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## Why Aunt Dora Never Married.

BY L. A. J.

WRITTEN BY A LITTLE GIRL SLAYER YEARS OLD.  
Spring, oh! gentle Spring, thou hast come again;  
Yes, thou hast come with thy mild and gentle rain;  
Wreaths, yes, wreaths of willow, yeons flying;  
From, oh! soon, will the woods and meadows ring;  
Hing, yes, hing, with the song of birds and humming-birds;  
Floating, oh! floating, through the distant air;  
All, yes, all, will send up a wild and joyous strain;  
So glad, oh! yes, so glad, are they, that Spring hath come again.  
E. J. G.

"Girls, I'll tell you what we will do. It's a rainy evening, and no one will be likely to come, so we will have a crisp, bright fire in the sitting room, and close the shutters early and light the lamps, and have a real old-fashioned evening, and get Aunt Dora to tell us a story—I mean a real true story—something about her girlhood, for I know even our demure little Aunt must, somewhere away back in the past, have had some romance, some lovers."  
"Why, yes, Dora," spoke up Fannie (my little blonde sister), "I saw Aunt Dora with her jewel case yesterday. I came unannounced in her room, and she was sitting on the floor with the contents of her cabinet scattered about her. There was a pearl necklace with—"  
"Stop, dear," I said, laying a finger across the rose leaf lips. "You must not tell anything that you saw. Aunt Dora would feel pained to know that you spoke of this to us, and my little sister must not mention this again."  
The wide, blue eyes filled with tears at this soft reproach, and the sweet mouth took on a piteous quiver.  
"You shall share our evening entertainment, darling, if Aunt Dora will consent to do as we say."  
Fannie was the youngest of three of us, small and slender, with soft blue eyes and a mobile mouth set amidst smiles and dimples. She was slipping into her seventeenth Summer. One would not have thought it though. She was so small for her years. I, Dora, the eldest, and Mignonette, the sweet flower girl as we called her, came between us. I was named for my Aunt. I was always a favorite with her. I knew there was something in reference to my being named for her more than the claim of relationship, but I never knew what. I'll admit I often wondered curiously what it could be, and longed to know. That in a birthright our dear old mother Eve left us women—curiously, you know—but my lips were always silent on the subject.  
"Just let me tell you this," insisted Fannie. "Aunt Dora was crying and I did so long to go to her and try to comfort her, but you know, Dodie, (this her pet name for me) I don't believe she even saw me or was aware of my proximity at all; she was so absorbed in her surroundings."  
"Well," said Mignonette, "we will do as you say, Dora, and I'll work on my Afghan, and perhaps I can finish it."  
An hour later found the blinds drawn in the little sooth room of our house and the red coils glowing in the open grate. Aunt Dora sat in the little low rocker, with her feet on a hassock. Mignonette and Fannie were busy over their respective tasks, viz., Afghan and toilet mat, and I sat near the little round table thinking, with my face buried in my hands. A silence had fallen amongst us for perhaps ten minutes. Aunt Dora leaned back against the hair cushion, with her eyes closed and her hands lying idly in her lap. She was a stately, distinguished looking woman, whose years were slipping into fifty, handsome despite the threads of gray that streaked her black hair, and the large, lustrous brown eyes were beautiful even yet. The long, black lashes drooped over the colorless cheeks, whose whiteness rivaled alabaster.  
"Aunt Dora, this is my birthday; you know I am twenty-four."  
"Are you, my dear?"  
"Yes, and I want that you should tell us a story. I will accept it as my birthday gift. A real true story about your girlhood, you know, and Aunt, tell us why you never married."  
I stammered through this, not looking at her till I had finished, for the white face before me made my heart ache. I saw that the request had pained her, but I knew she would tell us, for she seldom refused us anything.  
"Children, your faces are so bright I do not care to cloud them, and a rehearsal of the story would only sadden you. It has been carefully repulchered for twenty-four years. Never once has it crossed the threshold of my lips. Only the memory, whose companionship has come to walk with me day by day, hour by hour. But to-night I'll retrace the past and call from its grave the painful story of my early love and hopes, their despair, and death. You do not know, children, that away back across the bridge of years that separate the past from the present, your Aunt was considered a beautiful woman, set with all the graces of high breeding, pos-

sessing brilliant intellectual capacities and musical attainments of which there was no negation. At the age of nineteen, I was the occasion of a magnificent reception in honor of my debut. Here at my presentation, amidst the sweet atmosphere of ferns and palms, of flowers and vines, I came face to face for the first time with Paul Livingston. I will not attempt a description of him, for it would be a fruitless effort, but the finely cut features, the splendid physique and the graceful bearing won my admiration at once, and on further acquaintance, each interview developed some latent qualities that made him more fascinating, more representative type of the manhood, and whose mutual friendship strengthened by reason of our harmonizing tastes, our associations became more constant, for what man or woman is there who possesses grace of soul that is vulnerable against the innate, fine-grained principles that pervaded the souls of such men as was Paul Livingston? One had but to confront the calm, deep, dark eyes to read the depths shrouded beyond. The soul spoke through the shining, expressive glances. They spiritualized and redeemed the whole face.  
"I will not dwell long here. Our friendship in time ripened into something deeper, and soon became a devotion. It absorbed and revolutionized our lives, and when one Summer's morning—ah! how well do I remember it!—the sweet, misty, sleepy sunshine was over all the land, and our conversation was intermittent with the songs of birds and the play of the woodland brook whose white feet went twinkling over the stones. All nature seemed in sympathy, in harmony with our hearts, and as he clasped my hand in his and repeated the story enunciated of his love, the gates of our earthly Eden opened and we entered in. I felt that there was nothing left to desire. My peace and happiness were complete, but such happiness God does not permit to dwell here.  
"Dora, my little Dora," he said, "do you know the significance of the name?"  
"No, I do not."  
"It means a gift," a gift from God. I love the name more now than ever since this little woman has promised the gift to me.  
"You shall have me," I said. I did not know what else to say just then. He smiled at the childish, concise answer and held my face in his hands, and kissed the lips, the brow, the hair.  
"And now, darling, little Dora, I want you to always make me feel as good a child as now."  
"I think we are nearer Heaven when crowned with this childish, simple, trusting love. My happiness was so serene, so fraught with heavenly content. Our marriage was deferred for a couple of years, the first of which I traveled in the company of my parents. All the glory of art, the grandeur of scenery and the prominent civilizations of the earth were mine to contemplate, and in the middle of the second year I returned home, in honor of which a princely banquet was tendered me. I'll humbly now confess it, I was spoiled by the adulation, both at home and abroad. In the course of the evening, some one, our host, I think, proposed to toast Miss Dora Wilmer, commemorative of my safe return and of the pleasure my presence afforded them. I think this touched my vanity, for I graciously acknowledged it, and when the goblet was passed to Paul Livingston and he receded a few steps and courteously declined, I thought now I'll test the power of my charms, I'll see if he can prove himself vulnerable against the request of Miss Dora Wilmer. I did in no wise comprehend his refusal, therefore felt piqued at it, and a contumacious feeling filled my breast, so I took the cup in my hand and said: 'Went even drink to me. Can this be true?' I invested these sentences with mingled pain and surprise, and advanced with the air of an empress. The red wine in the moment I loved, over my fingers and dripped back in the cup. He reached out his hand and held my fingers with the goblet and said, 'So much do I love and reverence you, Dora, that I'll drink to your happiness if you desire it, even were death in the cup. Alas, death was in that cup, but I could not understand then. If only instead I had laid my fingers over that goblet and hidden its poisonous, pernicious contents and said, 'As you value your intellectual faculties, your manhood's strength and pride, and your eternal salvation, don't touch it,' he might have been saved. Ah! girls, how many of us have wrecked on that same rock; have seen our morning hopes as bright as skies of June set, ere they reached their meridian, in sombre colors; have seen our ships, whose freights were roses and pearls, go down in sight of land! It was wine, wine that did it! We reason with our souls, we say, it was no volition of mine. I would have had it otherwise, and yet how little we do to stay it!"  
The first glass of wine Paul Livingston received from the hand of the woman he loved, the woman he had taken into his heart as his Alpha and Omega. The second he willingly took of himself, and from that night he continued to drink. I was shocked, horrified. An imperative call to a distant city took him away for several

months and when on his return I met him, my heart faint and stood still to behold the terrible changes wrought in so short a time. There was no more the brilliant, luminous fire in the dark eyes; no more the quick, energetic movement called into action by vigorous manhood; the lagging step, the dull, soulless eye were visible truths of debauchery; of the midnight orgies and the frantic evils in which he participated. Oh! could this be Paul Livingston?—that man whom my very woman's soul idolized?—my idol incarnate, the one set apart from all others?  
"I know that he was hopelessly lost to me forever, and for awhile reason almost deserted my brain. I remonstrated and pleaded with him by all that was noblest and holiest in mankind; by that great Being in whose image he was created to turn away from the fatal grasp of the red demerol—wine—by the memory of that sainted mother whose love gave him life, and by the hopes of pardon and reconciliation with Him whose love cannot deny itself, to stop, to think, to shake off the fetters and stand once more a free, untrammelled man. But the trail of the serpent was about him. His fangs were in his heart. It was wine, wine or die! He could place no coercion upon his inebriation, and from exposure, disease prayed upon his vitals, till at last the physician's order interdicted any excitement whatever. Thus he hovered between life and death for weeks, in which time the agony at my heart was gnawing, corroding the life from me. Dr. Leyburn came to me one morning. He was one of those men whom we learn to trust instinctively, and taking my hand pressed it kindly and said, 'Your sufferings are telling on you, Dora, more than your lips could tell it. Now, I have a message from Paul Livingston for you.' I caught eagerly at the words. Oh! thank God, reason had returned, and at the last hour like the thief on the cross pardon might be granted him. I went to him. Surely my feet were wings, so swiftly did I go. He opened his eyes and held out an emaciated hand in recognition.  
"How memory leaped back to the one Summer's morning when we stood and plighted our lives to each other! How should we account to God for those vows unfulfilled? My heart rose up and confronted me with all the ghastly realities. I think this thought must have come to him, too, just then by the piteous, yearning smile that flickered about his lips. 'It was so kind of you, Dora. I wanted to see you again once more in this world and tell you, darling, that here on this couch of pain and lassitude the fear of death has been taken away. I do not fear to die now. Once life was full of aims and aspirations, of hopes and promises, but now—and here the tears forced their way over the sunken cheeks and dropped on the coverlets—I want you to place your little hand in mine, Dora, and tell me you forgive me, forgive the pains and blight that came to walk with you in all these years. I have nothing to forgive, but everything to deplore,' I cried. It is you who should ask the forgiveness of you, Paul, for the past sorrow that has covered our lives, was born of my vain frivolity, but in seeking cloth and ashes have I repented, and henceforth I live not for the world, not of the world, but to be met to an inheritance with you in Heaven.' 'Sit near me and let me hold your hand while I pass through the valley of the shadow of death. Will you come to me there, up there? Oh! beloved! beloved!' The fingers were tightening—this change meant—the throes of death. I clasped him up to my heart and held and strained him there. This was the bitterness of death to me, too, and as I saw the fluttering soul deserting its tenement, I thought my heart had broken with his. The wages of sin is suffering, and if I sinned, I also suffered. Only in the speaking silence of dreams have I realized the bliss my heart once leaned to. Its hopes, its youth lie in that lone grave, mingling with the sacred dust sepulchered there. The songs of the birds have lost their melody to me, even as the songs of the heart are voiceless to night. Never no more till it wakes in new melody above it sing, forgetting there is death."  
Mignonette was sobbing out her sympathetic tears on Aunt Dora's lap, the Afghan forgotten, and Fannie, dear little Fannie, her tender heart was broken up at the piteous story which Aunt Dora recited. We loved her so much. She sat calm at the close of the rehearsal—not a tear stained her cheeks. I think the fountain spring long ago have dried and its springs could never more be made to flow. I understood now why I was her favorite niece. I came was born at the time this great sorrow fell upon her life, and she took me into the remnant of heart she had left, and held me there as a gift from God and called me Dora.

"In choosing a wife," says an exchange, "be governed by her chin." The worst of it is that after having chosen a wife, one is apt to keep on being governed in the same way.  
There are few occasions when ceremony may not be dispensed with; it is never.

Woman's Rights vs. Rights of Children.  
Editors St. Mary's Beacon:  
In treating this subject the writer is aware that he is running counter to the wishes of many excellent but mistaken women, and will call down upon his head the wrath of those who in the nature of things ought to be his advocates and protectors.  
We invite attention to that part of sacred history which says: "I will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation," etc. We do not make this text cover all sin, acts, thoughts and words, as popularly called sin. It has reference only to the physical and mental deformities of our fathers and mothers which are to be visited upon our progeny. In this view we are backed by all the best authorities in the Christian church from the earliest ages to the present time. Every breeder of stock of any kind pays attention to this universal law—"like begets like." Every scientific man fully comprehends the hereditary transmission of qualities, both mental and physical. It was by the power of this natural law that the agriculturist, after years of laborious and painful experiment, was enabled to develop the beautiful and luscious grain that forms the staff of life from the original and ignoble grass of the fields. The horticulturist has done much by paying attention to this law: he has produced the luscious apple from the sour crab, the beautiful rose from the wild briar. The breeder of stock treading in the same path has produced the noble steed, the lordly ox; in fact, the law referred to, in part and parcel of our very instincts. The law being proved to be true in so many branches of industry, nature becomes as plastic in our hands as potter's clay. Jacob understood this law when he set up the "peeled rods." Diogenes seemed to comprehend it when he said to a young man who was a little too familiar: "Young man, why father begot thee when drunk."  
Come on, ye cowards, ye were got in fear though ye were born in Rome.—Shakespeare.  
Let us look at this thing a little closer, and use language that will fully express our meaning though it may offend delicate ears.  
It is very certain that if women are made to endure the nervous strain that worries and tires the brain and shortens the days of so many excellent men, their progeny would suffer for it, mentally as well as physically. This is a curious and delicate question, but one that men have acted upon in every department of nature where improvement was desirable.  
Germ life must not be disturbed after it is set, or the consequences must be death or an abortive effort.  
Men of striking abilities and superior genius generally draw their better qualities from their mothers, and almost always these mothers have been noted for their pious qualities and calm dispositions.  
It is true also that children of men of genius die out faster than children of duller natures. It must be, therefore, that men of genius exhaust the vitality they attempt to transmit by too active exertion in the calling which they have in hand. Put the mother under the same mental strain and the progeny, if any, would be, to say the least, half idiotic. This explains why the progeny of great men sink down the third and fourth generation sink down and become very commonplace men. Neither Clay, Calhoun, nor Webster was able to found a family equal to themselves; their vitality was exhausted over the excitement of their day. These statesmen drew their intellectual vigor from an abundant, unused, undisturbed source of mental and physical vitality. If the mothers of these statesmen had from girlhood laboriously exercised their faculties their sons would not have had anything to boast of, but would doubtless have been commonplace men in society, or the law of hereditary descent is a failure so far as man is concerned. Now, if there is any truth in the law of hereditary descent (we think there is) it is not in favor of casting woman into the political arena, or any other place of excitement which is the life and soul of the parent. It is enough that one parent labor hard at his vocation, be it what it may, and consume overmuch of the vitality that feeds the lamp of life; but it must not be that both parents should be under a strain of excitement if their progeny is deserving consideration. The unborn babe has its rights as well as others. They have the right to be born strong and healthy and not be exhausted in the very beginning of their lives.  
Give women in the United States the ballot, set them discussing politics with their husbands, and our firebrands would become a perfect pandemonium and their progeny would be imbeciles in the third and fourth generation; then new blood would have to be imported to reinvigorate the nation. The proper place for woman is the domestic hearth, as the tractable wife, the loving mother, in the school-room as the dutiful teacher of children, in the church as a moral reformer, otherwise she is not in the place in which it pleases God to call her.  
O. N. BRYAN.  
MARSHALL HALL, MD.

The Chesapeake Oyster Troubles.  
The following interesting description of the tricks and roses by which the Dredgers of the Chesapeake manage to escape arrest and to outwit the Police boat is taken from a recent issue of the Philadelphia Times. That paper says:  
"Many boats have strips of painted canvas, which when spread over their side make them look entirely different. It is the custom for honest trading boats whose captains are in search of a cargo of oysters to carry a couple of empty buckets on the mainmast head, which signifies that they wish to buy. The pirates take advantage of this and mounting a basket at the mast head, steer to forbidden bars and begin dredging. If tongsman with oysters for sale approach the vessel they soon see the dredge at work and keep at a safe distance. The crews of the navy were deceived by this ruse for a long time. 'The Cookoo Fleet,' which has been operating on the Eastern Shore for weeks past, is made up of seven or eight boats, whose names are changed by putting a piece of canvas over the two last letters and prefixing the word 'the' or the Christian name 'Thomas' to the work Cook. It can be easily imagined how by these changes a fleet of seven or eight vessels can be so fixed that it is utterly impossible to identify any one unless she and her crew are captured at work, which rarely occurs. A few days ago one of the navy boats discovered two canoes dredging on Tangier bar. As the police boat approached the canoes put on all sail for the mouth of the Potomac river. With a glass the officers saw that the largest and apparently the worst sailer had Cookoo painted on her stern. To this boat they gave chase, allowing the other to escape down the bay. The wind stiffened and the canoe outbatted her pursuer, and to the astonishment of the crew of the latter kept straight on for the Potomac river. An hour or so later the Cookoo disappeared in a cove that opened further up the river.  
"The sloop followed, and on going through the chute the pursuers were astonished to find that the Cookoo had disappeared, but coming down the river were two canoes, called 'Thomas Cook' and 'The Ghost.' Both had their numbers up, and to all appearances were innocent vessels, journeying to the dredging grounds on the bay. The Cook was boarded, but her papers were all right, and the mystified policemen returned to their sloop. A day or so later they learned from some tongsman that the Cookoo had merely taken her false name off her stern, pulled down the white canvas that covered the registered number on her mainsail, went about and came coolly down to meet her pursuers. John Yarnell, the captain of the Cookoo, is one of the most tricky members of the piratical guild and although he is often arrested, he is rarely found guilty. The law makes it necessary for every oyster vessel to have two sets of letters, twenty-two inches long, corresponding wide and six inches apart. One set must be on the starboard side of her mainsail and the other on the port side of her jib. The pirates, however, cover up their numbers with pieces of clean sail cloth and when a mile or so off are completely disguised. Of course they have to make the cut of the vessels appear different, but those changes are easily made with canvas tacked on the bulkhead.  
"The sloop in the oyster navy are far more effective than the steamer, which can do nothing when there is ice on the bay; but fast sailers and well handled as the sloops are, the canoes of the pirates will in a strong wind and heavy sea sail away from their pursuers with the greatest ease. The canoes are built of logs, and being very heavy and sharp at both ends, and having great length of keel, will stand up under a full press of sail when all other bay craft are compelled to go reefed.  
"In Fishing bay on the Eastern Shore there are many of these canoes that will carry six or seven hundred bushels of oysters. In light winds, when they are compelled to tack frequently, the canoes do not act as well as the sloops and are easily overhauled. It is the opinion of all the most intelligent officers of the navy that three good steamers, well armed and manned by crews of ten men each, would do more to break up the pirates than the present fleet of sail boats. In referring to this matter Captain Sim Lawson, of Kent Island, who is by the way, an oracle on oysters, says: 'What in the world can these cheap police boats 'roun head do when it's blowin' on the bay? Why, ash, they mus' haul in they haws and the canoes walks right away from 'em, ash.'  
"The captain was at dinner at the City Hotel, in Annapolis, when he gave this description of the inefficiency of the sloops and he paused to remove the upper shell of a section of oysters pie before continuing. After opening the pie much in the same way in which he would have let daylight into a Lynhaven bay oyster, he proceeded to swallow the meat, leaving the doughy shells untouched. The waiter on 'Now, there's my friend, Cap'n Lem Mitchell, one of the most perfect gentlemen in Anne Arundel

county—I tell you he shot a many of a drudger in his time; but they ain't a shootin' of many of 'em this wintah. An' ash, them drudgers is a stealin' oysters right under they eyes. I saw 'bout forty drudgers wuhin on Thomas P'int the other night an' were police in sight. 'Lusky' boys were fired on in Magdohy rivah las' week an' Jim he up with his gun an' led drivin an' blowed a haulful of wool right outen one of them air drudgers' heads. No, ash I can't say wethers that air shot killed him or not; as the Lusky didn't wait to see, but I guess the drudger lived, 'cause them air fellers is harder to kill than a dipper duck."  
On one occasion Captain Lemuel Mitchell had occasion to cross the bay and he carried as a passenger a young woman who lived at Centerville. On the trip he discovered five schooners dredging in Chester river. He came upon them very suddenly and they opened fire at once. One of the slugs from a heavy ducking gun struck the young woman's hat, and she retreated to the cabin, where the captain ordered her to lay down on the floor. He then returned to the deck and answered the fire of the dredgers, who after fighting fifteen minutes wanted to run away. Two of the schooners got out of the river, but the third one was cut off by the police boat. When the sloop came along side, the schooner's grappling irons were thrown out linking the vessels together. The crew continued to fight with clubbed muskets and cutlasses, but the pirates were overpowered. Three of Captain Mitchell's crew were slightly injured and nearly all their opponents were wounded. The captured vessel was the Magskvede and she was taken in the Potomac river by tongsman four or five days ago. Perhaps the most notorious oyster schooner on the bay is "The Banahse," or Irish Ghost, as she was often called. The naval officers say this boat is never seen except on forbidden bars. One night the navy sloop Nannie Merriman was in Fishing Bay, in Dorchester county, when she ran into a fleet of thirty or forty schooners, canoes and puffers dredging. It was too late to withdraw when the boats were discovered and the crew of the Merriman knew they would meet with a warm reception. "A few minutes later, when she reached the centre of the group, the crew of the Banahse, scarce fifty yards away, gave a yell and poured a volley of small shot into the sloop. The men of half a dozen of the nearest vessels followed the example set by the pirates of the Banahse, and soon the sloop became the target for marksmen on eight or ten vessels. The sloop passed on, however, straight to the Banahse, boarded, and after a brisk battle on deck, captured her and left O'Donnel, her captain bleeding profusely from a terrible wound caused by a clubbed musket. Five other boats were taken without much resistance after the Irish Ghost lowered her flag. The thirty-two prisoners were placed in the cabins of one of the captured vessels to wait until morning. During the night O'Donnel, armed with a broad axe which he found in a chest, broke out of the cabin. The guards hesitated about firing but clubbed their guns and knocked the prisoners down as rapidly as they showed their heads above the deck. The prisoners were landed in Dorchester county next morning and fined. Eleven men were wounded in this affray, and "Larry" McCall afterwards died in Bayview Hospital from the effects of a blow from the butt of an officer's gun."

ANOTHER COSTLY BIBLE.—The Sunderland copy of the Mazarin Bible, recently sold at auction in England, brought \$8,000. An enormous sum of money this to pay for a single volume. In the eyes of bibliomaniacs the price paid was not excessive; indeed, in their estimation, no figure paid for a rare volume can possibly be extravagant. In the case of this particular Bible—the Sunderland Mazarin—it really possesses intrinsic merits to recommend it to all intelligent appreciators of what is choice and interesting in bibliography and typography, for it is the first printed book with a date, the first book printed with movable type, and the first Bible copied on vellum, in excellent preservation, and in the original binding. Very seldom has a rare book so many intrinsic qualities to recommend it to all intelligent book collectors. In this connection it will be remembered that a Mazarin Bible was sold at public sale in New York last year, Hamilton Cole, a young lawyer, becoming the purchaser for \$17,000; it was also printed on vellum. A Mazarin Bible printed on paper changed hands at the same sale in New York, for \$13,450.  
There were rarer books in the famous Sunderland Library than the vellum Mazarin Bible that realized lower prices, showing that mere rarity no longer governs purchasers of priceless books. Volumes to possess a high money value, must have a historical interest attached to them, be marvols of old time typographic skill, or rich in illumination from the hand of the most patient and painstaking book illustrators that the world has probably ever produced.—Exchange.