

GYPSY.

By Miss F. M. Musgrave.

(Continued.)

In an injured tone, Madame Camilla went on:—"Of course, Mr. Germaine, it is impossible for teachers to accomplish anything in the way of training, if they meet with opposition instead of firm support from parents and guardians. If you are so blind to the great fault in your niece's character—why I am helpless.

"I should like to see my niece alone for a few minutes; without your mentioning to her who wishes to see her. Just send her to me, please."

Madame Camille left the room in her stateliest manner. Eagerly Bertrand watched the door; the moment Gypsy saw him she sprung towards him; then suddenly, as if remembering herself, she stopped and went towards him calmly. She had grown a little in the nine months that she had been away from him, and looked altogether more womanly. She certainly did not look well, but was far from being in a dying condition. She looked pale, and there was a weary look in her face.

Bertrand would have drawn her to him and kissed her, but she put out her hand in the most dignified way.

"Why did you come?" she asked, "Why didn't you send for me?"

"I felt anxious about you, Gypsy, and wanted to see you."

She smiled almost sarcastically.

"You have not seen me for nine months. I should have thought you could have postponed your anxiety a little longer." She looked at him; something in his face struck her. "What have you been doing?" she cried sharply, "You look ill! You are ill!" She scanned his face early, catching his hand, her face growing pale—

It was the first time she had really looked at him since they had met. Of her own accord she had touched his hand: he clasped it earnestly; glad that he was able to prove to her what she had seemed to doubt—his anxiety for her.

"I am not ill, Gypsy, but I have been very anxious about you. I never should have let you go from me. You do wish to go back with me. Don't you, dear?"

Sharply Gypsy drew her hand from his. That little word "dear" seemed to arouse in her something like defiance. There was evidently something very obnoxious in it to her.

"Yes, I am tired of school. Every one is unkind to me."

"Not unkind, Gypsy?"

"Yes, I mean unkind."

"I will take you away to-night, if you wish. Tell me exactly what you wish, dear?" Again that offensive little word.

"I will be ready to go with you to-morrow morning."

Bertrand moved near to Gypsy. She put her hand out hurriedly. He told himself sadly that it was plain any expression of affection on his part had become distasteful to her.

The next morning Gypsy's manner was more repellent than ever. When they got into the train she seated herself some distance from him and appeared to be interested in looking out of the window. Bertrand thought perhaps she was tired and did not wish to talk. He was very generous to her, even in his thoughts he was always excusing her. He opened his book and began reading, but glancing at Gypsy presently in his ever watchful way when with her, he noticed she had fallen asleep. Whiter and more pinched her face looked in the morning light than it had appeared the evening before. Very softly he moved nearer to her, till her head was resting on his arm. "Poor little thing," he murmured, looking down at her; how tired she is. I am afraid she is not happy, and I would give my life to make her happy, I always seem to be mistaking her."

Very contented he felt then with that small wilful thing so near to him. At last, with a little start, Gypsy awoke, and drew herself away almost haughtily.

"You were very tired, Gypsy," Bertrand said extenuatingly, making an excuse to her for herself.

"I am no longer a child," almost loftily she spoke, "and I should not do childish things. I have learnt that at school at any rate."

"Learnt what Gypsy?"

"Not to be childish!"

Silently Bertrand cursed the school; alone he said—

"You are still quite a child and will always be a child to me."

Gypsy made an impatient gesture, saying very decidedly, "I am not a child any longer, Uncle Bertrand, and I do wish you would not treat me as if I were a child."

"But I don't think I do treat you as if you were a child." Bertrand took up his book and began reading, thinking he had given Gypsy an immense power of wounding him through his love for her. He grew tired of reading at last, and threw himself back in the seat. Soon he lost consciousness. A touch first roused him. Something soft and warm lightly touched his forehead; light as the touch was, it was just as if a wave of fire had swept through his being. Very still he remained, trying to live over again that light touch. Then a sob broke in his ear; that sound wrung his heart, he sprung up—"Child" he said earnestly, "what is it? Answer me truthfully; what can I do for you?"

A sob was choked back, and Gypsy answered with rather an unsuccessful attempt at calmness.

"Nothing is the matter with me. I am very childish, and I am very sorry now I have left school. If I had only remained longer I would have become less childish." She could scarcely have said anything that could

have wounded him more than what she had just said, about being sorry that she had left school. But he made up his mind on one point then; now that he had her back, he would never let her go away from him again.

CHAPTER VII.

Some days after on entering his library Bertrand came suddenly on Gypsy, seated in front of a book case with Greek and Latin books open all round her. He was standing beside her before she had noticed his entrance even. The moment she saw him she sprung up with something like fear in her face.

"I know I have disobeyed you," she began hastily.

"Do you know Latin and Greek, Gypsy?" Bertrand asked in surprise, glancing at the books on the floor.

"Very little" she answered sorrowfully, "I wish I did. I began at school; but I have not gone on very fast. O, Uncle Bertrand, it must be so nice to know Greek—to be able to read your testament in the original!"

"Why shouldn't you?" he asked.

"Because I am so stupid. I have been struggling to go on without assistance, but I feel almost hopeless."

"Yes, without assistance it is hard, but I don't think if you had lessons you would find it hopeless, Gypsy. Let me become your teacher?"

Quickly Gypsy glanced up, then she looked down without speaking; at last she said slowly:—

"You don't know how stupid I am. But would you really? Oh, I will be so attentive; and you may scold me as much as you please, I shan't mind—I mean I shall know I deserve it all. Oh, you will soon be sorry you offered to teach such a little stupid." This was said very deprecatingly.

Yes, already he told himself he was sorry, but not, certainly not in the way she meant. No, there was no fear of his growing tired. He had a far worse fear though, gnawing at his heart—a great fear of this constant contact, which these lessons must necessarily entail. Could he trust himself so constantly with Gypsy? What if by some quick, thoughtless word or look he should betray to her, what he was fighting so hard to crush out, or at least to hide.

"Suppose you gave me a short lesson now?"

He smiled, then quickly he turned from those brown eyes so pleadingly raised to his,

"If you like," he answered coldly.

"No, I don't like if *you* don't like," sharply Gypsy retorted.

"Yes, I do like," and there was a depth of bitter truth in that reply which Gypsy never guessed at.

More than once Bertrand looked at Gypsy in astonishment; he now beheld in her a perfectly new phase of character. He beheld a mind peculiarly strong and vigorous, grasping greedily every morsel of knowledge placed before it. He had always thought her sweetly wilful and childish, but now he saw depths in Gypsy's character he had never dreamt of. Once, when he had been explaining something to Gypsy, in her impetuosity to stop him to show him that she knew what he was about to explain, she caught his hand, holding it in hers in childish eagerness. That touch sent a warm thrill of pleasure through and through him. He rose abruptly and went to the book case and got a book. As he returned Gypsy looked up at him, saying innocently.

"Oh, Uncle Bertrand, how much you know; I would give anything to know all that you do." Gypsy's great brown eyes rested on him with deep admiration. Now a man must be utterly devoid of feeling—not to say vanity—if he can remain unmoved beneath two glowing brown eyes like Gypsy's; but when those eyes belong to the one being to whom he has given deep and hopeless love, then there is nothing but pain to be endured under that look.

Hastily Bertrand put the book on the table and turned again to the book case. Oh, how gladly, he thought, he would give all that knowledge, if by so doing he could only gain the right to confess all his love, or, if by giving that knowledge, he could just step back a few years nearer to Gypsy's age.

Then inwardly cursing his folly, he went calmly back to his seat. Only one hour he felt had swept away the struggle of months.

Gypsy was very good and attentive. She became almost submissive. The greater mind subdued the lesser mind. With a girlish enthusiasm she began to attribute to Uncle Bertrand a wisdom scarcely human. Bertrand saw it and sighed—so fearful is love. He could only see that Gypsy was making his very knowledge a barrier between them, which would thrust him further and further from her.

Gypsy made rapid progress in both Greek and Latin. Her teacher often marvelled, and more than once remonstrated at the quantity prepared for him; but Gypsy wilfully persisted. At last one day, comparing the length of lesson and Gypsy's pale face, Bertrand said very gravely, but decidedly,

"Gypsy, I cannot allow this any more; this is altogether too much; I shall begin to think that I made a mistake in encouraging you at all."

Gypsy's head went up with the old spirit of defiance. She did not like to be dictated to like a child.

"I wish I was a man," she said sharply, "then I should be able to do as I liked without being advised like a baby. What a man can do, I don't see why a woman can't do."

"But Gypsy, no student even would prepare this quantity at one time! lifting as he spoke sheet upon sheet of closely written exercises and translations.

Gypsy looked surprised.

"Didn't you do more than that when you were studying?"