

were going, and if he feared a pursuit; but somehow, when she tried to speak, her lips felt glued together, and a hoarse hollow noise in the throat was all the sound she could utter. She was sensible of the swaying motion of the carriage, as the horses galloped along the uneven roads, urged to their utmost speed by the driver; but gradually external objects and sounds grew indistinct and dream-like, and she fancied she was falling asleep; the only remaining sensation to which she was alive was the dull but horrible pain in her head, and even the consciousness of this was of a very confused and dreamy nature. By the time they had reached their destination she was totally insensible, and a skillful physician, summoned immediately on their arrival by the agonised baronet, informed him that his beautiful grandchild was in a dangerous state of high fever, evidently the consequence of a severe cold, or over-excitement.

## CHAPTER LII.

When Eola again returned to consciousness, she found herself the tenant of an elegantly furnished bedroom, abounding in all the luxurious comforts the eye could desire to rest on.

Soft couches, inviting chairs, pretty ottomans, handsome mirrors and well-chosen ornaments met her gaze on all sides.

The bed on which she lay was hung with blue silk (her favorite color) and white lace, festooned in the most elaborate manner, and the snowy pillows were trimmed with frilling of the finest cambric. Her eyes wandered over these objects for a long time without any seeming consciousness in their glance of the reality of the scene on which they rested, but with the dull, vacant expression of one in a dream.

She had, to all appearance, suffered greatly. Her small, classical features and well-chiselled limbs had become visibly sharpened and wasted, and deep blue circles lay in startling distinctness round her mild lovely eyes, telling a tale of suffering not to be mistaken.

She was but the wreck of her former self, yet, in all her faded charms, she was still beautiful, and the sweet expression of deep, calm faith and love that had so strongly marked her innocent features in the days of their healthful loveliness, still illumined her pallid countenance.

Since the night of her pretended rescue all had been a blank to her. Ages might have passed away in the interim, from the confused and indistinct aspect which the occurrences of that night assumed to her fitful memory. It almost seemed as if the grave had intervened between her present life and the past; as if she had passed over in a vision a dark and fearful abyss, that separated her from all she had learned to love and cling to in that dim, far-off time.

As if to test the truth of her being still a creature of mortality—alive, breathing, a thing of flesh and blood—the hapless child feebly raised one little arm to view, upon her pillow. It was wasted and shrunken, and the hand seemed to have diminished to n $\grave{e}$ ro infantine proportions. Altogether, the limb felt as if it held an independent existence from the remainder of the body; as though, in fact, it did not belong to it.

In childish amazement she felt her hand, her face, her hair; and drawing one little golden curl languidly through her wasted fingers, gazed upon it with a soft but meaningless smile, that showed how cruelly was prostrated the intellect that had formerly shone out so clear and brilliant in the bright blue eyes of the little gipsy girl.

But that golden tress was the one strong connecting link between her shattered memory and the past.

Slowly, as she drew the bright threads through her wasted fingers, came back the lost powers of remembrance.

The first distinct idea was of a tall, noble-looking, but gentle being, with low winning tones, and loving glances; dark, earnest eyes, and broad, white brow; who had in some bygone time, been wont to play with those glittering locks, while softly whispering of some new, strange feeling, which they shared in mutual gladness.

Was she not betrothed to this high-souled being? Had she not promised to be his bride? Yes, surely it had been so. Then why this singular separation? How this wondrous change?

Gradually it came back to her: the abduction—the cottage—the stranger—the escape—her sudden illness—all were remembered at last. And now reason had resumed its sway, curiosity, surprise, anxiety, and fear became almost insupportable. She began to long for some lucid information concerning her novel position, and the events that had occurred since she left the cottage in neighborhood of Truro:

The apartment in which she lay was partially darkened by the aid of Venetian blinds; but the bright, though heatless rays of a winter sun penetrated through them in several places, giving the azure-coloured furniture a cheerful and gay appearance, that greatly enhanced its beauty.

Drawing aside the silken hangings, the young girl peered round the room in search of some one of whom she might make her anxious inquiries, and as she did so, a cry of surprise proceeded from one of the window recesses, and an old woman, with a good-tempered, pleasing little old-fashioned face, came nimbly forward, and in deep amazement stared at the pretty invalid.

'Lor' bless me! Dear, goodness heart alive! and are ye really come to life agin, my dear young lady?' were her wondering exclamations, when she could find vent for her surprise in words.

'I suppose I have,' returned Eola, with a faint smile; 'but how long have I been ill?'

'Lor', my pretty creetur', ye've bin nearly dead.'

'Yes; but how long?'

'All the time, dear,' was the very lucid response; and then the old nurse, much to the young girl's vexation, returned to her former tone of surprise, and reiterated every one of her first exclamatory sentences, word for word.

'But I must go and tell it to the baronet, to be sure: didn't he give me strict orders to fly to him directly ye opened yer pretty eyes?' she said, all of a sudden. 'Oh! won't he just dance for joy, that's all? Ah, my dear young lady, if ye could only have seen yer dear, fond grandpa, when he's bin hanging over yer pillow, a-crying and raving like a reg'lar lunatic, ye'd a knowed how dearly he worshipped every hair of yer blessed little head.'

'My grandpa! What do you mean?' cried Eola, with a bewildered look; but the good old nurse was already out of the room, and on her way to the baronet, full of the delightful news of his grandchild's restoration to reason.

The truth was, that when the unforeseen calamity of her illness occurred, Sir George had been forced to make a slight alteration in his plans, in order to lull the curiosity of his domestics, who were told that Eola was brought there on account of her indisposition, to have the benefit of the sea air.

As they were informed that she was his grandchild, he was compelled to devise some other way of making the circumstances known to herself, than that which had been originally planned. He therefore purposed, on her return to consciousness, to inform her that the gipsy had done during her illness what he was at first intended to have done in her presence—namely, after finding out her place of refuge, to have turned penitent, confessed his wickedness, and declared her to be the granddaughter of Sir George Shipton, by the daughter of the Spanish gipsy girl.

During the alarming sickness of the poor deceived girl, the baronet had experienced some of the keenest tortures of self-reproach, and had, indeed, raved over the havoc he had wrought, as the nurse said, like a man bereft of his senses.

Therefore it may be imagined with what joy he now heard from the old woman—who was, by-the-bye, his country housekeeper—that her young charge was so much better. Requesting the informant to keep within call in a small dressing-room leading off from the invalid's chamber, he entered the latter's presence alone.

## CHAPTER LIII.

Eola greeted the appearance of her grandfather with a look of deep gratitude, mingled with surprise; but she timidly refrained from speaking.

He leaned over the bedside, and, taking one of her little washed hands, said—

'My sweet child, I am so glad to see you better. Since you have been ill I have heard strange and joyous tidings.' (Eola trembled, and her pale cheek flushed.) 'The interest I took in you, was not the mere compassion of a stranger, but the mysterious yearnings of nature—the sympathy of kindred.'

He paused for a moment to watch the effect of his words, for he had been warned by the medical attendant against exciting his grandchild too much in her weak state.

The hand he held slightly quivered, and a look of wild amazement gleamed in the brilliant eyes, but she did not appear overpowered, and he continued—

'Yes, dear girl, it is wonderful how things come to light. I, who for long, weary years have lived alone, uncared-for but by mere

acquaintances, in the wide, wide world, have at length found that I have a claim of relationship on one of the best and sweetest of beings. Dear Eola, I am your grandfather.'

'My grandfather?' cried the lovely invalid. 'Oh! sir, it cannot be true—you must be mistaken. I have not a relative in the world, but one,' she added.

These last two words came forth very faintly, and the blush on her cheeks grew deeper.

'No, I am not mistaken, my dear child; it is a reality—to be a pleasing, a most happy one.'

'But how can it be so, sir?'

'Your mother, my darling, was my child. Now do you understand?'

But Eola did not understand for a long time. It seemed to her such a fabulous thing, to be the grandchild of that proud, great man. She could not grasp the idea for a considerable while.

Before the baronet could have time to explain it all to her, the doctor came, and unceremoniously ordered him out of the patient's room, declaring that he was undoing all his work as fast as he did it, by thus agitating the invalid with his conversation. But the worthy professor of medicine, though he was an exceedingly clever man, man, erred in this instance. Unsatisfied anxiety was more detrimental to the beautiful girl's health than even over-excitement. The physician did not know the nature of the discourse that had excited her, or most probably he would have counselled its continuance to the end, instead of prohibiting it altogether.

And so, as soon as he was gone, the baronet, who did know its importance, took the liberty of returning to the young girl's chamber, and of calmly relating to her all her grandmother's history—of course, softening its deepest horrors. That part of the harrowing tale relating to the perpetration of Wingfield's crime, Sir George intended to carry to the grave with him an inviolate secret from all human beings. He then told Eola how the gipsies had known all this from Wingfield, and how Ralph, on finding that the man who had rescued her from him was the father of the girl that had been reared in their tent, and the grandfather of the child he had delivered from her late captivity, had come forward, confessed all, and withdrawn his unjust claim on her.

It would have been difficult to analyse the young girl's feelings on hearing this singular tale. For some minutes after its conclusion she appeared lost in deep reflection. Had she, the little outcast gipsy girl, the stray lamb, the obscure offspring of the tent—had she really a tie of kindred on one human being in the world who was ready to acknowledge it?—who appeared to love and cherish her, too, above every other earthly possession! It was a joyous thought to the lonely girl to feel that she had a natural claim on a fellow-creature, and on one seemingly so good, so generous, and noble as the baronet.

And when he folded her in his arms in a fond, paternal embrace, and soothingly kissed her fair brow, she did not shrink from his caresses; but rested her gentle head upon his bosom in all the warm, confiding willingness of filial love; for he had already won her affections, and inspired her with the deepest gratitude and respect.

And what were the feelings of the high-born admiral as he indulged in this first display of paternal affection—as he took for the first time to his beating heart the little fragile form of his grandchild? Was his delight at thus acknowledging the child of his child, and the tenderness which he already lavished on her, unalloyed by conscientious regrets or social scruples?

It was so.

The baronet was one of those independent, self-reliant, determined individuals, who in a case like the present, where his whole heart was, as it were, on the die, would, supported by his conscience, laugh at social conventionalities, and set at nought the trammels of the world, with a calm contempt defying its right even to question his actions. As a matter of course, Sir George hated his grandchild's origin on her father's side. But for all this, she was none the less a descendant of his own, none the less a treasure on which to lavish all the doting, blind, and too often selfish fondness which, in later years, takes in man's breast the place of earlier and more reasonable affection.

Eola was now, as may be supposed, dying with impatience to speak of him who was uppermost in her thoughts—of her beloved Elwyn. Had Sir George not made his late singular revelations, she would have introduced the subject nearest her heart the first thing, and begged that her lover might be

sent for; but now the duty that she felt she owed to her relative, and a feeling of bashfulness, constrained her to refrain from making this request until she had related to her grandfather all the events leading to her betrothal. Therefore, with a few premonitory sentences, she commenced her artless story, in which she unfolded to the astonished auditor all the wild adventures of her young life, following her escapade from Croydon.

And now the baronet heard from Eola's lips the true version of her love tale; but even after she had told him all—after she had told him in passionate terms, of all Elwyn's deep, fond, sheltering affection—of his brilliant qualities, useful impulses, and disinterested views, even then his stern decree was not revoked. Though half-convinced of his mistake, and at times feeling humiliated at the false position in which he had placed himself, the baronet's heart obstinately cherished its secret prejudices, and vigorously resisted the suggestions of better feelings.

Besides, setting aside all other considerations, Elwyn Esward was a great deal too old to marry his beautiful young grandchild. It might have proved to her a great shield from temptation, to have been united to him when friendless, poverty-stricken, and alone in the world; but now that she was neither of these, and, on the contrary, wealthy and protected, it would be madness to let her have her own foolish way, and bestow herself, in all her first, fresh loveliness, on a man who, for all she knew, might be a little better than a 'roue.' It was very well for a child to talk of his nobility of mind and delicacy of conduct, but how in the world could she, so inexperienced, so totally ignorant of the world's vices, answer for his faith? What could she know or suspect of his private character?—a man who had been pretty well all over Europe—who had lived amid the sensualists of the East, the love-sick denizens of the South, the debaucheries of Paris, and the equally disgraceful, though better-cloaked profligacies of London; and, according to all accounts, too often under the shadow of the demoralising influence of a thorough-bred, systematic libertine, whose example alone, in the baronet's estimation, was sufficient to contaminate the best grounded morality.

No; she might think him all honor and sincerity; but Sir George held a different opinion; and, above all things, the idea of wedding the lovely girl to the near relative of the villain who had destroyed her mother, was to him horrible. He must wear her thoughts from him by every means in his power. She might droop under the disappointment for a time, but her heart was too pliant to break—too young to bend for long. She would thank him for it some day, and look back with aversion at the idea which now gave her so much delight.

At some future day—wedded to a young husband, her equal in age, beauty and sentiment—she would forget that she had ever known such a being as Elwyn Esward.

Of course, it would be necessary to exert a great deal of ingenuity in framing and carrying out his plans, to keep them apart until the time arrived for him to confess his plot. This confession the baronet felt bound to make at some period or another, from a singular scruple of honor, which, though it did not prevent him deceiving his grandchild for a time, would not allow him him to keep up the deception for ever. He knew he would have to stoop to a vast deal that was mean and ungentlemanly; but the result would amply repay him, he felt sure.

Thus reasoned, and argued, and schemed the naturally well-intentioned, but prejudiced man, in defence of a principle that, from the very ardor with which he strove to excuse his error to himself, it was plain he felt to be an improper one.

'And may I write to him again to-night, grandfather?' asked Eola, after receiving a re-assurance from the baronet relative to her fruitless endeavors to communicate with Elwyn; Sir George giving it as his opinion that the letters had miscarried through some negligence in the postal arrangements.

'Yes, my dear, if you feel able, do so by all means,' returned the deceiver; 'but you must not exert yourself to write too much.'

'Will you write, dear grandfather, and give him an account of all that has happened? and I will just inclose a very tiny note of my own.'

'I shall be most happy, my darling, to carry out your wishes, and will lose no time in doing so,' rejoined the baronet; and he soon after quitted the apartment for the ostensible purpose of complying with her wish. Of course, he never did so in reality, and her own eloquent epistle was destroyed in less than half an hour after it was penned.

[To be continued.]