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Chapter 2 : Editions of Dynevor Terrace: or, the clue of life - Volume 1 by Charlotte Mary Yonge

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James Frost Dynevor, Esq. Jocelyn, 3rd Earl of Ormersfield Mary, m. Louisa Villars, Mary, m. Frances Preston Oliver J. Frost 4th Earl of b. When shall I be able to relieve her? Dynevor, Esquire, if it were you who were coming from Peru, you would find a score to settle! Catharine Dynevor had begun life with little prospect of spending nearly half of it as mistress of a school. Her choice was one of the instances in which her affections had the mastery over her next strongest characteristic, family pride. She married a highly-educated and wealthy gentleman, of good family, but of mercantile connexions, such as her father, if living, would have disdained. Her married life was, however, perfectly unclouded, her ample means gave her the power of dispensing joy, and her temperament was so blithe and unselfish that no pleasure ever palled upon her. Cheveleigh was a proverb for hospitality, affording unending fetes for all ages, full of a graceful ease and freedom that inspired enjoyment. Frost Dynevor was a man of refined taste, open-handed even to extravagance, liberal in all his appointments, and gratifying to the utmost his love of art and decoration, while his charities and generous actions were hearty and lavish enough to satisfy even his warm-hearted wife. Joined with all this was a strong turn for speculations. When the mind has once become absorbed in earthly visions of wealth and prosperity, the excitement exercises such a fascination over the senses that the judgment loses balance. Frost Dynevor had the misfortune to live in a country rich in mineral wealth, and to have a brother-in-law easily guided, and with more love of figures than power of investigating estimates on a large scale. Mines were set on foot, companies established, and buildings commenced, and the results were only to be paralleled by those of the chalybeate springs discovered by Mr. Many a speculation has swallowed a life and fortune before its time for thriving has come. Frost Dynevor and Lord Ormersfield were the foremost victims to the Cheveleigh iron foundries and the Northwold baths. The close of the war brought a commercial crisis that their companies could not stand; and Mr. He had shown no misgivings, but, no sooner was he removed from the helm, than the vessel was found on the brink of destruction. Enormous sums had been sunk without tangible return, and the liabilities of the companies far surpassed anything that they had realized. Lord Ormersfield was stunned and helpless. Her sons were mere boys, and the only person who proved himself able to act or judge was the heir of Ormersfield, then about four-and-twenty, who came forward with sound judgment and upright dispassionate sense of justice to cope with the difficulties and clear away the involvements. He joined his father in mortgaging land, sacrificing timber, and reducing the establishment, so as to set the estate in the way of finally becoming free, though at the expense of rigid economy and self-denial. Cheveleigh could not have been saved, even had the heiress not been willing to yield everything to satisfy the just claims of the creditors. She was happy when she heard that it would suffice, and that no one would be able to accuse her husband of having wronged him. This was the sole dependence with which she and her sons quitted the home of their forefathers. With this view she took up her abode in the least eligible of her houses at Northwold, and, dropping the aristocratic name which alone remained of her heiress-ship, opened a school for little boys, declaring that she was rejoiced to recall the days when Henry and Oliver wore frocks and learnt to spell. If any human being could sweeten the Latin Grammar, it was Mrs. Frost, with the motherliness of a dame, and the refinement of a lady, unflinching sympathy and buoyant spirits, she loved each urchin, and each urchin loved her, till she had become a sort of adopted grandmamma to all Northwold and the neighbourhood. Henry went to Oxford. He gained no scholarship, took no honours, but he fell neither into debt nor disgrace; he led a goodnatured easy life, and made a vast number of friends; and when he was not staying with them, he and his mother were supremely happy together. He walked with her, read to her, sang to her, and played with her pupils. Frost kept school, and Henry played the flute, or shot over the Ormersfield property. If any one remonstrated, Henry was always said to be waiting for a government appointment, which was to be procured

by the Ormersfield interest. More for the sake of his mother than of himself, the Ormersfield interest was at length exerted, and the appointment was conferred on him. The immediate consequence was his marriage with the first pretty girl he met, poorer than himself, and all the Ormersfield interest failed to make his mother angry with him. His house, in a crowded part of London, was especially doomed by the deadly sickness; and out of the whole family the sole survivors were a little girl of ten months old, and a boy of seven years, the latter of whom was with his grandmother at Northwold. Frost was one of the women of whom affection makes unconscious heroines. She could never sink, as long as there was aught to need her love and care; and though Henry had been her darling, the very knowledge that his orphans had no one but herself to depend on, seemed to brace her energies with fresh life. They were left entirely on her hands, her son Oliver made no offers of assistance. Of that dignity, Mrs. Frost was a perfect model. Her trustful spirit and warm heart had been an elixir of youth, and had preserved her freshness and elasticity long after her sister and brother-in-law at Ormersfield had grown aged and sunk into the grave, and even her nephew was fast verging upon more than middle age. I walked by his garden and saw the wild brier, The thorn and the thistle grow broader and higher. The house was of the stately era of Anne, with a heavy portico and clumsy pediment on the garden side, all the windows of the suite of rooms opening on a broad stone terrace, whence steps descended to the lawn, neatly kept, but sombre, for want of openings in the surrounding evergreens. It was early March, and a lady wrapped in a shawl was seated on the terrace, enjoying the mild gleam of spring, and the freshness of the sun-warmed air, which awoke a smile of welcome as it breathed on her faded cheek, and her eyes gazed on the scene, in fond recognition. It had been the home of Mrs. After fourteen years spent in South America, how many threads she had to take up again! She had been as a sister to her cousin, Lord Ormersfield, and had shared more of his confidence than any other person during their earlier years, but afterwards their intercourse had necessarily been confined to brief and guarded letters. She had found him unchanged in his kindness to herself, and she was the more led to ponder on the grave, stern impassiveness of his manner to others, and to try to understand the tone of mind that it indicated. She recollected how she had shared his aspirations, and gloried in his consistent and prudent course, without perceiving what sorrow had since taught her—that ambition was to him what pleasure was to other young men. What had it not been to her when that ambition began to be gratified! There, a change came over the spirit of her dream; and though she sighed, she could not but smile at the fair picture that rose before her, of a young girl of radiant loveliness, her golden curls drooping over her neck, and her eyes blue as the starry veronica by the hedge side, smiling in the sunshine. She thought of the glances of proud delight that her cousin had stolen at her, to read in her face, that his Louisa was more than all he had told her. Little was needed to make her love the sweet, caressing young creature who had thrown her arms round her, and told her that she saw it was all nonsense to tell her she was such a good, grave, dreadful cousin Mary! Yet there had been some few misgivings! So short an acquaintance! Her cousin too busy for more than being bewitched by the lovely face! The Villiers family, so gay and fashionable! Might not all have been foreseen? And yet, of what use would foresight have been? But there was a darkening background which grew more prominent. Poor Louisa had little wisdom by nature, and her education had been solely directed to enable her to shine in the world, not to render her fit for the companionship of a man of domestic tastes, accustomed to the society of superior women. Page 15 A time had come when childish vanity and frivolity were verging on levity and imprudence. Expostulations fell powerless on her shallowness. Painful was the remembrance of the deprecating roguish glance of the beautiful eyes, and the coaxing caresses with which she kissed away the lecture, and made promises, only to forget them. She was like the soulless Undine, with her reckless gaiety and sweetness, so loving and childish that there was no being displeased with her, so innocent and devoid of all art or guile in her wilfulness, that her faults could hardly bear a harsher name than follies. Ponsonby thought of the days when she herself had been left to stay with her old uncle and aunt. In this very house while her husband was absent abroad, when she had assisted them to receive the poor young wife, sent home in failing health. She thought of the sad weeks, so melancholy in the impossibility of making an impression, or of leading poor Louisa from her frivolities, she recalled the sorrow of hearing her

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build on future schemes of pleasure, the dead blank when her prattle on them failed, the tedium of deeper subjects, and yet the bewitching sweetness overpowering all vexation at her exceeding silliness. Though full one-and-twenty years had passed, still the tears thrilled warm into Mrs. Ponsonby's confidence had explained the whole. If I had had my own way, I know who it would have been; but there were mamma and Anna Maria always saying how fortunate I was, and that he would be Prime Minister, and all the rest. I was far too young and foolish for him. He should have married a sober body, such as you, Mary! Why did he not? She wished she had never teased him by going out so much, and letting people talk nonsense; he had been very kind, and she was not half good enough for him. That confession, made to him, would have been balm for ever; but she had not resolution for the effort, and the days slid away till the worst fears were fulfilled. Nay, were they the worst fears? Was there not an unavowed sense that it was safer that she should die, while innocent of all but wayward folly, than be left to perils which she was so little able to resist? This had been known to Mrs. Ponsonby, but by no word from him; he had never permitted the most distant reference to his wife, and yet, with inconsistency betraying his passionate love, he had ordered one of the most beautiful and costly monuments that art could execute, for her grave at Ormersfield, and had sent brief but explicit orders that, contrary to all family precedent, his infant should bear no name but Louis. Page 16 On this boy Mrs. Ponsonby had founded all her hopes of a renewal of happiness for her cousin; but when she had left England there had been little amalgamation between the volatile animated boy, and his grave unbending father. At her earnest advice, the little fellow had been placed as a boarder with his great aunt, Mrs. Frost. These had ever since engaged him, whether in or out of office, leaving little time for society or for any domestic pursuit. The very purple ones that used to grow on the orchard bank! Frost, who had followed her up the steps. Ponsonby declared herself so much invigorated by Ormersfield air, that she would go to see her old friend the gardener. She looked as if it were hardly natural that any one but herself should support her mother, when Mrs. Frost tenderly drew Mrs. Old Gervas, in a patriarchal red waistcoat, welcomed Mrs. Ponsonby with more warmth than flattery. Surely those used to be strawberry beds. My old woman says he do want a lady about the place to make him comfortable like. Ponsonby, when they had turned from the old gardener. It did not answer; the servants did not like it, and it ended in his being sent to work with Smith, the ironmonger.

Chapter 3 : actinia - definition and meaning

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