres* got their liberty, we have lost our right hand, I may say. To be sure, they are, or ought to be, numbered; but the night vehicles often evade the law. How did we know that the lady went straight from the Havre station to the Hôtel du Parc? By the cabman! But, unluckily, no cabman can be found to say that he took her away on the next morning. Yet it is very certain that she only spent one night there."

"Perhaps she took a porter," suggested Mr. Templemore, "and went on foot?"

"No porter in the neighbourhood knows anything about her," replied the high official, who seemed perfectly conversant with every particular of the case. "We shall have hard work, sir—hard work. It is not easy to find people who are either unwilling or unable to help us."

"Unable!" said Mr. Templemore; "in what sense, may I ask?"

"We have now several cases of mysterious dis-

appearance on hand," evasively replied the high official, "and they are all utterly inexplicable. Take this, for instance, which I shall call number one. A foreign nobleman of high rank, free from debt or embarrassment of any kind, so far as our knowledge extends, leaves his hotel one fine summer morning, and returns no more. He goes out on foot, but is seen driving in a common *fiacre* an hour later. This, and no more, is all the knowledge we have of his movements. His servants can give no clue, his relatives know nothing; and yesterday his landlord sold his carriages, his horses, and his furniture, to cover the rent, which happens to be high. Where is that young man? Is he hiding, and if so, for what reason? Is he dead, and how came he by his death? These, sir, are matters on which the keenest search has given us no sort of information."

Mr. Templemore looked impatient.

"A young man's freak," he said.

"Very likely; but number two has another complexion. An Indian merchant sends his wife, his sister, and his two children to Paris. The wife is young—not beautiful—pious and charitable—a fond wife and a fonder mother. Her life is spent

in the greatest retirement. She seldom goes out alone. Well, sir, on an unlucky day, when the sister-in-law is out, the young wife goes out too—on business, she tells her maid—and she never comes back. Weeks and months are devoted to the closest search, and we cannot find one trace of her—not one. Did she go out on some charitable errand, and fall into some dreadful trap, or was she a false wife? Heaven knows, sir; we do not—but I forgot to tell you that she sent for a carriage—a common *fiacre*—and that we can find no trace of the same."

Drops of perspiration were standing on Mr. Templemore's forehead.

"You spoke of a trap, sir—allow me to suggest that you thus pay a poor compliment to the Parisian police. Surely all evil-doers are under her special control and notice."

The high official smiled.

"I doubt, sir, if you imagine how far that notice and control extend. What will you think, sir, when I tell you that we have not merely the most accurate description of our black sheep over all France, but that, thanks to Caselli's telegraphic apparatus, their portraits and their autographs, sir,

can be sent in a few moments to no matter what remote or obscure station."

"Then what trap can be feared?" impatiently asked Mr. Templemore.

"We find some cases inexplicable on any other hypothesis. Take Number Three, the last case with which I shall trouble you. A gentleman of middle age, of retired habits and literary tastes, holding a responsible though not lucrative position, suddenly declares that he must take a short journey on some private business. He takes little or no luggage with him; he is known to have but a small sum of money in his possession; he even leaves or forgets a hundred francs on the table in his room, and still, declaring that he shall not be more than twenty-four hours away, he enters a cab, which he had himself secured on his way home from his office to his private residence. The cabman no doubt knew whither to drive, for though the *concierge* stood at the door to listen, the man received no direction within her hearing. From that day to this we have not been able to get the least knowledge of Number Three. And do you know who Number Three was, sir?" asked the high official, rising, and laying his hand on

Mr. Templemore's arm; "he was one of the chief men in our telegraphic office—the very man, sir, at whose suggestion the Caselli apparatus was first adapted to the detection of criminals."

If the high official had told Mr. Templemore all this to damp Mr. Templemore's ardour, and prepare him for ultimate defeat, he succeeded. Mr. Templemore looked turned to stone, and unable to speak. A trap!—for to that fearful suggestion his mind reverted—a trap in which his young wife might have fallen!—a trap so deep down in the dark nether world of crime, that, living or dead, it would never restore her to light! Was anything so sickening, so frightful possible? He could not believe it, and with a strong effort he shook off the loathsome thought, and said, firmly,

"Excuse me, sir, if I tell you that in this great —this civilized city, perfect concealment of crime is next to impossible."

"For ever, very true; but for a time justice can be baffled. In the three cases I have mentioned we have found no corpses. The Morgue has told us nothing, the river has yielded back no victim, the lime-kilns and stone-quarries, which abound round Paris, as you may know, have been

searched in vain, the vast sewers in this city have not screened the dead—in short, we are compelled to conclude that these missing persons have fled, and are hiding willingly, or that they have been foully dealt with, and buried in some hidden spot. That they may have been conveyed away forcibly is just possible, but wholly improbable."

"May I ask which you consider the more likely hypothesis of the two?" inquired Mr. Templemore, as calmly as he could.

"I consider the chances equal. Crime is but too frequent, as we all know; and we all know, too, that seemingly unruffled lives often hide something which may make flight needful. The motive is not always apparent, but it exists, for all that. However, in this case we will for the present take a third hypothesis—that of ill-luck. A letter may have been written which you did not receive; some designing or foolish person may have broken the chain of evidence, and wantonly given us all this work, but it does not follow that we may not find the missing link again. We may find it to-day, or, maybe, in three weeks. Our agents are keen, cool, and steady, and we spend five millions a year."

He ceased, and Mr. Templemore, after a brief pause, which showed him that he had no more to learn, rose slowly and took his leave. But unreality was around him, and walked in his steps. The streets, the houses in them, the men and women whom he met, were all shadowy and dim. He had but one thought, and that was torture; but little by little the morbid and unnatural fear vanished. No, Dora had neither been kidnapped nor ensnared. She had fled from him in resentment, and it might be hard to find her again; but find her he must. He was sure of it—even as sure as that he could charm away her wrath.

By the time Mr. Templemore reached his hotel, he was as sanguine and as hopeful as ever. The event seemed to justify his anticipations. That very evening he received news from the police which made him flush up with joy. He seized his hat, went downstairs, and left the hotel without saying a word to anyone.

And now the high official had an excellent opportunity, if he chose to avail himself of it, to add Number Four to the list of his mysterious disappearances. Mr. Templemore did not return that night, nor the next morning, nor for days that

lengthened into weeks. He had left his trunk, his carpet-bag, his books, and even some money behind him, so great had been his haste, and still he neither returned, nor wrote, nor gave any clue to his whereabouts.

The master of the hotel was at first satisfied with scoring down the absent lodger's rooms to his account, but when a whole fortnight had passed by he cleared the apartments of Mr. Templemore's property, let them to other guests, and went and laid the whole matter before the police.

The police knew he was not in Paris, but they knew no more; the story spread and created a sensation, then it became a legend of the hotel, and still Mr. Templemore did not return.

CHAPTER XV.

AS there can be nothing in this world which does not belong to some one, so the legend of Mr. Templemore's disappearance was early appropriated and pertinaciously retained by the concierge in his late hotel. He had but one way of delivering it, but that was effective. Whenever a new-comer entered his comfortable room, and made inquiries concerning apartments to be had, the concierge would ejaculate thoughtfully: "Why, yes, there is Number Seven, the apartment of the poor gentleman who vanished so mysteriously; but did you say *one* room, sir? Then Number Seven will not do; better have Number Fifteen."

Paris was very busy just then with mysterious disappearances. Number Three had been found drowned in England, but how he had come by that fatal end no one could say. It might be a suicide—it might be worse. A mystery it was, and would probably remain till the great Judgment

Day—the revealer of all secrets. Now, the owner of Mr. Templemore's legend cherished the secret hope that it would have some such tragic ending. Thus—Part the First: a mystery. Part the Second: clearing of the mystery by a second mystery, never to be cleared on any account.

But it was not to be. A traveller came one afternoon, a sceptical traveller, a Thomas of Dydymus, who sharply interrupted the legend, and denied it peremptorily, and asked "what ridiculous story this was?"

"Monsieur!" indignantly exclaimed the concierge; but he said no more. He stared with open mouth and eyes at the stranger, in whom he recognized Mr. Templemore himself. He was much worn, and looked haggard, but his identity could not be disputed, and thus ended Number Four and the legend.

Trouble and Mr. Templemore had been closely acquainted since we saw him last. Acting on information from the police, which convinced him that he had at length found his wife, Mr. Templemore had gone to a boarding-house in Passy, and asked to see Mrs. Foster, exactly a quarter of an hour after that lady had gone to England. He

followed her at once, but reached the station ten minutes after the departure of the train. He took an express train, but the same ill-luck pursued him. There was an accident, the train was delayed two hours, and when Mr. Templemore reached Boulogne, he could see from the pier the smoke of a steamer fading away on the horizon. Mrs. Foster, he learned without a doubt, was on board.

This was but the first step in a keen pursuit, which ended in blank disappointment. For several weeks Mr. Templemore was on the unknown Mrs. Foster's track; then she suddenly vanished, and was found no more. Was she really Dora? He did not even know that; he knew nothing, he could learn nothing. If the grave had received his wife, she could scarcely have vanished more completely than this from all knowledge of the living. No one had seen, no one seemed ever to have known her. It was as if the being who was so dear to him had lived for himself alone, for Mr. Templemore could find no token of her vacant place. To have vanished was for Dora to have been forgotten.

Wearied and disheartened, Mr. Templemore returned to Paris, and, even before going to his

hotel, called again upon the high official; but that gentleman was out of town, and in his stead Mr. Templemore found a nervous little man, who knew nothing, who would say nothing, and who was evidently most anxious to get rid of his visitor.

He would place the matter in the hands of Durand; Durand was sure to know everything about it; Durand would call upon Mr. Templemore, and save him the trouble of coming again. Yes, Durand would be sure to call and tell him, even if there was nothing to tell. It was useless to insist, and though burning with secret indignation and impatience, Mr. Templemore had to submit and take his leave.

For two days he waited. But no Monsieur Durand appeared. No letter, no message even, came to set at rest the fever in which he lived. On the evening of the second day, Mr. Templemore, who had not left his room, went out, but he could not stay away more than a few minutes. He turned back as eager as if he had been away on a long journey, and expected news on his return. He entered the lodge of the concierge, and looking at him searchingly, he said,

"No letter?"

"None for Monsieur."

"And no message?"

"None of any kind; Monsieur," added the concierge, looking injured, "has been gone three minutes."

"I did not ask you how long I had been gone," replied Mr. Templemore, with a sort of fierceness —so the concierge called it—in his looks, which greatly affronted that dignitary. Unconscious, perhaps, of the asperity of his reply, Mr. Templemore went back to his apartment.

"I must renew the search on my own account," he thought, as he paced his room up and down, "even though I fail again, and allow myself to be led away by a mere *ignis fatuus*; the search itself will relieve me, and this waiting, this suspense, is maddening."

He had scarcely come to this conclusion when he heard a low tap at his door.

"Come in," he said, with a sudden beating of the heart, that came from neither hope nor fear, but that partook of both.

The door opened, and a low thin man, with a bundle under his arm, entered the room.

"Are you Monsieur Durand?"

"I am, sir."

"Have you found her?"

"I have not exactly found the lady, sir, but I bring some information about the lady."

Mr. Templemore's face fell. He wanted Dora. If they had her not, he cared little about their information.

Monsieur Durand resumed, composedly:

"Something was astray, too, and so I could not come at once."

"What have you got there? What do you come to tell me?"

Mr. Templemore spoke hastily. This Monsieur Durand was hateful to him. He was a pale, thin man, with restless eyes, and as Mr. Templemore met their look, he could not help thinking that if, instead of seeking out the fugitive to bring her back to the fondness of a repentant husband, their task had been to hunt her down to shame or death, they would have done it without shrinking and remorse.

Whether Monsieur Durand guessed or not the feeling with which he was regarded by Mr. Templemore, he preserved his composure, and replied very calmly,

"An English lady in mourning, young and pretty, lived in a furnished room, let by the owner of a *bric-à-brac* shop, Rue de la Serpe. She was Madame Smith."

He looked at Mr. Templemore.

"Well," he said impatiently, "Madame Smith has left the place, I suppose?"

"Oh! yes, she has left it. And after she left a young Englishman came and inquired after her—a good deal; I suppose it was not Monsieur?"

The blood rushed up into Mr. Templemore's face.

"A gentleman! what gentleman?" he asked sharply, for he thought of John Luan.

But Monsieur Durand's knowledge did not extend thus far. He shook his head—he could not tell.

"Well, and what about Madame Smith?" asked Mr. Templemore, after a brief pause, "for I suppose you have something to tell me."

"I have, sir," and Monsieur Durand began untying the bundle. He drew forth a woman's dress, black, but dreadfully rumpled, and he inquired "if Monsieur knew that?"

"It is impossible for me to know it," replied Mr. Templemore; "that mourning—if it belongs

to my wife—was purchased whilst I was away."

"And linen—would Monsieur know linen?"

Mr. Templemore saw Monsieur Durand's hands fumble at something white.

"The mark will tell us," he said, eagerly approaching.

"Ah! there is none, unluckily," remarked Monsieur Durand; "look!" and he showed him that the mark had been cut out.

"Then how can I tell?" impatiently asked Mr. Templemore. "What are these things?—how did you get them?"

"I will tell Monsieur directly how they came into the hands of the police; but I may remark, first, that the linen is fine, and that the dress, though spoiled, is almost new, and was expensive. And now I will tell Monsieur all about them. That Madame Smith to whom they belonged took the room in the Rue de la Serpe several weeks ago. She was in mourning; she spoke little and cried often. A week after taking her room she left it one evening, and never came back. Her trunk was empty, but her rent had been paid in advance, so her landlady had nothing to say. On that same evening, however—that is to say, the

fifteenth of July, when there was a great storm—a woman in mourning climbed up on the ledge of the Pont de la Concorde, and leaped into the Seine. Three days later her body was found and taken to the Morgue, where it was identified by her landlady; and these," calmly continued Monsieur Durand, "are the clothes she wore."

On the evening of the fifteenth of July!—that is to say on the evening when he was at the play, when he paid for the diamond cross, when he travelled home through the storm to seek her! On that evening this woman, who was supposed to be his wife, had committed suicide!

"It is impossible!" at length exclaimed Mr. Templemore. "I will believe anything else—that never! Take those things away," he added angrily, looking at the clothes, which had kept such strong traces of their three days' sojourn in the water; "and let me never hear of that Madame Smith again!"

"Then Monsieur would rather not see the photograph!" said Monsieur Durand, leisurely tying up the bundle.

"What photograph?" sharply asked Mr. Templemore.

"Oh! it was taken after death, you know."

A cold fear crept to Mr. Templemore's very heart, but he would not yield to it.

"Show it to me," he said briefly.

Monsieur Durand fumbled in his pocket, and drew forth a photograph ten inches square. As he first unwrapped and then handed it to Mr. Templemore, he said,

"It had gone astray; and, to say the truth, that is why Monsieur had to wait two days."

Mr. Templemore did not heed or even hear him. He stared breathless at that image of the dead—so cold, so calm, and so awfully like her, and the very beatings of his heart seemed to grow still. Yes, thus he had seen her sleeping, with closed eyes and half-parted lips; but in another slumber than this. How heavy seemed this sleep! The voice of love would never bid those pale lids unveil the bright eyes he remembered so well—never more would those lips smile half fondly, half shyly as he spoke. The head which a stranger's hand had placed on the pillow had sunk upon it in such weariness of all earthly things, that it could never be raised again. Life held nothing—no love, no voice, no aspect which could

waken this slumberer from her charmed sleep. She was locked in it for ever and for ever.

Was it thus? he thought. Perhaps not, but it was thus he felt in the first bitter agony of that moment. "Oh! my God, can it be she?" he exclaimed, with parched lips—"can it be she?"

The doubt following on awful certainty was a sort of exquisite relief. For this dead woman might not be Dora after all. A dreadful past, a bitter story, might have led her to a despairing death, and she might not be his wife. Perhaps even she was not so very much like her. Surely there had been nothing—nothing which could drive Dora to despair like this? He looked again, but he was not calm enough to see well; there was a mist in his eyes, his hand shook, he dreaded that fatal resemblance; but his will, which was a strong one, prevailed and conquered that weakness. Once more he saw that image, and oh! how he blessed Heaven from the fulness of his heart—it already seemed less like!

"This lady was older than my wife," said Mr. Templemore; "older and thinner."

"Photographs make people look old," remarked Monsieur Durand.

"She was older than my wife," persisted Mr. Templemore, almost angrily; "besides, I cannot trust a photograph—every one knows that light, that position, that the slightest accident can produce a complete change in a face, dead or living."

He looked defiantly at Monsieur Durand, who did not answer one word. He had not come to argue or to convince. All this was nothing to him. Opposition could have made Mr. Templemore vow that this dead woman had never been his wife; but this cold silence threw him back on dreadful uncertainty.

"Is that all?" he asked feverishly; "is there no more?—do you know no more?"

"No more," laconically echoed Monsieur Durand; "I went to the Rue de la Serpe to learn something before I came to Monsieur, but there was nothing."

"What colour was her hair of?" suddenly asked Mr. Templemore.

Monsieur Durand looked annoyed. "Brown, I believe; but they were very negligent, I am sorry to say—they took none."

Monsieur Durand said this in a tone which implied plainly that if the case had been in his hands,

so important a link in the chain of evidence would never have been broken.

There was a brief pause, then Mr. Templemore said, "Take me to that Rue de la Serpe."

Monsieur Durand bowed, and said not a word. He was one of the modern slaves of the lamp, and to obey the master of the lamp—namely, the owner and dispenser of a certain amount of Napoleons—was his duty.

It is easy to deny; but, alas! denial is not always unbelief.

Mr. Templemore followed his conductor, and felt in a sort of stupor. Could his keen and anxious search for a loved and living wife end thus in the great gap and dark pit of Death? Could the tender frame which had been so dear to him have drifted helplessly down the dark river, with the chill waters flowing over that loved face, and loosening the long bright hair his hand had caressed so fondly?

There is an unreality in the death of what we love, which strong minds feel as well as the weak. Death was familiar to Mr. Templemore's mind, but not the death of a passionately loved woman. It was not a certainty yet, and he could not and

would not believe it ; but beyond that revolt and denial loomed a possibility which invested the present and every surrounding object with the vagueness of a dream. The living streets through which he passed had something abstract about them—they were and they were not. The roll of the carriages, the sounds of life, came from afar, and their din and tumult were softened by that distance which one thought placed between him and all surrounding things. He did not believe it, and yet he shuddered as he saw the swollen Seine flowing on to the sea, and bearing away with it to that great bourne, many an unknown human burden. If it were true!

They passed by the Morgue. He saw Monsieur Durand glance towards it. He looked at it too—with what secret horror! If it were true! If she had really rested there on one of those cold stone slabs which he remembered so well! Oh! Heaven, was that the bed he had made for her! He revolted against the foul thought—he bade it defiance. In the name of the love which, though but for a few days, had bound them so fondly, he bade it begone. It was not possible that she had thus despaired of love and life—that she whom he had

known so joyous, with a brave, warm heart and a living faith, had thus violently and sinfully denied both.

It was not possible; but he breathed more freely when they left the river behind them. They entered a narrow stone world, dark and stifling, and yet seemed to come no nearer to the goal of their journey. At length Monsieur Durand stood still, and when Mr. Templemore came up to him, he said,

"This is the Rue de la Serpe, and yonder, where you see the *bric-à-brac* shop, is the house. Shall I go with Monsieur, or does he wish to go alone?"

"I shall go alone. You need not wait for me, thank you."

Monsieur Durand bowed, turned tbe corner of a street, and vanished. Perhaps he did not go very far, after all, but Mr. Templemore neither knew nor cared. The setting sun filled the street with its level rays, and half blinded him as he walked up to the *bric-à-brac* shop. Oh! that the street had had no ending—that this goal had never been reached, if it was to lead to cruel knowledge!

The house was mean and narrow. Above the door dangled a yellow bill with "Furnished Room to Let." The shop was one of the poorest of its

kind. Here were no rare relics of the past, each telling the story of a king's reign. No tapestry, no Sèvres, no Boucher and Watteau shepherdesses, no traces even of Revolution and Empire, or tokens of the East, in blue vases and gilt dragons, were there. Mr. Templemore saw nothing but the dingy, commonplace and dilapidated ruins of the present generation. Shattered mahogany chests of drawers, ruined card-tables, with the green baize half torn off, faded artificial flowers in common china vases under dusty glass shades, and showy little gilt clocks abounded. But commonplace though all these objects were, they were also very dreary. They told of ruined and broken homes, and told it without the softening grace of the past.

Mr. Templemore entered the shop. A stout, middle-aged woman came forward, and asked his pleasure.

"You have a furnished room to let," he replied —"let me see it."

"This way, sir;" and leaving the shop in the care of a child, she showed him up a dark, steep staircase, into a small, gloomy bedroom, which, spite the heat of the day, felt strangely chill. Why are these places alike all the world over?

Why do they all bear the same cold, homeless look, which, with every difference of climate and manners, we recognize at once? Mr. Templemore looked about him, but the plain bed of walnut-tree wood, the chest of drawers and toilet-table, told him no story. Everything was tolerably clean and dreadfully comfortless. He went to the window and opened it. Below him lay a small yard. The greenish hue of the stones with which it was paved told of habitual damp. A tall, miserable-looking pump stood in one corner. A few flowers in pots, withering for want of sun and pure air, had been placed near it, heaven knows for what purpose. High walls dotted with windows enclosed this court, and made a well of it. Mr. Templemore shut the window with a slight shiver. Was it possible that her eyes had gazed on that dreary prospect? Had she lain and brooded over her wrongs in that wretched bed, until she rose on her last morning, resolved to end all that night? Oh! insufferable thought!

"It is a pleasant room, sir," said the *marchande* cheerfully—"nice and airy."

"Yet some people might object to it," replied Mr. Templemore.

"Why should they, sir?" was the prompt reply.

"You know my meaning," he said.

"Ah! about the poor lady. Why, sir, she did not do it here. She was not even brought home here."

She spoke of it in a commonplace, matter-of-fact tone that sickened him. He could bear this no longer. He opened his pocket-book, and took out a paper, which contained a lock of Dora's hair.

Brief though Mr. Templemore's wooing had been, he and Dora had nevertheless read together a few opening chapters of the long, fair book of love. One day, when he pressed her to importunity to accept a gift from him, and she refused, with the proud, sad question, "What can I give you in return, Mr. Templemore?" he had lifted up one of the locks of hair she wore tied with a blue ribbon at the back of her head in a nymph-like fashion, which he had praised once, and he had said, with a smile, "You could give me this." "Hair is too dear," mischievously answered Dora. Mr. Templemore, who knew that a lady's locks are not always her own, blushed. Dora laughed, and Mrs. Courtenay, untying the blue ribbon, let her daughter's long rich curls flow loosely, and at once cut off one, which she triumphantly placed in

Mr. Templemore's hand. It was Dora's turn to look rueful, and his to smile. He had reached the age, indeed, when even an enamoured man does not think it a priceless boon to have a lock of a beloved woman's hair; besides, that bright head was almost his, and such instalments lose in value when possession is near and sure; but there is a pleasure in receiving the keys of a conquered citadel, even though its capitulation be imminent; and so, as he held this token of her subjection, Mr. Templemore looked at his future wife with gentle and not unkind triumph, and the lock thus won he kept very carefully—it was useless, but it was dear. Now, however, its use had come. That lock of hair might save him from long misery.

"Was her hair like this?" he asked, in a broken voice, and with a face so pale that the woman drew back startled. "Speak! Oh! for God's sake, speak!" he urged. "Tell me the truth, whatever that may be."

"I know nothing, sir," replied the *marchande;* "I never saw the poor lady. It was my cousin who kept the shop then."

"Your cousin, where is she? She must tell me —she shall!"

His looks and his tones had passed from grief to menace. But there is one with whom we must reckon in every human emergency, a grim keeper of secrets, whom no threats can terrify, whom no promises can bribe, and that one now chose to step in between Mr. Templemore and the knowledge he wanted.

"My cousin is dead, sir," said the *marchande.*

Dead! That woman whom he had delayed to question till the last moment, so much did he dread her reply, was now for ever beyond his reach. He was baffled again; another dead woman stood between him and the truth; yet it was a terrible sort of relief to feel that he could not get at the fatal certainty; to doubt meant to hope.

"And so that was her hair," said the woman, looking curiously at the lock of hair which his passive hand still held; "very beautiful hair—I remember my poor cousin said so."

She looked both inquisitive and interested. He saw that the knowledge he so dreaded would be welcome to that woman. She wanted the mystery of that drama to be solved, and there would be a grim satisfaction to her in the knell of all his hopes. He hurriedly hid the hair from her sight.

He would not trust her. In her wish to find a meaning to the sad story of the unknown dead, she might deceive herself and help to deceive him.

"I think it was chiefly by her hair my cousin identified the poor lady," continued the *marchande*; "I know it was beautiful hair."

Mr. Templemore heard her and was mute; the conviction and the hope with which he had entered this place were leaving him inch by inch. He did his best to keep them—he grasped them as a drowning man grasps his last plank of safety, and they would not abide with him. They floated farther and farther away on the dark and dismal sea of doubt. He did not indeed believe that the suicide and his wife were one, but then he was no longer sure that they were not. He could not speak, he could not argue, he could not even hear this mentioned. He went down stairs, and slipping some money in the child's hand, he left the shop without saying a word. He walked away, not knowing whither he went, neither thinking nor remembering aught beyond a ceaseless question, which ever rang within him like a knell, "Was it Dora?"

When thought returned to Mr. Templemore, he

was standing on the quays, with the river, the bridges, and a distant prospect of church towers on one hand, and the verdure of trees on the other. The soft bluish mists of evening were abroad, and rosy clouds, still flushed with the sunset, floated across the sky. It was a fair and delicious picture, and yet Mr. Templemore felt as if it broke his heart. His fortitude seemed to give way every time he gazed on those dark green waters, and still he lingered near them. Gradually his steps led him to that bridge built with the stones of the Bastille, whence the dead woman was said to have taken her fatal spring. The palace of the Corps Legislatif rises at one end of the bridge, and at the other extends the Place de la Concorde, with its eight statues of the cities of France, its bronzed fountains, and its old Egyptian obelisk. The night was one of full moon, and it was both bright and calm. The reflection of the lights burning on distant bridges scarcely quivered in the waters of the quiet river. Mr. Templemore looked at it as he walked up and down the bridge, striving against the cruel tempter who ever whispered: "What if it should be true?"

It is strange how hateful senseless, inanimate

objects can become when such a mood as Mr. Templemore's is upon us. Every time he came back to the palace of the French Legislative Assembly, and saw the statues of Sully, d'Aguesseau, l'Hôpital, and Colbert, who sit so calmly guarding its wide gates, a sort of wrath at their stillness and unchanging attitude, at that peace of the grave which had been theirs so long, and now seemed transmitted to their stone effigies, rose within him.

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 as he 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.

At length he turned homewards. He passed by one of the Cafés Chantants. The little stage looked bright in the darkness of the surrounding trees. Three girls in scarlet cloaks were sitting, a fourth in blue stood and sang. "She is consumptive," thought Mr. Templemore, giving her a critical look. "Poor little thing, how long will she last, with those bare shoulders and the night air?" He had stopped for a moment; he now walked on, and as he thus turned away he saw a pale, stern face behind him—the face of John Luan.

"Pray hear the singer out," said the young man; "I should be sorry to interfere with your pleasure."

He got no answer. There was something in his aspect which sent a chill to Mr. Templemore's heart. It was as if his fate had risen from the darkness of the night, and now stood before him. They both remained a few moments silent, then John Luan spoke again.

"I come to bring you the news you asked of me two months back. I learned, no matter how, that you were in Paris, and I followed you for that."

Still Mr. Templemore did not answer, but he walked beyond the circle of the crowd, and John Luan followed him. When they stood alone near one of the gas-lights of the avenue, John Luan said,

"I bring you news of your wife, Mr. Templemore—she is dead!"

"'Tis false!" angrily replied Mr. Templemore, speaking for the first time.

"She is dead," doggedly said John Luan. "You have killed her—remember that. You took her to your house young, innocent, and happy, and you disgraced her—I know it all now—you robbed her of fair name, peace, and finally of life—remember that, I say! Your wife is dead!"

"How and when did she die?"

"That you shall never know from me. She died a cruel, despairing death. That much I can tell you."

"I defy you to prove it!" said Mr. Templemore, trembling with passion.

"I shall never attempt to do that," replied John Luan, with a cold, stern smile, "never. She has been dead two months, and two months I have known it, and I have not said a word, I have not made a sign. Did you think that I would help

you, you her murderer, to happiness and liberty? Did you think that any assistance of mine would enable you to marry Florence Gale? No—she is dead, but you shall never be able to prove it. You shall never recover and enjoy your liberty. If you really doubt, you shall doubt on, and be thus chastised. And if you do not doubt, yet, as you shall never be able to impart your certainty to others, so shall you again be chastised. And thus," added John Luan, looking him steadily in the face, "I shall have my revenge."

"Your revenge, because Dora loved me!" replied Mr. Templemore, with much indignation. "If I did not think you half mad, Mr. Luan—for your language is not that of a sane man—I would tell you that my revenge for your malice will be to recover my wife and be happy with her. You say she is dead, and I tell you she is living! I tell you nothing shall convince me that she and the unhappy woman of the Rue de la Serpe were one. You see I am better informed than you think, and yet I am not convinced. I have seen the house, the room, the clothes, the photograph even of the dead woman, and I tell you, for your comfort, that she was not your cousin and my wife."

John Luan looked confounded, but he soon recovered, and said,

"You were not in Paris, Mr. Templemore, when she was taken out of the water, not very far from this spot; I was. You were away when she was brought to the Morgue; I was here, and I saw her. I saw her lying dead before me. I have known her from childhood, and I tell you I saw her. I stood behind the grating as she lay there cold and inanimate. I tell you I saw her. I neither claimed nor identified her—why should I set you free?—but I saw her. And now you may believe me or not—it matters very little. I am mad—am I? Good night, Mr. Templemore."

He laughed scornfully, and walked away, and Mr. Templemore let him go. He felt stunned. Was it true? Had John Luan really seen her? Had he been mistaken in her identity—such things have been—or was it really Dora? Was that photograph, so strangely like her, the true image of his dead wife? And yet what is there in a likeness? Was not Nanette's enamel portrait, of a woman who had been dead two hundred years, like Dora?

"But not so like as this," thought Mr. Templemore, with sudden anguish; "besides, he should

know her. Only he may be mad, or a liar; this may be a plot to deceive me."

Imagination is a tormenting gift. As Mr. Templemore walked home under the arcades 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 for ever?"

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, perjuring herself to commit bigamy with John Luan!

How could he think it, and yet remember how utterly 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.

For, after all, Mr. Templemore doubted. He had faith and hope, but no certitude. Even if his wife were not now sleeping in an unknown grave, he had her not, he knew nothing of the road she had taken, of the spot that held her, and, hard fate, he knew not how to seek for her. No mariner lost at sea, with neither chart nor compass, could be more at a loss than he was.

It was inevitable, perhaps, that something of resentment should mingle with these thoughts. For, after all, he did not think he had deserved to be so deserted, with abandonment so complete, and silence so scornful. Dora might have remembered their dignity, ere she had thus laid bare to the world the sad secrets of their married life. And thus one after the other the angry thoughts came rising slowly, but surely, like the waves of a sullenly wrathful sea, drowning in their tide tenderness, regret, and even the fair image of hope, till suddenly Mr. Templemore's eyes fell on the photograph. Monsieur Durand had taken the other things; this he had either forgotten or left designedly. Mr. Templemore took it in his hand, and looked at it. How like it seemed, and how the likeness grew as he looked on !

"If I could believe it," he thought, and his lips quivered as he said it to his own heart—"if I could think this image showed her poor dead face, and that unkindness of mine had driven her to such a death, life would henceforth be a blank page, one on which neither love, nor hate, nor happiness, nor enjoyment could ever again be written for me."

Many have said such things in the bitterness of

remorse, or in the first burst of grief; but how many have abided by them?

"God help me!" thought Mr. Templemore in the agony of his doubt—"God help me! It is cruelly like her!" And still he held it and gazed on, and he could not put the image by.

CHAPTER XVI.

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 favourite patience, to bring anything like it there. But nothing was incredible or impossible after such a calamity; and there could be no doubt about it—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 splendours of Les Roches!

"I do believe the girl must be crazy!" thought Mrs. Courtenay—"as crazy as her poor aunt!"

Here Dora's voice singing gaily in the next room added fuel to the fire of Mrs. Courtenay's indignation.

"Garry Owen indeed!" she thought; "a pretty time to sing about Garry or Terry, or Jerry even!"

What Jerry had to do with it no one could have said, not even Mrs. Courtenay; but the three names certainly relieved her, for the frown was gone when Dora entered the room, in full song, as her mother mentally called it.

Dora had never looked brighter, gayer, or more cheerful than she looked now. Never in the hopeful days of her girlhood had she had a sunnier look than that which she wore on this day. But for all her cheerfulness, Dora's cheeks were pale and thin, and gaily though she sang, her eyes were sunk. Perhaps, too, Mrs. Courtenay might have noticed or remembered, that, in the old happy days, Dora's songs had been sad—doleful, her mother called them—whereas now they were light and gay, when they were not actually merry. But Mrs. Courtenay was not a very clear-sighted person, and Dora's gaiety now so far exasperated her,

that she sat mute and sulky, and folded her arms in silent protest.

"What! can't you get on with the patience?" asked Dora in her lightest voice, and with a little ringing silvery laugh. "Let me try."

She sat down and stretched her hand towards the cards; but Mrs. Courtenay took them up, made a packet of them, and deliberately put them underneath the cushion of the chair on which she was sitting; after which she looked rather sternly at her daughter.

Dora laughed again. She laughed very often now.

"What have I done now?" she asked, in her cheerful, good-humoured voice; "come, tell me my new sin, mamma."

"Dora, I am very angry," solemnly said Mrs. Courtenay. "Why did you lure me away from Les Roches to—to this horrible little hole!" she added, suddenly raising her voice into her favourite little scream.

"Dear mamma," replied Dora, looking amused, "it was agreed we wanted a change—and you know Les Roches was a dreadful place, after what happened to poor Aunt Luan. And this is a

lovely spot, and not a horrible little hole, as you very unkindly call it."

"Why did we not go to Ireland?" asked Mrs. Courtenay. "I have been very happy with my dear husband, and Paul and you, and even with poor Mrs. Luan, in Ireland. And it is quite absurd, Dora, that we should be living here in this ridiculous little place, instead of being down at Deenah! Deenah was my 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.

"Dear mamma," she said gaily, "if he does not care enough for me to come and seek me, I cannot help it, can I? And it is no use being vexed or angry about it—he did not marry me for love, you know."

"And how does he know where you are?" angrily asked Mrs. Courtenay; "just tell me that?"

"He will find it out when he wants me," replied Dora, with a pretty toss of her bright head.

"Dora," said Mrs. Courtenay, with as much solemnity (and again we say it was not much) which she could convey into her look and manner, "are you getting frivolous? Why, you seem to have no conception of a wife's position and duty!"

"Dear mamma," gaily said Dora, "I was so short a time a wife! And I have always been light-hearted, you know. Why, Mr. Templemore said to me once, it was like sunshine to have me in a room, I was so bright a creature. For, you know, he used to make pretty speeches to me, even though he was in love with Mrs. Logan all the

time. And I suppose that sunny girls, if one may call them so, have no great depth of feeling. Another woman would fret and cry perhaps because Mr. Templemore is not coming. Better sing and be gay, as I am," added Dora, with her brightest smile.

"I never could understand you, Dora," said Mrs. Courtenay, looking profoundly puzzled; "never. You adored Paul, and when we lost him—" added Mrs. Courtenay, with a tremor in her voice.

"I was as gay as ever, after a time," suggested Dora. "Why, yes; you see, mamma, you are French, and I am Irish, that is the difference. We Irish," she added, looking very saucy, "are more Celtic than you are. And we are not half civilized yet, as the whole world can tell you. When we suffer we give a great cry, a terrible wail, like a keene over the dead; then we are gay and lively again, being, as the whole world also knows, a very merry people, light-hearted and light-headed. It is a dispensation of Providence, I have no doubt," added Dora, with a touch of irony; "but if I have my share of the national gift, why reproach me with it? After all, mamma, I suspect I am a more cheerful companion than if I had a solemn English

grief or a decorous French one. Then you have the comfort of knowing that when I leave you, as I must this afternoon, I am not fretting my heart out, but just taking life easily and merrily."

"Yes; but I wish you would not leave me," said Mrs. Courtenay, a little pettishly; "what can you want in Rouen to-day?"

"Must I not see about money—money?" gaily asked Dora; "good, kind Mr. Ryan is not here to help me now—I must do it all myself, you know."

Still, Mrs. Courtenay was querulous, and wondered why Dora must needs go to Rouen; but Dora gave her a kiss, told her not to wonder if she did not come in to tea, and ran upstairs to dress.

"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 downstairs unheard, and bade Mrs. Courtenay adieu by tapping at the parlour 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.

"She is getting a very disobedient girl," thought

Mrs. Courtenay, in some indignation. "I need not wonder she behaves so badly to Mr. Templemore when she treats *me* so."

But Mrs. Courtenay's wrath was never very long-lived. It gradually calmed down, and though she thought herself very ill-used, she took refuge and sought for consolation in a patience. But the pack of cards which she had so indignantly put away out of Dora's reach did not seem to Mrs. Courtenay a sufficiently lucky one.

"I shall do it for a wish," she thought, "and I shall take a fresh pack. If I succeed at once, it is a proof that Mr. Templemore will soon come and fetch us. If I have some trouble about it, as is likely, why, then we must wait, I suppose; and if I fail——" Here Mrs. Courtenay, who had risen, and was going upstairs for the cards, paused, with her hand on the lock, and stood still in some perplexity. She was not one of your bold spirits, who will stake their all on one cast, and trust Fate with too much, so she looked for a third alternative, which should neither be success nor failure, and she found it in the evasive bit of commonplace, "If I fail, it is sure proof that Mr. Templemore knows nothing about it." But about

what Mr. Templemore knew nothing, or how he could possibly be ignorant of Dora's flight, Mrs. Courtenay forgot to say to herself, and quite triumphant at the loophole through which she had escaped destiny, she went upstairs to look for her pack of cards. To her great annoyance, she found none in her room; she searched up and down, but no cards were to be got. Yet Dora had bought her a pack—it was only yesterday. Where had she put them? Mrs. Courtenay entered her daughter's room, a poor and meanly furnished one. Mrs. Courtenay's heart swelled. Were this low bed, with its shabby chintz curtains, this painted chest of drawers, that dilapidated wash-hand stand—were these fit for the mistress of Les Roches, and the wife of Richard Templemore?

"She must be crazy," indignantly thought Mrs. Courtenay; "her aunt Luan was mad"—they had heard of Mrs. Luan's death—"and Dora got it from her, and is crazy. But my mind is quite made up—I shall wait a while longer, then write to Mr. Templemore, and ask him what he means by letting his wife run away from him so. Now the cards must be in one of these drawers. I wonder in which?"

Mrs. Courtenay had a natural hatred of trouble. She tried to guess which drawer could possibly hold the cards she was looking for, but as none bore a label telling lookers-on its contents, she recklessly pulled one open, and began her search by a slow, careful survey.

Dora had taken very few things with her from Les Roches, a fact which, when she discovered it, greatly exasperated her mother. Linen, smelling sweetly of violet powder, now met her view; she closed the drawer pettishly, and tried the next. This held collars and sleeves, and a silk dress carefully folded. "One," angrily thought Mrs. Courtenay. She was closing that drawer too, when a little casket caught her eye. Were the cards in that? It had no lock, and Mrs. Courtenay opened it rather curiously. She saw some papers, and recognizing Paul's writing, she put them back with a dim eye and a trembling hand. Her step-son had been very dear to Mrs. Courtenay. Another paper, which she had taken out at the same time, fell on the floor. She picked it up. It was an envelope, on which Dora's hand had written, "The first and the last."

The first and the last! What could that mean?

The envelope was not sealed, but it was worn, as if it had been used often. Mrs. Courtenay did not ask herself what right she had to pry into her daughter's secrets, she took out the two papers which the envelope held, and she read them both. One was a note which Mr. Templemore had written to Dora as Doctor Richard, the other one was that which intimated her mother's banishment. One was Hope, as she had first come to a dreaming girl; the other was Reality, as she had visited a sorrowful woman. And both, though Mrs. Courtenay knew it not, had been read daily by Dora since she left Les Roches. Daily she had gone back with one to the exquisite visions of the past, and daily, too, she had been led by the other down to the unutterable bitterness of the present.

Mrs. Courtenay remained with the paper in her hand till she could not see it for tears. Then, meek and subdued in spirit as in bearing, she put it back, and went downstairs. But neither with the old nor with a fresh pack of cards did Mrs. Courtenay question fate under the guise of a patience. She sat in her chair crying silently, and now and then saying, in a low, broken voice, "It was for my sake, my poor Dora! It was all for me!"

CHAPTER XVII.

MR. RYAN'S advice concerning the shares in the Redmore Mines had been to sell out whilst they were at a premium, and Dora had gone to Paris for that purpose. The money had been placed in Mrs. Courtenay's name at a banker's in Rouen, and her daughter had therefore but to go and present a cheque to be paid. The transaction in itself could not betray her. Not that she cared for concealment; she neither sought nor shunned detection, but let events take their course recklessly. She saw no one whom she knew on her way to Rouen, and no one saw her; besides, her crape veil was thick, and protected her from the careless observation of strangers. But the cheque which Mrs. Courtenay had given her failed in some requirement, and the French clerk hesitated, and would not cash it. Seeing Dora's annoyance, he referred the matter to the head of the establishment; but he was out for an hour—would Dora

call again? She said she would, and left the house to wander about the streets of that city in which she no longer had a home. She shunned Notre Dame and its vicinity, and went towards Saint Ouen. She entered the little garden around the church, and sat there to rest, and as she sat she thought: "We must not stay here. Why should we? He has forgotten me. I must abide by my fate, and remember that, such as it is, I have chosen it. We must go back to Ireland and live there. He has forgotten and put me by! I shall let him feel and know that if I gave my love unsought, I, too, can conquer, and, if need be, pluck it out, and yet live on."

She could do it, but it was hard. Besides, Dora had not expected this. Few women seem to understand that love, even strong vehement love, is but one of the many features in a man's life. And Mr. Templemore had so many things to think of! He had his child, he had his poor, his studies, and his articles of virtu. Passionately though he had loved Dora, that passion could never have absorbed him for more than a time. He had not, indeed, borne his wife's flight with the scornful indifference she attributed to him; his search had

been keen, his grief had been great, but perhaps he had given up the one in despair, and perhaps there was a weary lull in the other; for though she was so near him he had failed to find her. "He scorns me," thought Dora, with a full heart. "Well, I do not scorn him, but I, too, can be proud!"

But pride is a cold comforter, and Dora felt it. She felt, too, what we all feel at some hour of our life, that her sorrow was too much for her.

"What ails me?" she thought, with a sort of despair; "he has deserted me, allowed me to go my own way, what ails me, that I cannot forget him, but must remember and suffer on."

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 later—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 thrown over the dusty garden. The noisy children, the servant girls, the gloomy mass of Saint Ouen, all vanished, and if they were seen it was with the thought—

"We will come here and study Saint Ouen, as he once promised me in Deenah that we should,

and every sorrow and every wrong shall be buried and forgotten—and it will be Paradise—Paradise !"

Delicious was the day-dream, but very brief. Voices talking behind her roused Dora. She awoke with a sigh, but yet did not feel all unhappy. The gates of Eden were only just closed, and its sweetness lingered around her still.

"Now, where are they ?" said a sharp, irritable voice, a woman's, in English. "Gussy, come here directly."

"I never heard anything like it," said another voice, feminine too; "how many weeks has his wife been dead ?"

"Not merely dead, but drowned. It was her cousin, that stupid Doctor Luan, who knew her," says Florence. "Gussy, stay here. Do you think these Grays handsome ?

"Handsome! they have not got a nose among them all. I wish they would not stare so at Saint Ouen. I do think, like Florence, that it is an old bore."

"How could she make up her mind to be a third wife ?"

"Oh! it was she whom he was to have married,

you know; only 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 scarlatina, 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!

How often do we feel this in life! How often, when a heavy blow comes, do we think, "Ah! the rest was nothing! This was the crowning catastrophe, the shipwreck, the last cause beyond which

there is no appeal." If she could but have doubted —but it was not in her power to do so. His name had not been mentioned, nor Mrs. Logan's, for Florence might belong to any one, and yet a certainty, against which she could not strive, entered her very soul and tortured it. He thought her dead, how or why mattered not—he thought it. There lay the full explanation of his silence. Alas! she had never thought of that. She had imagined that the voluntary forgetfulness of a bitter resentment weighed upon her. She had not thought that the cold oblivion of the grave already lay between her and her husband. He had forgiven her, she was sure of it now—her imaginary sins were buried in the mercy we extend to the dead. She was no more his wife, erring, indeed, but warm and living—she was that something impalpable and unseen, against which we can cherish no resentment. That thin veil, so thin, but so chill, which divides us even from the most beloved, had spread between her and him, and so his love had returned—oh! what wonder!—to the fond, childish Florence, the chosen one of his heart, and, after a decent time given for mourning, they would marry and be blest at last.

This fair future she must now break. A second time she must be the cause of Mr. Templemore's grief. Perhaps this thought overpowered her—perhaps the consciousness that her death had been welcomed as a deliverance was too much for her fortitude. She did not faint, she did not even lose consciousness, but when the sense of reality at last came back to her, she saw that a silent and wondering crowd had gathered around her. She looked vacantly at a woman's face, and saying, in a cold, monotonous voice, "I was unwell, but I am well now," she rose and walked away.

As fast as her limbs could bear her, she walked through the streets; with the eagerness of a lover going to a trysting-place, she hurried to meet her bitter woe. If happiness has its fever, so has sorrow—a cruel fever, which drives us on and spares not. A presentiment, strong as a certainty, told Dora that she would find the confirmation of the fatal tidings she had heard on her aunt's grave, and it did not deceive her. Day was declining as she entered the cemetery. She passed through the wooden crosses, and stone and marble slabs, till she reached Mrs. Luan's last resting-place. Yes, there it was, written beneath Mrs. Luan's name:—

In Memoriam,

DORA COURTENAY.

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!

"Surely these graves ought to calm me," thought Dora, looking round her; "surely the dead, who sleep here so soundly, admonish me, if I but heard them."

But the dead were silent, or their voices were very low, for when Dora left them they had taught her nothing.

Her first words, when she entered the room where her mother sat, alone and sad, were, "How cold it is!"

"How pale and ill you look!" said Mrs. Courtenay.

"Yes—it is so cold," replied Dora, shivering.

"Dora!" exclaimed her mother, rising, "you must go back to your husband!"

"Go back to him!" impetuously exclaimed Dora.

"Yes, you must. I know all. I know why you left him—I feel sure he is broken-hearted——"

"Broken-hearted!" interrupted Dora; "do you know that he thinks me dead, that there is a talk of his marrying Mrs. Logan, and that I have just read my own name inscribed on poor Aunt Luan's grave? Yes, weeds are beginning to choke the flowers John set there, I suppose; but my name is on it, and Mr. Templemore is a widower, and he is going to marry Mrs. Logan."

Mrs. Courtenay stared confounded. Nothing could exceed her amazement when Dora told her all she knew, unless it was her indignation, when her daughter added recklessly:

"Yes, it is so; and yet, mamma, I am going back to-day to Les Roches."

"You are going to leave me!" cried Mrs. Courtenay, and leaning back in her chair, she gazed with a look full of dismay on her daughter, who stood before her very pale, but very calm.

"I cannot help it," replied Dora, with a quivering lip. "He has forgotten me; he thinks me

dead; he is going to marry Mrs. Logan, they say; but, for all that, I must go. I am his wife, and when I married him I undertook to be the mother of his child. If he were with her I should write and merely tell him I am alive, for, you see, I would rather not read in his face what he must feel on seeing me; but I cannot help myself. Eva is left to the care of servants, or to that, scarcely better, of Mrs. Logan. I must be true to the child, who was always so true to me!"

"Yes, and Mr. Templemore will come back and keep you!" querulously said Mrs. Courtenay.

"He may not come back before Eva is well," replied Dora; "and surely," she added, very sadly, "he has shown no wish to keep me, mamma."

"But I say that he will keep you," persisted Mrs. Courtenay, who was now in tears, "and then what is to become of me?"

Dora knelt before her mother, and clasping Mrs. Courtenay's waist, she looked up fondly in her face.

"No one shall keep me from you," she said, with a smile. "If Mr. Templemore locks the doors I shall get out of the window. And I will come back—I will come back!"

Mrs. Courtenay looked down at her wistfully,

but she still thought: "I know he will keep Dora."

Her daughter had no such fear. She had never felt very sure of her husband's affection, and since the great bitterness which had divided them, she had felt that his love was gone from her, never to return. There was pain, there was humiliation in the thought of now going back to his house; and Dora had said it truly, she did it for the child. But Mrs. Courtenay thought, as she saw her depart: "She is still fond of him."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE greyness 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 anyone; 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; for a moment 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's nerves were naturally strong, and had just then been strengthened by a cordial of which he and the housemaid 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—very bad, I mean."

"Is she conscious?" asked Dora, fearing lest her sudden appearance should agitate or over-alarm the child.

Jacques shook his head. It was plain that

there was very little consciousness to be apprehended from Mr. Templemore's little daughter.

"Take that light," said Dora, handing it to him as she spoke. Her other hand was extended towards the lock of Eva's door; but Jacques, with a boldness and freedom he had never shown before, stepped in front of her, and effectually checked her entrance.

"Mademoiselle must excuse me," he said; "but I think Mademoiselle had better not go in now."

The blood rushed up to Dora's face, and dyed it crimson. It was not possible that her husband had given orders to deny her to his child. Her blush and her silence confirmed Jacques in his suspicion.

"I daresay that Mademoiselle can see Mademoiselle Eva to-morrow," he continued composedly, and laying a slight stress on the word that proclaimed Dora unwedded; "but she had better not see her now."

"Where is Mr. Templemore?" asked Dora.

"Monsieur is away, and that is just it. He left no orders about Mademoiselle."

This time Dora understood the insult. She reddened again with mingled indignation and

shame; but she scorned to acknowledge the taunt, and it was composedly that she said,

"The master of the house has no need to leave orders about its mistress, Jacques. Let me pass!"

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 remonstrative sullenness in his tone, he said,

"Madame Logan is there."

Dora's heart sickened within her. This was her welcome home. Mr. Templemore's servants insulted her, and the woman he loved had forestalled her, and taken her place by her husband's child. But keen though the pang was, it was also brief; and her look as it fell on Jacques said so expressively, "What about it?" that the man replied in a tone of excuse,

"I thought I had better tell Madame."

This time he thought it better to drop the offensive "Mademoiselle." Without further parley, Dora went up to the sick-room. She opened the

door and closed it again so noiselessly, that her entrance was not heard by Mrs. Logan. A look showed Dora that Florence was not alone. She stood at some little distance from Eva's white cot, talking to no less a person than Doctor Petit. The very man whom Mr. Templemore so much objected to had been called in to attend on his sick child! The light of a night lamp fell full on Mrs. Logan's pretty face, and showed it to be full of concern. She raised her little dark eyebrows, and gathered her rosy lips with an assumption of grave anxiety which might be yielded as much to decorum as to real uneasiness. At least, even in that moment Dora thought so.

"And so you are uneasy, Doctor Petit!" she said, with a look between perplexity and trouble; "really this is a great responsibility upon me, and I do wish that poor dear Miss Moore would recover, or that Mr. Templemore would return. Indeed, I wish both."

"My only uneasiness is lest my orders should not be attended to," sententiously said Doctor Petit. "Let my orders be attended to, and I answer for the result."

"Yes, but suppose your orders should not be

attended to!" pettishly retorted Florence; "I cannot be everywhere, can I?—and the responsibility is all the same. So I do wish, I do, Mr. Templemore would come back!"

As she uttered the words, she happened to turn round slightly. Dora stood before her, silent and rather pale, but with all the signs of life about her. On seeing her Josephine had uttered a cry of terror, and Jacques had looked bewildered and amazed; but it was blank dismay which appeared on Mrs. Logan's face as her rival thus returned from the grave to confront her. She stepped back, and clutched the doctor's arm, and gasped for breath, but she could not speak. Dora looked at her with sorrowful severity. She knew what feeling had brought Florence to Eva's sick-bed. It was not love for the child, it was not kindness or pity—it was the secret hope of winning back a past which her own act had forfeited—of conquering anew her lost lover, and perhaps, too, the master of Deenah and Les Roches.

"I am sorry to startle you, Mrs. Logan," she said, with much composure. "I believe a rumour of my death has been spread, and I can see that it has reached you. But, as you may perceive, I

am not dead, but living, and on learning Eva's illness, I came at once. May I ask, sir," she said, addressing Doctor Petit in French, "what you think of the child's state? I trust you are not uneasy?"

Doctor Petit did not answer at once. Mrs. Logan's agitation had struck him as very singular; he looked at her for some clue to guide him, but she had sunk down on a chair pale as death, and her emotion was unintelligible to him; so, looking at Dora, he said, point-blank,

"May I know whom I have the honour of addressing?"

"I am Mr. Templemore's wife, and Eva's stepmother," simply replied Dora.

Doctor Petit bowed, but looked more surprised than impressed—indeed, if Mrs. Logan's silence had not confirmed Dora's words, he would probably have looked incredulous; but as no denial came from that quarter, he was compelled to believe this stranger. As he had heard, however, that Mrs. Templemore had left her husband's house very suddenly, and as he had no sort of conception of the degree of authority which Mr. Templemore would yield to her, were he to come

back, there was just a touch of polite superciliousness in his reply.

"I am uneasy—slightly so, I confess it, but still I am uneasy. Nevertheless," he added, turning to Florence, "I do hope, as I was telling you, Madame, that, with care and attention to my orders, the child will do."

And he drew on his gloves, and looked for his hat, evidently considering Mrs. Logan as the person from whom he drew his mandate, and ignoring Mr. Templemore's wife.

Florence now roused herself from the stupor into which Dora's appearance had thrown her, and scarcely knowing, perhaps, what she was saying, she repeated mechanically her previous words.

"It is such a responsibility. I do wish, I do, that Mr. Templemore would come back."

Dora looked from one to the other, and she thought, with much bitterness,

"I have deserved this. On the day when I left this house I brought all this on myself; then I must bear it—I must bear it!" So her look remained calm, and the tones of her voice were low and even as she addressed Doctor Petit, and said, "I am much obliged to you, sir, for the care

you have bestowed on the child, and I hope you will have the kindness to continue your attendance."

"I shall call again to-morrow morning," said Doctor Petit, rather more graciously—"indeed, and spite the great distance, I have called twice daily, as Madame knows."

"I am much obliged to you," said Dora again; "but you will not take it amiss, I hope, if I call in one of your brethren, Doctor Leroux, who usually attends on Eva, to assist you."

Doctor Petit looked as if he did take this very much amiss, and he said, rather stiffly, that he would have no objection to hold a consultation on Eva's case with Doctor Leroux. "Though," he added, with marked emphasis, "I cannot say I think it at all necessary."

"That is not my meaning," resumed Dora: "I wish Doctor Leroux to conduct this case with you. And, indeed, on my way here I left word for him to call."

Doctor Petit looked astounded.

"Madame!" he said, with some heat, "this is inflicting a very unnecessary affront upon me. You must know that I can consent to nothing of

the kind, and your proposal leaves me no alternative but to withdraw altogether."

"But you must not withdraw!" cried Florence, turning crimson, and wholly forgetting how painful she had found her previous state of responsibility, "*I* cannot allow it. *I* am answerable to Miss Moore for the child's life."

"And I to her father," interrupted Dora, with a slight flush on her pale cheek.

"Well, Mrs. Templemore," retorted Florence, speaking very fast, "you will acknowledge that Eva was not left in your care."

"Was she left in yours, Mrs. Logan?"

"She was left to the care of Miss Moore, and all I have done has been done with Miss Moore's wish and authority."

She spoke triumphantly, and Dora felt the force of the argument. Eva had not indeed been left in her care, and she did not know but her husband would resent her interference, even as he might be displeased with her return. But memory, crossing the bitter chasm that now divided them, showed her a face full of concern. To that she trusted.

"I acknowledge Miss Moore's claims," she said, answering Mrs. Logan, "but Mr. Temple-

more's are greater still, and I act in his name."

Mrs. Logan was going to reply, for having always plenty to say, and being troubled with no sense of dignity, she was not one to be easily silenced; but Doctor Petit interfered, and with a quiet waive of his hand, said loftily,

"I beg, Madame, you will have the goodness to say no more. It is impossible, after what has passed, that I should continue to attend on this unfortunate child; but, in justice to myself, I must say this: she is now progressing favourably, if, therefore, any casualty should occur, I wish it to be well understood that the blame cannot rest upon me."

He moved towards the door, but Florence attempted to detain him.

"I cannot allow this," she said, "I really cannot. Miss Moore called you in, she is Eva's aunt, and she left the child in my care, and I cannot allow this!"

She spoke angrily and fast, but Dora said not a word to detain Doctor Petit, or to alter his resolve, and if he had the misfortune of being a very bad doctor, he was neither a servile nor a mean man.

"It is quite useless, Madame," he said, address-

ing Florence, "I am not accustomed to such treatment, and will not tolerate it. Madame, being the child's stepmother, no doubt has the greatest and the strongest right to dictate on this matter; only I think I might have been treated with more courtesy?"

"I meant and mean no discourtesy," here remarked Dora, "but knowing what my husband's wish would be, I must obey it."

"I wash my hands of the result," said Doctor Petit, with a slight sneer, "and I have the honour to wish you a good evening."

Florence saw him to the door, then came back, her eyes sparkling with tears of anger and mortification.

"Well, Dora," she said, "you have again prevailed against me; but if this child dies, Mr. Templemore shall know that you came back to prevent her from being saved. How dare you do it?" she asked impetuously, "how dare you do it?"

"And how dare you forget that the child is mine?" asked Dora, with a quivering lip. "On the day he married me he gave her to me. I asked him for her, and I got her. He gave himself too on that day, but if he has withdrawn one gift," she

added, in a failing voice, "as I daresay you know, Florence, he has not yet taken back the other," she said, pointing to the little low bed. "Besides, I have another right. You had, perhaps you still have, the father's heart; but even you must confess that I have always had the child's. And now pray let this cease—let there be silence and peace about that poor little sick-bed. Let there be no bitterness between us. The two men whom I have most loved—my brother—my husband, have preferred you to me. Leave me the child, Florence—leave me the child. But for my aunt and you, I should be Dora Courtenay still. Remember that, and grudge me not a position and a name which have cost me so dear, that when I read to-day my own epitaph on poor Aunt Luan's grave, I wished it were true—I wished I were lying there with her, away from all the bitterness which made me leave this house, and which I find in it on my return. Remember Paul, Florence—remember him, and let there be peace between us."

For once Mrs. Logan was affected; for once Dora had found the way to her heart. Paul Courtenay's name brought the tears to her eyes. She had not loved him very much; but such as it was, this love

of her youth had been the only disinterested affection of her life. It had not stood the test of poverty, but money had not helped its birth. And Paul Courtenay had loved very faithfully. No second love had effaced her image there, and she knew it.

"Poor Paul!" she said, taking out her handkerchief—"poor Paul! I was very sorry for him, and it made Mr. Logan in such a way with me. But then you know, Dora, it is me"—Mrs. Logan did not care much for grammar—"and not you, whom Mr. Templemore should have married. You will acknowledge that, I am sure."

"She never liked him—never," thought Dora, looking at her in wonder, "or she could not stand there talking so to me, his wife."

But she did not think it needful to answer Mrs. Logan's strange remark. She had sat down by Eva's cot, and she was looking at the child. Eva's dark eyes glittered with fever, but she did not recognise her former governess.

"And how you can take the frightful responsibility you are now taking with Eva is more than *I* can imagine," pettishly resumed Florence; "besides, you really have behaved abominably to Doctor

Petit. I am quite certain Mr. Templemore will be *so* angry," she added, raising her eyebrows, to give her words more emphasis.

Still Dora was silent. She was thinking what a difference Nature had placed between her and this woman. How one was made to float down the stream of grief, which nearly submerged the other. *She* would never have let her husband go, if it broke her heart that he should leave her; *she* could never have left his house, however much his indifference had stung her. If her folly led her into trouble, it would at least have saved her from such calamity as had fallen to Dora's lot.

"On one thing, however, I am determined," resumed Mrs. Logan, getting angry at Dora's silence, "that Miss Moore shall have the medical attendant she prefers, and that Mr. Templemore shall know the truth."

"You are very welcome," replied Dora, with such evident weariness of this conversation that Mrs. Logan became scarlet, and giving her an indignant glance, darted out of the room.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE door had scarcely closed on Mrs. Logan, when Doctor Leroux was announced, and shown in by Jacques. Dora's face lit on seeing him. It was a relief to escape from the bitter thoughts Florence had left after her. She went up to him and said eagerly,

"Eva is ill again; but Doctor Petit, who was attending upon her——"

"Then why did you send for me?" sharply interrupted Doctor Leroux.

"Because I know Mr. Templemore has no faith in him, and every faith in you; he has left me affronted, but I cannot help that; and where the child's life may be the cost, I cannot mind courtesy—nor will you, I trust, mind professional etiquette."

She spoke with some uneasiness, but it was causeless. Doctor Leroux was a rich man, and

for etiquette of any kind he cared naught. His wealth placed him above the suspicion of wishing to secure a patient by unworthy means; and as he entertained a profound contempt for Doctor Petit's skill, and a high respect for his own, he made no scruple of taking a patient from him in the hour of peril. So without further parley he approached Eva's bed, and looked at the child. Dora read his face anxiously, and its gravity filled her with concern.

"Well?" she said at length.

"Well, it will be a miracle if we save her," replied Doctor Leroux, with some bitterness; and internally he added, "Petit's mark is upon her."

Fearful, indeed, is this power over life which the ignorant and unskilful possess, as well as the learned and the gifted, all the more fearful that the guilty man is generally unconscious of his guilt.

Doctor Petit, whatever may be his name or his country—whether he command a ship, a forlorn hope, a company, or rule by a sick-bed, is our greatest enemy, if we but knew it. Ask the soldiers whose bones bleach on the battle-field, the sailors who have gone down with a despairing cry,

the men and women whose homes are ruined, the mourners whose hearts are broken by the death of a loved one—ask them how they have fared through their trust in him, and be warned. The thief, the murderer, even, are less dangerous than the man whose claims to knowledge you cannot control, and whose ignorance you can only learn at your bitter cost.

At first Dora felt stunned; but rallying at length, she said,

"It is impossible! You cannot mean to say that the child must die, Doctor Leroux?"

"Not that she must, but that she may," he replied, somewhat shortly.

Dora looked at Eva. It was not and it could not be mother's love she felt for that poor little sufferer, and therefore hers was not a mother's bitter agony. But the knowledge that this little creature, motherless, and for the time, too, fatherless, was dying, pierced her heart. She had loved the child, and the child, too, had loved her. Eva had been a tie between her and her husband. She had brought Dora back to his home when nothing else, it seemed to her, could have done it—and now that gentle and tender bond must soon be

broken. They would stand apart without that loving link, and they could not even meet by Eva's grave.

"He would not believe in my grief," thought Dora; "and he shall not see it to doubt it. When Eva is dead—if she must die, indeed—I shall leave this house again, and this time all will be surely over for ever!"

But must the child die? It seemed so hard. Doctor Leroux was gone, and Dora sat by Eva's cot, holding Eva's little wasted hand in her own, and she could not believe it. Oh! if there were but power in love to keep those loved beings who go away from us so surely, whether their leave-taking be swift or slow! "Stay with me," Dora longed to say—"stay with me, my darling! I never can tell you my trouble, but still you will comfort it. There is more consolation in a child's loving kiss than in all men and women can say to prove that one ought not to mourn. Oh! if I could but keep you!—if I but could!" And then to think that this tender little being must really die and be put in the cold damp earth, there to moulder away, with all its beauty prematurely destroyed, and the sweet promises of youth for ever unfulfilled! The

thought filled Dora's heart with pity as well as with sorrow. Every caress she had received from the child—every fond, endearing word which had been exchanged between them in those hours when Dora was no longer the governess and Eva the pupil, came back and inflicted its pang upon her. "I never could have left this house if she had been in it!" she thought—"never!" Then came the thought of what it would be when the child was gone—how empty, how silent, how cold! And so vivid were these images—so painfully real did imagination make them—that Dora grasped Eva's hand till the child opened her heavy eyes and looked wonderingly at her step-mother. She had no knowledge of death, and no fear of the destroyer. He might come and steal her away, and she would yield to him with the meek unconsciousness of her years. She would never suspect or know that there was a power stronger by far than that of the kind hand which now held hers.

"Cousin Dora," she said, with a suddenness that startled Dora, "when is Doctor Petit coming back?"

"What do you want him for, Eva?"

"I don't like Doctor Leroux."

But the words were spoken faintly, and she fell back into her old languor.

"The very child is against me," thought Dora. Her heart sickened within her as, remembering the strife she had already gone through, she foresaw another trial, more cruel still. What if, seeing matters through the bitterness of his altered feelings, Mr. Templemore should lay the death of his child to her door? He might not say it, indeed, but she would read it in his eyes, and would not that be hard indeed? "Since Doctor Leroux cannot promise to save the child," she thought, "would it not be better for me that I had never come here, or had left her to the other man's care? He said he could save her; and who knows—oh! who knows, perhaps he could!—perhaps it is true I am killing her!"

The thought was so exquisitely painful, that Dora dropped Eva's hand and left the side of the little cot. She went to the window, leaned against the glass pane, and cried there as if her heart would break. Two thoughts were with her, and either was very hard to bear. One, that there was little or no hope of saving Eva; the other, that, believing her to be dead, Mrs. Logan and her

husband had indulged in hopes, felt or spoken—it mattered not—which her return must needs dispel.

"He believes me to be dead, and he will find me to be living," thought Dora. "He hopes to marry Florence, and he will learn that he is still bound to me. I am the bitterness and the clog of his life. The dark cloud, which ever comes between the sun of happiness and him!" As this secret voice spoke to her in such bitter language, Dora asked herself, with something like passion, why she was tried so cruelly. Why was her life a double burden—to herself first, then to him? And she felt so strong, so free from disease, so full of vitality! It seemed to her as if she could live for ever. "I daresay I shall survive them both," she thought; "they will die, and I shall live on into dreary old age, forgotten by death, as I have been forgotten by love."

Bitter, indeed, was the thought, and nothing came to soften its bitterness. Eva was worse the next morning, and Doctor Petit pronounced Miss Moore out of danger. His verdict, indeed, might have been doubtful, but she asked to see Dora, and her appearance fully confirmed her medical attendant's assertion.

"Mrs. Templemore," said Miss Moore, with some energy, "what do you mean by tampering so with my niece?—what *do* you mean?"

Dora did not answer at once. She looked from the sick lady in her bed to Florence, who had taken out her handkerchief, and was weeping behind it, and she tried to say calmly,

"I did all for the best, Miss Moore—I followed, as I believed, Mr. Templemore's wishes."

"But it was to me Mr. Templemore left my niece," argued Miss Moore; "and you take advantage of me and my illness to get hold of her, Miss Courtenay."

"Mrs. Templemore," corrected Dora.

"Yes, I know you are his wife," impatiently retorted Miss Moore; "you need not taunt me with it."

"I mean no taunt, Miss Moore; but it is because I am his wife that I have a right over his child."

Miss Moore looked helplessly at Mrs. Logan, who had withdrawn her handkerchief, and was tapping her foot impatiently. Dora read that look very easily—it meant, "I have done my best, you see, but I cannot help myself." Indeed, Miss Moore's next remark was to that purpose.

"Well, Mrs. Templemore," she said, "I am not able to save poor Eva from you and that Doctor Leroux; but, remember," she added, weeping, "remember, that if I lose my sister's child, I shall hold you guilty."

"I cannot accept that guilt, Miss Moore; life and death are not in my power, and I have still hope that Eva may be saved."

Miss Moore tossed restlessly in her bed; Mrs. Logan looked indignant, and, after a brief pause, Dora withdrew and went back to Eva. She had left Josephine with the child, and she found the girl inclined to remain and be communicative, especially on the subject of Fanny.

"Madame may believe me," she said, confidentially, "but I never believed in that demoiselle with her blue eyes. I always told Jacques she was deceitful; and when she came back and said Madame Courtenay was dead, and took away all Madame's letters and things, I said to Jacques, 'I do not like that; and I do not believe Madame sent that Mademoiselle Fanny back.' Jacques will not grant it now, but I said it; and I never believed Madame was really dead, for, you see, Monsieur never went into mourning, nor never

said a word. Only Madame Logan's maid said it to Jacques, who told me; but no one told Monsieur, who went about looking so grave and so stern; but servants must be careful, as Madame knows, and not repeat every word they hear. And I have always been discreet," continued Josephine, adding, with an abrupt transition, "I can make dresses too, and trim caps quite prettily. Mademoiselle Fanny took many a hint from me. For being English, you know, she had not the right knack which we French have."

"Josephine wants to be my maid," thought Dora, with a sigh; "poor girl, she does not know my reign is over. I am still queen, of course, but where is my kingdom? And who and what shall I be in this house if poor little Eva dies?"

"She is thinking over it," conjectured Josephine, watching Dora's pensive face; "I did well to tell her about trimming caps. Madame Courtenay always was particular about her caps."

And Dora, whose thoughts were far away, saw a sad image of herself going back alone to the poor house where Mrs. Courtenay was waiting; whilst Eva slept in her little grave, and Mr. Templemore brooded over his grief in Les Roches.

CHAPTER XX.

THE concierge in the Hôtel Rue de Rivoli was leaning back in his chair, and looking pensively at a telegram which lay on the table before him. It had been lying there seven days, and had not been claimed as yet by Mr. Templemore. Was this a second edition of that gentleman's mysterious disappearance? The concierge thought so, and was rounding off a period, when again Mr. Templemore spoiled his story by suddenly coming forward. A clue to the truth which he had not ceased to seek had taken him suddenly from Les Roches to a place beyond Paris, but it had proved vain, and he was coming to the Hôtel to spend the night there on his way home, when the concierge, recognising him, rose, and said with much alacrity,

"We were afraid something had happened to Monsieur. This dispatch has been lying here for Monsieur no less than seven days."

Mr. Templemore's colour fled as he heard him. Who could send a dispatch to this place, save Miss Moore, and what could she send it for but to give evil tidings of Eva? He tore the paper open with a trembling hand; but his heart sickened as he read it. The telegram was sent by Doctor Petit, and that gentleman informed him that Miss Moore and her niece were both ill of scarlatina; that he, Doctor Petit, was attending upon them, and that though there was danger, he hoped to get them through.

Mr. Templemore stood with the paper in his hand, stunned with a grief so unexpected. That Eva should be ill was ever possible, but that she should fall into the hands he most dreaded had always seemed out of the question; and now this dreadful evil had come to pass, and for seven days his child had been in the power of Doctor Petit. All might be well, or all might be over by this. Mr. Templemore asked for a railway guide. The last train left for Rouen at seven, and it was half-past six now. There was no time to send a telegram to Les Roches and receive the answer before the departure of the train. He must go at once, go with the agony of that doubt upon him, or wait

till the next day to save Eva from Doctor Petit's ruthless hands!

Within ten minutes to seven Mr. Templemore was in the waiting-room of the Havre Station, and whilst his eager eyes sought the hand of the railway clock, and his heart sickened with impatience, very bitter were Mr. Templemore's thoughts. Yes, all might be over now. Eva might be dead by this. The disease which he had dreaded most of all for her might have robbed him of his last child, as it had of her two little sisters. The enemy had come whilst he was away seeking for one who had all but replaced his child in his heart. "If I had been with Eva I should at least have saved her from Petit," he thought. "Oh! Dora! Dora! must you cost me so dear as this?"

There was a double agony in the feeling. Then swiftly other thoughts rushed through his mind. The mother whom he had given to his little girl had proved faithless. Alas! they had both been faithless, father and adopted mother too. Love and wrath had been fatal alike to Eva, and the innocent child's life must pay for a passion of which childhood has no conception.

Only a few people were waiting for the express

train, but amongst them was a young English matron with children, a nursery-maid, and a whole array of small baskets, and toys, and worrying parcels. Mr. Templemore walked to the other end of the waiting-room, in order not to see this happy group. That woman had four children, and he, who had but one, might soon be childless. There would be joy in her home for many years, whilst his might be hushed and silent. He was not envious, he wished her no evil, but he could not look on her happiness. The sight was one, however, which he could not escape. One of the children, a little girl, ran past him, to jump into the arms of a gentleman, who kissed her and joined the group. He was evidently the father and husband. "Why did I not meet Dora years ago?" thought Mr. Templemore, in the bitterness of his heart. "She would have been Eva's mother, and all would have been well. There never could have been unkindness between us with such a tie. And Dora would never have left her child's home as she left her husband's—never!"

These travellers made themselves at home, English fashion, and spoke loud and freely together. Tiny—such was the little girl's name—made daring

attempts on one of the baskets holding biscuits. The nurse scolded, but Tiny, defiant sinner, only laughed, and throwing back her golden curls, got up on her smiling mother's knee and hugged her. The child was young and fair, wholly unlike the darke-yed Eva ; but many a time Mr. Templemore had seen his little daughter thus in Dora's arms, caressing and fond, and now, looking at this strange mother and child, he also remembered something that had occurred during his hurried journey from Deenah to Les Roches with Dora. Conquered by fatigue, he had fallen asleep one night in the railway carriage. When he woke in the grey morning Dora was sleeping too, and he found that, unconsciously, he had laid his head upon her shoulder. Then, as the carriage still moved on, and he saw the deep purple plains in the faint light of dawn, the thought came to him how often his child's innocent head had rested where his now lay, and how often again, as he hoped, he should see her clasped to that kind heart. It had been one of his troubles to know that Eva would never love Florence, and now it was a joy to feel that he could hold these two, Dora and the child, in one love, undivided. He gently moved away,

and Dora awakening, asked what was the next station. He told her, but he did not say how this little incident seemed to have given his brief married life some of the sweetness which only comes with years; and how this girl, who had been his wife but a fortnight, was already to him as the mother of his child.

Again Mr. Templemore felt he could not look on, and he turned his head away. He could not help loving Dora, whatever happened; but if Eva died, grief, remorse, and a child's grave would be between him and Dora, ay, even though she never left his side again. Could he forget that if he had not been within call in the hour of danger, she was the cause; could he forget that some strange woman, and not his wife, was now with his sick and dying child?

At last the wooden barrier was opened, and the travellers hastened to the row of carriages with the loud impatient hissing engine at the head. Five minutes more and they were in motion, first panting, then flying through the country. The suburbs melted away into a green landscape. The Seine gleamed, then disappeared, then came again to sight, villages were seen, then towns, then fields

and orchards. Then towns once more in the autumn sunset, and still they went on, and Mr. Templemore thought they would never reach their goal. At length the hills which surrounded Rouen came in view, then the spires of the old Gothic city rose in the darkness of the night, and Mr. Templemore felt he must prepare for the worst.

There were two ways of reaching Les Roches. Mr. Templemore chose the shortest. A carriage took him up a steeper path than the winding road which led to the château, and being unable to proceed any farther, left him within fifty yards of the wooden door in the boundary wall. Mr. Templemore paid and dismissed the cabman without a word. The man looked after him curiously. He saw him take out a key, and heard him open the door and enter, locking the door after him.

"They have their troubles too," he thought, making his horses turn. "They have trees and gardens, and houses, but they have their troubles too."

Swiftly, yet with the fear of death at his heart, Mr. Templemore went on through the dark paths. At length the house stood before him. It looked strangely quiet and solemn. Not a light burned in

the windows, not one human being was visible. He stood for a moment waiting for some token of life, but none came from that silent dwelling. Suddenly, and as Mr. Templemore was walking quickly through the flower-garden, Jacques appeared with a lantern in his hand. In a moment Mr. Templemore stood by the man.

"Well!" he said.

He could utter no more. His lips were parched and dry, and fever sickened his very heart.

Jacques was slightly startled at his master's unexpected appearance, and there was just a moment's pause, an eternity of torment and doubt, ere he answered,

"Mademoiselle Eva is very low."

Mr. Templemore had tried to prepare himself for a worse reply than this, but by the agony it gave him he could test the vanity of all such preparation.

"Doctor Petit thought she was getting better," resumed Jacques, "and he cured Mademoiselle Moore; but that was in the beginning, and Mademoiselle Eva is not so well now."

Mr. Templemore was standing perfectly still, like one incapable of sense or motion; but his eyes

flashed when he heard Doctor Petit's fatal name, he started, as if that name had stung him back from torpor into life.

"My God!" he cried, "who brought that man —who brought him?"

There was something so desperate in his look and tone, that Jacques stepped back, and forgot his partizanship for Doctor Petit, which he shared with the whole household, in personal uneasiness. So hastily evading Mr. Templemore's question, he answered,

"Doctor Petit cured Mademoiselle Moore, and attended Mademoiselle Eva at first; but Doctor Leroux has the care of her now."

"When has he been?"

"He left five minutes ago."

Mr. Templemore put no further questions, but walked on. The fatal thought, "Petit has murdered her, and Leroux himself cannot save her—I have come too late!" rang through him again and again like a knell. He entered the house, turned into the school-room, thence into Dora's sitting-room, and went up the private staircase which led to the apartment Eva had once shared with her governess.

He pushed the door of the child's room open very softly. He did not wish her to be startled by his sudden appearance. The night lamp shed a dull faint light in the sick-room, a low wood fire smouldered on the hearth, but Mr. Templemore could see Eva's little white cot at the other end of the apartment. He approached it gently. A calm, regular breathing told him the child was sleeping. He bent over her very cautiously. Long, keen, and attentive was the look. Suddenly Eva's eyes opened. Mr. Templemore remained perfectly still. She looked at him with a half wondering gaze, in which sleep contended; then her lids fluttered and fell, her eyes closed, and she was sleeping soundly. With a relieved sigh Mr. Templemore turned away. Eva was saved, and he knew it.

"Thank God!" he said, half aloud—"thank God!"

He walked towards the fireplace, then stood still. A flickering ray of the firelight shot up from the hearth; and pale, worn, and altered though she was, he saw and knew her. This was his wife who stood before him! For a moment his heart seemed to cease to beat. For a moment

he stood, pale as death, and as silent. For a moment she, too, was mute and still, looking at him as he looked at her. But she had been expecting him days, and she recovered first. She raised a warning hand.

"Do not waken her," she said in the lowest whisper—but low though it was, her voice shook; "she is saved—she will live!"

Great joys come to us like great sorrows. Mr. Templemore could neither move nor speak—he felt stunned. He had got them both back—the wife and the child, and for a while he could only look at his lost Dora's face.

"My wife!—my dear wife!" he said at length.

He took her in his arms. The word "wife" was a sesame. No term of endearment had ever sounded half so sweet as this, when he had spoken it, in the past; and as he uttered it now her whole heart seemed to go forth to meet him. When he opened his arms to receive her, she threw hers around his neck, and all was forgiven and forgotten for ever between these two.

"Then you are glad I am not dead," she said, smiling through her happy tears; "you never had that cruel 'Dora Courtenay' put on poor aunt's

grave?—you never wished to marry Mrs. Logan? You need not tell me so. I know it—I know it!"

Yes, this was truly Dora—Dora jealous and fond, and Dora joyous and light-hearted. Dora who had fled from him in hasty resentment, and had come back on the first token of the child's peril. But great joy is incredulous. The cruel fear of Eva's danger was but a few hours old. It had not taken upon him the hard grasp of reality. He could bid it begone like an evil nightmare; but the doubts, the fears, the anguish he had gone through in seeking the woman whose voice he heard, whose hand he held, all came back to him now, and seemed to say, "Do not be too sure—you may be dreaming, and when you waken she may be gone."

"I cannot believe it!" he exclaimed vehemently—"I cannot believe I have got you back!"

"And yet I am no ghost!" she answered joyously.

Ah! but how pale and worn she looked! She had been watching many nights, surely?

"Four," she answered simply. "I did not dare to leave Eva for fear they should bring back Doctor Petit."

"You brought Leroux, then?"

"I did. I had a hard battle, but I won."

"And Petit would have killed her. She is now your child, indeed!"

There are some sweet drops in this bitter cup of life, as the poets call it.

"I am sure of him now," thought Dora—"sure for ever."

Eva moved slightly. At once Dora was by her side; but Eva was only dreaming. Dora raised the curtain and bent over the sleeping child to make sure of her slumber; and Mr. Templemore looked at them both, and never forgot that picture—the poor little head on its white pillow, and the faithful, tender face above it.

CHAPTER XXI.

MR. TEMPLEMORE had sent Dora to her room to rest and sleep, and Dora had obeyed him. It was sweet to go and rest after fatigue, and to sleep after watching, and sweeter than all to know she was doing both in her husband's house, and under her husband's care.

She looked around her with a delicious sense of home. How pleasant to sit down in that large arm-chair, and rest a while, and think of her husband, surrounded as she was with tokens of her husband's affection! How pleasant, after the vexing storms of the past, to rejoice in the sweet peace of the present! The same sense of repose followed her when she at length laid her head on her pillow, and composed herself to sleep.

"Adieu to care," she thought. "If our love has survived such bitter trials, surely we need not fear for it. We are mortal, and, therefore, may suffer again, for we cannot conquer sickness and

death; but for all that, adieu to care! Now I can fall asleep and not dread wakening. And to-morrow I can waken, and not feel in my heart, 'Another bitter day lies before me.' I know that Eva will live—I know that he sits with her thinking of me—I know that the delightful days are all coming back like spring after winter."

Yes, she knew it, and when she ceased to know it—when thought folded her wings, and a gentle torpor crept over her—when fatigue and happiness both wrapt her in a delightful heaviness, and made her close her eyes—she felt it still. It was the last consciousness she carried with her into the world of sleep—it was the meaning of all her dreams, and her bright welcome when she woke.

Whilst Dora slept, Mr. Templemore sat up and watched in Eva's room. He had sat down in Dora's vacant chair by the fireplace, and looking at the red embers, he threw off the weary burden of the past, and indulged in some bright dreams. But suddenly the image of Florence, pale and reproachful—Florence, who had wronged him, but whom he had abetted too willingly, came back like an upbraiding. How completely he had given up the old love, and how eagerly he had

turned to the new! Was not this vehement affection the justification of Mrs. Logan's jealousy. "Yes," he thought, with something like remorse, "she was right enough. I was always too fond of Dora. I always gave her too much, and now she has all, and she has a right to all. The folly of a silly woman and the guilt of a mad one have made it too late for repentance or regret. Then why perplex myself with what might have been, but never can be?—why grudge myself the happiness of what it is, when that 'is' happens to be a girl I love, and a young wife like Dora?"

Thus spoke Reason, and Conscience lent her a very willing ear, and Remorse retreated discomfited, and in some disorder. An unexpected ally, moreover, came to Reason's aid, and made her mistress of the field.

Dora had not long been gone, for thought travels fast, when the door through which she had left opened gently. Mr. Templemore looked quickly round. He had scarcely time to recognize Miss Moore's square figure, when he heard her lock the door, and take out the key; then, crossing the room swiftly, she went to another door and locked that too. He stared at her in

silent amazement, but it was plain Miss Moore did not see him. She went to Eva's bed, peeped cautiously at the child, then walked away on tiptoe, took a large, old-fashioned arm-chair, shook the cushion upon it, wheeled it to Eva's cot, then sat down, with a gentle sigh of relief, took off her curls, fumbled in her pocket, brought out a white-frilled night-cap and put it on. She was tying the strings, when, to her mingled terror and confusion, Mr. Templemore appeared before her. Miss Moore felt petrified, and so she did not scream; but when Mr. Templemore, who did not want to waken the child, made a sign that she was to rise, Miss Moore mechanically obeyed, and found strength to do so. He took a light, and she followed him to the neighbouring room.

"Miss Moore," he inquired, when they were out of Eva's hearing, "may I ask the meaning of this?"

"I—I wanted to sit up with Eva," stammered Miss Moore; "I thought she was alone."

"What made you think so?—did you see my wife leave?"

"Yes—just so. I saw her leave, and I came to sit up with the child."

"Miss Moore, why did you lock the door?"

Miss Moore was mute.

"It is not possible," he said, rather bitterly, "that you meant to lock out my wife?"

"I—I don't know," was Miss Moore's piteous reply.

It was plain that such had been her intention; but Mr. Templemore did not think Miss Moore capable of originating so rebellious a scheme, and his eyes flashed with resentment, as he said,

"Who advised this? Of course you would never have done it?"

Miss Moore turned traitor without remorse. "It was Mrs. Logan," she said.

"Mrs. Logan! Good Heavens! what could be her motive? What could make her wish to insult my wife in her own house? And, Miss Moore, how could you abet her?"

"I have a right over Eva," jealously replied Miss Moore; "she is my sister's child after all, and I have no faith in Doctor Leroux; and Doctor Petit cured me, Mr. Templemore."

Mr. Templemore felt too indignant to argue that point; but he said again,

"But Mrs. Logan has no right—how dare she

meddle?—how dare she advise you so, Miss Moore?"

"I suppose it vexed her that Mrs. Templemore should be alive," composedly said Miss Moore; "you see, she thought that you were a widower, I suppose, when she came to mind Eva and me."

Mr. Templemore heard her with mingled anger and shame. Not a shadow of remorse or regret could remain in his heart after this. "And I have loved this small, silly, selfish creature," he thought, in mute indignation; "this ruthless little thing, who would have sacrificed my child's life as well as her own pride to indulge a moment's revenge!"

He could not speak at once, so bitter were his feelings; and that bitterness showed itself in the first words he uttered—

"Miss Moore, Dora must never know this—never, mind you. She must never know that this insult was contemplated."

Miss Moore was quite willing to vow that she would never tell Mr. Templemore's wife the little plot that had been concocted against her. And though she had been faithless to Mrs. Logan, she was strictly faithful to herself. Dora never did know it. She never knew why, when her hus-

band spoke of Florence, which was but rarely, he spoke of her with such bitter emphasis and such resentful looks. She never knew why, when a year after this, Mr. Templemore heard of Mrs. Logan's marriage with a learned Judge, he uttered so serious and earnest a "poor fellow!"

"But you might have been that 'poor fellow,'" gaily said Dora.

"Never," he rather sharply answered. "I have committed some mistakes, but they have never been fatal ones. Either reason resumed her sway at the critical moment, or," he added, smiling, "some good fairy came to the rescue when all seemed lost. So you see that I never could have been that 'poor fellow!'"

"I see," thought Dora; "there is something I have never known; but I am not Blue Beard's wife—I can bear it."

But all this was yet to come. When Dora entered Eva's room the next morning, so bright and joyous that Mr. Templemore told her she looked like the sunbeam whom the alchemist caught and imprisoned,

"Then mind you lock me up, or I shall escape," replied Dora; "do not trust me—do not trust me."

Alas! Mrs. Courtenay's worst presentiments were being fulfilled. Mr. Templemore wanted to keep her, and Dora wanted to stay. "Yes," thought Mrs. Courtenay, as she sat alone and sad, and looked out at the village street, "I knew how it would be."

This time Mrs. Courtenay was not frowning. Dora's mother was weeping, gently, indeed, not with a bitter or passionate flow, but still with sorrow and heartache. Dora had been gone, oh! so long, and she was not returning. She wrote frequently, almost daily; but she did not come back. Mrs. Courtenay knew how ill Eva had been, and how well she was getting. She knew that Mr. Templemore had come back, and that Dora was, as she said, happier than ever; but when Dora would come to her, or if ever she would come, Mrs. Courtenay did not know. And thus, though the cards lay before her, though the favourite patience of His Majesty Louis XVIII. had come out beautifully, Mrs. Courtenay was gloomy, and indulged in some reflections more philosophic than cheerful. "I have always read in history," sadly thought the poor lady, "that when two contending powers made peace, it was

at the expense of a third, some poor little weak kingdom, or dukedom, or republic, which they either divided or sacrificed in some dreadful way or other. And that is how Dora and Mr. Templemore are now acting. Of course I cannot be divided, or made three pieces of, like poor Poland, but then I can be excluded from the confederation, as it were, and told to mind my own business, and let the mighty people settle their own affairs. Dora is a good daughter, and she loves me very dearly, but then she is crazy about her husband, and, of course, he is desperately fond of her, and they are making a new honeymoon of it. And, of course, too, I must be sacrificed. I always thought Doctor Richard looked like a jealous man, and I do believe he will lock her up rather than let her be out of his sight. And if he does, how can she help herself, poor dear!"

Yet it was a hard case, a very hard case, but it was of a piece with that carrying off of the Sabines which Mr. Templemore had emulated on his wedding-day. "It began then, and it is ending now," thought the poor lady. "I have lost my Dora!"

Mrs. Courtenay was sitting in the parlour, look-

ing disconsolately at the sunburnt road through the green screen of vine-leaves which framed her window, as she came to this lamentable conclusion. The cards lay before her, and a red glow from the west stole in and filled the plain room with warmth and light. Mrs. Courtenay was dazzled as well as miserable, and leaning back in her chair with a sigh, she closed her wearied eyes with the dismal reflection, "Where is the use of looking?"

"Mamma! mamma!" said a pleasant voice, which sounded in her ear. Mrs. Courtenay started and looked round. She was alone in the room. "I am here," said the voice again; and this time Mrs. Courtenay, turning in the direction whence the voice came, saw Dora's bright face looking at her laughingly through the vine-leaves. "You have been crying," said Dora, putting on a frown. "I see it. I am very angry!"

"Don't!" implored Mrs. Courtenay, deprecatingly.

Dora shook her head, then vanished. The next moment she was in the room, and she stood before her mother with a grave face and a threatening forefinger.

"I told you I would come back, but you did not believe it, and yet here I am."

"Yes," said Mrs. Courtenay, admiringly; "and how well and how pretty you look, Dora! How did you get away?" she asked, as Dora sat down by her, and kissed her heartily.

"Did I not tell you I would get out through the window?" gaily replied Dora.

"Oh! but I hope you did not," exclaimed Mrs. Courtenay in some alarm. "That wonld never do, Dora. Mr. Templemore would not like it."

Dora looked a little defiant.

"Why did he lock the door?" she asked.

Mrs. Courtenay clasped her hands.

"And did he lock the door?" she cried. "Dora, that was disgraceful; but you should have procured another key, and not jumped out of the window!"

"My dear Mrs. Courtenay, do not believe her," now said the voice of Mr. Templemore, who had been standing behind her chair all the time. "The doors of Les Roches were wide open, but Dora was so unwilling to come that I had to bring her to you."

"That is pure slander, you know, mamma," composedly said Dora, "and you know better."

Mrs. Courtenay was a little flurried by Mr.

Templemore's sudden appearance, but she promptly recovered, and her first words were an inquiry after Eva.

"Eva is very well, thank you, but we do not leave her long alone, and you will not take it unkindly, my dear Madame, if we ask you to come away with us—almost at once."

He spoke with his old kindness and courtesy. Mrs. Courtenay looked at him and at her daughter, and her lips parted to say—

"Mr. Templemore, you did not want me in your house, and I will not return to it," but for Dora's sake she was mute. "They shall never guess that I know it—" she thought—"never. I, too, shall have my secret and my burden, but my dear Dora shall be happy—quite happy—if I can make her so!"

"I shall soon be ready," she replied meekly.

"Let me pack up for you," gaily said Dora.

She rose and went upstairs, and her first act was to look for, and burn Mr. Templemore's letter. As it shrivelled up before her, she smiled triumphantly. Thus all bitterness, all unkindness would perish and pass away from their two lives. She soon came down again.

"We are ready," she said to her husband.

The carriage which had brought them from the railway-station was at the door waiting. Mrs. Courtenay allowed her daughter to put on her bonnet and shawl without a word. Still meek and silent she entered the carriage, and she scarcely opened her lips during the journey to Les Roches. Dora noticed this, and she said a little jealously as they went up the stone steps that led to the house.

"Well, are you not pleased to be home again."

"Yes, my dear, very much pleased," meekly replied Mrs Courtenay; but night had set in, and it was well that Dora did not see her mother's face. Mrs. Courtenay said she was tired, and she went up to her room.

"Mr. Templemore will want Dora all to himself," she thought, with a swelling heart; "I must not be in the way."

The room was a pleasant room, and Mrs. Courtenay looked around it drearily. She felt chill, and she had asked for a fire; but though the logs burned and crackled cheerfully on the hearth, Mrs. Courtenay felt miserable. These two, her daughter and son-in-law, were happy below without her. Yes, remembering her own early-married days, she

could imagine how it was with them. During the journey home Mr. Templemore had alluded to one of his Eastern wanderings, and to some sketches he had made of the ruined cities which lie beyond the Jordan and the sea of Galilee.

"Why did you never show them to me?" asked Dora quickly.

And Mr. Templemore had answered—

"You shall see them this evening."

So it was not difficult for Mrs. Courtenay to imagine how these two were now engaged. She could hear Mr. Templemore's voice and Dora's soft laugh; and she could see, too, Dora's wondering bright eyes raised to her husband's face, and his smile half amused, half fond, for he was very fond of her indeed, fonder than ever, it seemed to Mrs. Courtenay, and of course they did not want, they did not miss her.

"Poor Mrs. Luan," thought Mrs. Courtenay, with a sigh, "if I had her still I should not feel so dull and lonely." A little rap at the door here roused the solitary lady from her reflections. "I wish Mr. Templemore's servants would not come and pester me," crossly thought Mrs. Courtenay.

The little rap was repeated, the door opened, and

a curly head peeped in, and a childish, treble voice said, "Please, it's only me. May I came in, Mrs. Courtenay."

"Come in, my dear," said Mrs. Courtenay, brightening up as she saw Eva. "Well, what is it?—what do you want?" she added, as the child came forward.

"I came to see you," replied Eva, half offended at this welcome.

"Thank you, my dear," soothingly answered the elder lady; "I am very much obliged to you. Sit down."

Eva climbed up on a chair, looked at the fire, then burst out with the angry ejaculation:

"Papa doesn't mind me a bit since Cousin Dora came back!"

"My dear, you must not say Cousin Dora now——"

"Yes, yes, I know," impatiently interrupted Eva; "but one can't get used to it all at once, you know."

She was flushed, and looked anything but satisfied. "Dear, dear," thought Mrs. Courtenay uneasily, "I hope the child is not going to be jealous of poor Dora."

"Papa is showing Cousin Dora all his beautiful sketches," continued Eva, warming with the sense of her wrongs.

"My love, there is no harm in that," said Mrs. Courtenay, trying to excuse the sinner.

"Oh! no," replied Eva, "but when Cousin Dora wanted to take me on her knee papa would not let her. So I came up to you, Mrs. Courtenay."

It was plain Eva was offended, not so much with Dora as with her father; and it was plain, too, that, fond as he was of his little daughter, Mr. Templemore did not object to being alone with his young wife. Yes, matters were going on below pretty much as Mrs. Courtenay had conjectured. Mr. Templemore and his wife were sitting side by side in his study, bending over a large portfolio. Dora looked with wonder at a graphic sketch of a deserted city. She saw a street with stone houses, and on a rocky peak a lonely temple rising against the sky. It was very impressive, but it was melancholy. Mr. Templemore told her that a fox scampered out of the house on the right when he entered it, and that two jackals had made their lair in the temple on the left.

"I do not like it," said Dora; "I cannot fancy

having a fox in this room when we are dead, or rabbits instead of jackals, which the climate does not allow, about the place. Do you, Eva?"

But Eva was gone.

"You would not let me take her on my knee," remorsefully said Dora, "and Eva is affronted. I did not even see her go. Mamma told me so: 'You will want no one when you are again with Mr. Templemore.'"

Mr. Templemore was vexed. What ailed his mother-in-law and his child that they would not let him enjoy his newly-found happiness? Still he wanted to know where Eva was, and Dora suggested that she might be with Mrs. Courtenay. They both went upstairs to look. Eva had forgotten to shut the door of Mrs. Courtenay's room. A broad ray of light shone out on the landing, and guided too by the sound of voices, Mr. Templemore and his wife peeped in unseen.

Mrs. Courtenay had spread out the cards on the table, and was giving Eva a lesson in the favourite patience of His Majesty Louis Dix-huit. Eva, perched on a high chair, looked on intently, puckering her little brown face into an expression of the utmost gravity. Suddenly she clapped her

hands and uttered a joyous cry: "You have done it!"

"I have!" said Mrs. Courtenay, in great glee—"I have!"

"Well, Dora," said Mr. Templemore, making her turn away, "you thought we did not want them—pray do they want us?"

"Perhaps they do, and perhaps they do not," saucily replied Dora; and to herself she thought with a bright, happy smile, "I do believe we are all going to be so happy!" But happiness is silent, not spoken; and not one word of this did Dora say.

THE END.

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