

thing to do; to leave such a little child to a man, all alone as you are. He must have known you were *very* good."

Quite a new expression seemed born in Gypsy's face as she said this; gazing up at the moon.

"We were at school together, then at college. Your father was then the dearest being—"

"Then!" said Gypsy quickly, jealous of that father's memory, "and is he not still the dearest to you?"

"Your father will always be to me as a man seldom is to another man," Bertrand answered.

"Did papa leave me independently off, or am I quite dependent on you, Uncle Bertrand?"

"You have your own," was the rather evasive reply. "You are quite independent of me, Gypsy. If you got married to-morrow, you would have all your own."

"You have not answered my question. Did *papa* leave me independently off, or have I been living on your charity?"

For a moment he was silent; he could not bring himself to tell an untruth, and yet, how could he answer that question truthfully.

"My dear Gypsy," he began, getting further into the gloom, "if I tried to explain, you would not understand. Women never understand these matters."

"Oh! women never understand these matters; don't they?" almost viciously Gypsy snapped this out. Then her brown eyes were fixed in the direction of Uncle Bertrand, but even her bright eyes could not pierce the gloom in which he sat. She remained there quite silent for some time; a very unusual thing for her. Then she got down from her seat in the window, and walked away with the first shadow on her face.

Bertrand watched her with an almost hungry look in his face. I have hurt her, he thought sadly; but how could I help it. O Gypsy, my darling, if you only guessed on that gulf of years between us.

Poor Gypsy went away with the firm belief that but for her Uncle Bertrand would have got married. She felt altogether miserable and very discontented with herself. But unconsciously to herself, there had sprung up within her heart the greatest admiration—a feeling almost of reverence—for Uncle Bertrand. So much for her, she thought; and she was not even his own niece, as she had believed. And Gypsy sat down that night and pondered long and wearily.

The next morning, Gypsy proposed in the calmest way in the world that she should go to school.

"Go to school!" ejaculated Bertrand; "away from me? You shall have masters, dear, here; but I don't like the idea of your going to school."

Gypsy shook her head decidedly. "No, I think I ought to go to school for a little while, at any rate."

"If you wish it Gypsy, it shall be so," he answered quietly; "but I never meant that you should go from me to school."

CHAPTER VI.

George Eliot says, "In every parting there is an image of death." And so Bertrand felt it when he said a last good-bye to Gypsy before leaving her at school. Very lonely in heart he felt when he returned to his home without Gypsy. All brightness seemed to have flown with her. She had now been away from him nearly nine months, and in that time he had only received two letters in reply to those he had written her. He could not understand such cruel neglect, as it seemed to him on the part of his little charge. He knew Gypsy was quite well, because he heard regularly from Madame Camilla. There was a weary pain in the bottom of Bertrand's great, tender heart; and some disappointment too, although he would not have acknowledged that to himself. After Gypsy had left, he set himself to work very hard for his darling; till he felt this separation almost intolerable. He had just made up his mind at last that he could bear it no longer when he received this letter from Gypsy:—

"Send for me" she began abruptly—"at once, if you wish to see me alive. Why did you ever allow me to come here? I am weary of life!" Here Bertrand could scarcely help smiling although his anxiety was great, but the idea of Gypsy being tired of life was strange indeed. "I know I have always been a trouble to you; but perhaps it won't be much longer. I cannot stay here any longer though; send for me at once if you care to see me again." Never for a moment did it cross Bertrand's mind that this letter was altogether unjust to him. No, he only asked himself what he had been doing to allow her to go away from him. He had not done right; perhaps she was very ill, and he grew very fearful. "Child! child!" he cried; "why did I ever allow you to go from me, O friend of my youth; may it not be with the fear of cruel neglect on my soul that I shall have to meet you?"

The next day he stood at the door of Madame Camilla's young ladies' establishment. His first inquiry was about Gypsy, as Madame Camilla entered.

"Miss Melville is very well" was the rather astonishing reply. "But Mr. Germaine," Madame Camilla began with a slight compression of her very thin lips, and drawing her chair confidentially nearer as she spoke; "I am very glad to have an opportunity of speaking to you about your niece. It is inexpressibly painful for me to say it, but it would be a false kindness on my part to deceive you." This was rather a stereotyped phrase of Madame Camilla's to all parents and guardians when she had to report some misdemeanor on the part of some pupil. "Your niece is really a strangely wilful; not to say stubborn girl."

"I don't think my niece stubborn," Bertrand said, very decidedly, and thinking that no one should call Gypsy stubborn with impunity.

(To be Continued.)

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