

CONTINUED FROM TENTH PAGE.

my happiness to-day?" he asked, presently. Oh, what fun it will be to see their faces!"

He laughed.

"Fun?" echoed Eola, brought back to the present. Oh! how angry they will be. No, do not say a word yet. I must think, I must breathe; and there is something I must tell you before anything is settled.

"There is something I ought to tell you. I ought to have told you it before, but I never dreamed of this. It will probably make a great difference in your wishes."

"Will it make me wish to marry you earlier?"

"Please don't joke."

He saw that she was desperately in earnest, and he ceased to smile.

"Tell me everything, anything, my own," he said; and he stood quietly before her, listening.

Eola clasped her hands, and the sweet face grew very pale.

"I told you a story when I said I was Eola Caxton. I am called so, but in reality I am no relation of theirs at all. They are not my mother and sisters."

"What splendid news!" he cried. "The only drawback one could conceive was the link with these vulgar people."

"I have no relations, not one in the wide world," Eola faltered, sorrowfully.

"Better and better. My wife will be all my own. I could not have imagined anything more in accordance with my lifelong wishes."

"But understand—piteously—I am nobody. I have no name even. I am a waif and stray. Mr. Caxton took me in out of charity—he found me in the North of Canada. I had been stolen, and then deserted, by a tribe of Indians, and should have starved if he had not taken pity upon me, and brought me home. It was very good of them to feed and clothe me all these years, and I had no idea I was not Mrs. Caxton's own daughter until a few weeks ago when she told me the truth, as she said I was old enough now to know, and ought to try and make some return for the charity I had so long received. She said—the fair, refined face colored hotly—"I was low born, not even her equal in rank, and, therefore, surely I am not yours."

"You will let me have my own opinion upon that point," said the lover, decidedly.

He looked at the thoroughbred figure, the stag like head, the refined face, the starry eyes, the tiny, delicate hands.

"Is this the worst you have to tell me, sweetheart?"—then he smiled down very tenderly. "I can only say that you look more like a princess than a Caxton, but that—princess, Caxton, or beggar-maid—you are the only woman this world holds for me. You are my dear, dear love, my heart's desire, my pearl among women, my wife or I will have none, whatever your parents might have been, whatever your rank. As my wife, you will be—then he broke off and kissed laughing. "Why, you don't know who I am yet, little one; nor how low, according to the Caxton code, I may be in social grade."

"I hope you are a little low," smiled Eola, very brightly. "I shall feel so much more at home with you then; but perhaps it might be as well now—demurely—"as things have, one so far, that I should know your name."

She looked up with laughing eyes, and her lover kissed them.

"Your own name that shall be soon. Wait a while, little one, you will hear it in good time, but just now it is so delightful to feel that you give me entire trust. You don't fear poverty, Eola?"

She laughed out right merrily.

"Why, when have I known anything else? I think if you were rich, I should be a little afraid, because you might require so much more of me, you know. If you were Lord Bellevue, for instance."

She laughed again, such sweet, clear music.

"What puts Bellevue into your head, sweetheart?"

"Blanche. I believe that will be a match."

"Fortune forlorn! Poor Bellevue!"

"He was dining here last night."

"For a reason."

"They are lunching at Highfields today."

"Bellevue isn't there."

"Oh! how disappointed they will be. And you think he won't have Blanche?"

"I know for a fact; he is going to marry someone else."

CHAPTER VI.
"MY CHILD."

They came home with disappointment written upon their faces.

The luncheon at Highfields had not been all their fancy had painted it.

Lord Bellevue had not been visible, and Lord Dartrey had been stiff and difficult.

He had stiffened in manner directly he saw two daughters instead of three, and had so plainly inferred that the invitation had been given for Eola's sake, that Mrs. Caxton, with a burst of diplomatic inspiration—she had such at times—had requested a few minutes' private conversation with his lordship, and had there and then told him of Eola's true status—told him she was no scion of the noble house of Caxton—only a waif grafted in by charity.

"And I think, my lord, it is not right nor just to the girl herself, that she should be lifted higher out of her proper sphere or have her head turned by impossible visions. Therefore, I try to train her as much as possible to be useful and humble. She has been a great expense to us. My dear husband ought not to have burdened me thus, but he was too charitable to all. I consider that, now she can in some way repay me. I ought to expect her to do it."

Lord Dartrey seemed deeply impressed.

"I knew your husband, Mrs. Caxton," he said, abruptly. "I was not however aware he was the same Caxton until to-day."

"I have heard him speak of your lordship often," said Mrs. Caxton, impulsively.

"Indeed!"

Then, in an abrupt and authoritative way, which compelled more from Mrs.

Caxton's lips than she had intended to say his lordship asked many questions about the finding of the child, the tribe of Indians, part of Canada in which Mr. Caxton had done this charitable deed, the date when it had happened, &c.

And then he left her even more abruptly, saying—

"Excuse me for five minutes, please."

And it was a full hour before he reappeared.

Altogether, the luncheon at Highfields was not as the Caxtons had expected it to be, and Blanche and Julia snapped at each other for the remainder of the day, while Mrs. Caxton snubbed Eola.

But good humor was restored, for the very next day there came an invitation to a dance at Highfields.

"Just a few friends and a little carpet dance," wrote Lord Dartrey in the kindest manner, "and I particularly request that Miss Eola may accompany her sisters."

Well, that was bad taste on his lordship's part.

But it could not be helped, and, when Mrs. Caxton found that none of their world of Sretton was invited save themselves, she gave herself great airs, and thought it safer not to risk displeasing Lord Dartrey again.

Eola must be allowed to go.

The girl trod on air.

She had a letter—her first love letter—in her pocket from her beloved, who was now in London, but who promised to be at the dance at Highfields, to meet her there, and to publicly proclaim their betrothal.

Eola's happy heart beat so fast that she could scarcely sew the white muslin which was to make her dancing frock.

"Quite enough for a girl not out," said Mrs. Caxton. "Julia and Blanche must have new satin gowns. White satin, with trimmings of old rose velvet."

"What a fright you have made of your self!" said Blanche to Eola, looking the girl over when she came down dressed.

"Whatever possessed you to make your frock in such a ridiculous fashion? You will be the laughing stock of the party. But it does not matter, of course. You won't be noticed much."

"No," said Eola, quietly.

She had had before her eyes, as she sewed her frock that lovely picture at Highfields, and unconsciously her muslin had taken shape from the silken gown of the portrait.

No style could have suited Eola better—the simple muslin, that reaching to the ground the short bodice, cut low round the fair white throat, and with sleeves puffed high above the delicious dimpled arms.

She was the image of the picture; she saw it herself, saw it and wondered, and her heart beat tumultuously.

Round her throat was a black velvet ribbon, and threaded on it a heart of pink coral, which she had worn when Mr. Caxton found her.

It was a worthless ornament, or Mrs. Caxton would not have allowed the wait to retain it.

Lord Dartrey, stately courteous, received his guests.

When his eyes fell on Eola he started, and she glancing up, saw on his face a look which thrilled her.

Holding her hand for a moment he said, in a voice reaching her ears alone, "My child!" and a wave of emotion swept the fair, sensitive face the azure eyes were wet as they passed into the ball-room.

It was a blithe dance, but it lacked perfection for Eola for he had not come yet. Her forget-me-not eyes watched the door every moment more longingly, but supper-time came and he had not appeared.

The sweet ace shadowed.

Lord Dartrey took Mrs. Caxton into supper, and the lady's pride swelled high.

Her face was as crimson as her velvet gown, but at the door of the dining-room his lordship turned off down a passage.

Eola knew whether it led.

"Will you all follow me please?" I will not detain you long," he said, with his

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courteous grace, and one and all trooped after him, wondering.

They entered the oak panelled room, and there, between two beautiful silver lamps the lovely portrait hung.

Unconsciously Eola pressed forward, and as she did so, Lord Dartrey took her hand and led her immediately beneath the portrait, while all stood silent.

"Let down your hair dear child," he said, and the girl looked up wonderingly, then obeyed.

She let the heavy coil of golden hair fall in a rippling mass over her white shoulders, and then—the resemblance was complete.

The lovely pictured face above, the lovely living face below, were the same.

In the deathlike stillness which followed, while Eola paled and trembled, Lord Dartrey spoke quite quietly.

"You can all see for yourselves the truth of what I say. This is my daughter—The Lady Eola Owen. That is the portrait of my beloved wife; her name was Eola also. Bear with me for a few minutes, and I will tell my story. I married secretly long before I became Earl of Dartrey. We lived in Canada—my wife, my child, and I. A man named Caxton was employed by me, dismissed for dishonesty, and he vowed revenge."

"I was summoned from home suddenly, and when I returned, I found the Indians had made a raid upon my house, incited thereto in part by this man Caxton. They had burned my dwelling; they had killed my wife and child—or so I thought. My wife's body I found, but the little Eola's was supposed to have been consumed by the fire. I never dreamed otherwise until I met my child by accident the other day, and her face and her voice—the exact voice of my darling wife—told me her identity."

"Since then I have employed detectives to trace all, and by their researches I have learned the truth. I have, today, received telegrams which put it beyond a doubt that my child was carried off by the Indians, alive, and was rescued by Caxton. He gave me no comfort in my agony of bereavement; firstly desiring to have his revenge, and secondly meaning, when I succeeded to wealth and title, to extort a heavy price for Eola's restoration. He died suddenly, ere his plans were ripe, and I believe that he never told his secret to his wife. She thought that the child he brought home was a waif unknown. This alone, without other proof, would satisfy me."

With gentle touch he took the coral heart from Eola's neck, and opening it in a way none ever knew it could open, disclosed a picture of himself.

"My wife took a fancy for this little ornament in one of the shops, and insisted upon buying it, and putting my portrait inside; she afterwards gave it to little Eola to wear."

Then he turned to the wondering, quivering, sobbing girl.

"My daughter—my child!" he said, in tones of the deepest tenderness, "will you come to your father, and bless his declining years?"

And as Eola threw herself into his arms, there was scarce a dry eye in the room.

Only the tears of Mrs. Caxton and her daughters were tears, not of sympathy, but of jealousy and wrath.

"If Lord Bellevue sees her as Lady Eola!" Blanche waited to herself, as they all went in to the deferred supper, Eola clinging to her father's arm and the loveliness of the picture was apparent even to the green eyes of jealousy.

The stately distinguished man, from whom all age and sadness seemed to have fallen, and the young and beautiful girl, with her hair still streaming, like a veil over her simple white frock, and her tender eyes upturned.

As Miss Caxton spoke, she turned and saw Lord Bellevue, his eyes fixed upon Eola, and his gaze full of passionate admiration.

Forthwith she intercepted him.

"Oh, dear Lord Bellevue, you are just too late for the most affecting scene! Our dear little sister Eola, our pet youngest sister—you don't know her, I think—has been taken from us. I don't know what mamma and we shall do."

She clasped her large, white gloved hands affectingly, and looked, with bold eyes, into his lordship's face.

"She has turned it to—only, I think it must be a mistake, and we shall find it out presently—into Lord Dartrey's daughter, Lady Eola Owen. It is wonderful. I feel quite—"

Lord Bellevue cut short her feelings.

"I must go and offer my congratulations to Dartrey," he said. "This is good news indeed, Miss Caxton."

"Not for us," she cried, trying to detain him. "Mamma and we shall miss the dear child so terribly."

"No doubt you will miss her," he responded dryly. "Yes Miss Caxton I must console with you."

But he left her all the same; only, he did not go straight to Eola.

She was surrounded by new friends, and he waited his opportunity, then touched her arm, and drew her into a little empty boudoir.

Lady Eola came willingly, her sweet face radiant.

"Now my happiness is complete," she said, clasping her hands on his arm. "Have you heard the wonderful, the glorious news?"

"It may not be glorious for me," he said, looking grave. "You are now a great lady, and it is likely, it is probable, that you will now wish to marry some great man. You will not throw yourself away upon a nobody—upon me."

She stopped him with sweet rippling laughter.

She was now so bold that she put up her face to be kissed, and returned his caresses warmly, and then she became quite grave, and said, looking into his face with her starry eyes—

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wife." A delicious blush there; Eola's blushes were the most enchanting things. "Do you think that rank or title count to me before love? And do you think that I love today and forget tomorrow? You don't think it really, I see it in your face; but it is most unkind of you to dare to hint at such things." And then, softer, lower, sweeter: "Dear love, I have given you my heart! Nothing, nothing that this world could offer could make it possible for me to take it back."

"But your father, Lady Eola?" he said, quietly.

"Let us go and ask his consent at once," she cried, impulsively, linking her hand in his arm. "My father can't object to you when he sees; but I shall tell him—with a very resolute look coming on her pretty face—that even if you are a crossing-sweeper, you must be my husband, because I love you, I love you and none other."

"Would you give up this new inheritance your title and luxury, and share poverty and obscurity with me?"

He held her face in his hands as he asked the question, and Eola replied, without an instant's hesitation—

"I would."

He kissed her very tenderly, then almost solemnly.

"My pearl among women!" he murmured, and then he led her out towards Lord Dartrey.

There were many people all about, talking and wondering; Blanche Caxton was there and she turned pale when she saw who Eola's companion was, and how he looked in the lovely face and held both the girl's hands.

Very quietly Bellevue went up to Lord Dartrey, and still holding Eola in a possessive clasp—a possession from which there could be no appeal—he said, clearly for all to hear—

"It is hard, Dartrey, that you should find your child only to lose her; but Eola has promised to marry me."

"Lord Bellevue!" shrieked Blanche, distracted, "Eola marry you?"

"I have her promise, and I ask her father to give his consent. I am sorry, selfishly sorry, that she has turned out to be of higher rank than myself, because I would have counted it the most glorious privilege to have given her all I had to bestow. But I cannot let her off from her promise whoever she may be."

Then Eola interrupted, her sweet voice broken by tears—

"Oh! what does birth, or rank, or wealth signify in comparison with love? It is love I have always craved for, love I value to-day more than all."

"Father, dear, dear father, you are not angry with me, are you? You will give your consent, won't you?"

No one could resist that upturned face. Lord Dartrey bent and kissed it.

"My child, my little one!"—his voice shook—"my child with her mother's face!—how could I refuse you anything?"

Then, turning to Lord Bellevue, he said, with a flickering smile: "It is hard on me to hard on me to have another putting in claim to my just-recovered treasure; but, if I must give it up, I would rather to you, Bellevue, than to any other living man."

Then, raising his voice for his guests to hear: "Lord Bellevue is an old and tried friend, a man of honor and integrity; my darling will be safe in his keeping, and I give her to him willingly."

He put Eola's hands into those of her lover, and there was a moment's hush.

Lord Dartrey broke it with grave and tremulous accents—

"For the rest, I can only offer humble and heartfelt thanks to merciful Heaven for the blessings vouchsafed to me to-day. My gratitude is, indeed, too deep for poor words to express."

And Eola spoke unconsciously aloud, with a little catch in her breath—

"Oh! what can I say, what can I do, to show and prove my gratitude?"

Here Mrs. Caxton, with ill advised fulsomeness, came forward.

"My lord, I am sure I am entirely over-whelmed and taken by surprise. I beg you to believe that I never had an idea, or a thought, of this wonderful thing. My husband never told me."

"Let us hope that it is so."

His lordship cut her short with the coldness and sharpness of a steel knife.

"You have complained of your heavy burden, madam. You shall instantly be relieved of it. I cannot let my new found treasure out of my sight, more especially if I am doomed to relinquish her too soon."

He smiled upon the lovers. "You will oblige me, madam, by forwarding to me an account for every penny that my child has cost you, and it shall be repaid to you—with interest. And now let our ball continue."

He turned courteously to his guests.

"So I know your name at last," Eola said archly, to her sweetheart. "I must say I am glad now that Lord Bellevue did not carry out my wishes, and fall in love with

Blanche."

"After seeing you?" said Bellevue and he gazed at her adoringly.

"I am glad I did not guess it before. Had I thought you a noble peer, I should have been terrified."

"And now, sweetheart?"

"Oh, now I have got used to you!" she demurely.

They are scarcely separated at all, the father and daughter, for Lord and Lady Bellevue spend much time at Highfields, and Lord Dartrey pays long visits to his married daughter.

Eola has not yet satisfied her own mind as to how she can show her gratitude, but countless poor speak of her generous kindness, and she is ever at work to find out and to relieve her fellow creatures in sorrow or in poverty.

"I cannot do enough for others—I, to whom so much has been given," she says, when they tell her she works too hard.

The Caxtons are always longing to see more of their "dearest Eola," Lady Bellevue.

"She was so thoroughly one of ourselves," says Blanche, "such a dear, real sister; it is hard to be separate, you know."

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Officers' Difficulties.

An inexperienced military officer is sure to encounter great difficulties in the practical management of soldiers in the field. An English journal represents a scene at a general inspection of a volunteer battalion, in which Lieutenant Tompkins—an excellent fellow but a poor soldier—is called out to show the general and the British public what he knows. Says the general:

"Now, sir, you have the battalion in quarter column, facing south. How would you get it into line in the quickest possible way, facing north-east?"

"Well, sir," says Lieutenant Tompkins, after fruitless consideration, "do you know that's what I've always wondered?"

This officer's ingenuity was not equal to that of Abraham Lincoln, when he was a captain of Illinois volunteers in the Black-hawk War. Mr. Norman Hapgood, in his "Life of Lincoln," relates that during this campaign Lincoln once has his company marching in a column twenty men wide, when he was suddenly confronted with a high fence with an open gate, through which only one man could pass at a time. He had no idea of the proper way to get his men into single file, so he halted the company and said:

"This company is dismissed. But it will come together immediately after getting through that gate!"

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