

THE GYPSY GIRL

"Stop quick, James!" Mr. Mourdant fairly yelled at his chauffeur. James yanked on the breaks and the big Locomobile limousine abruptly came to a halt. The startled chauffeur turned to see what his employer wanted. To his great surprise Mr. Mourdant was fumbling at the car door.

"Don't stand there like an idiot! Open this confounded door! he snarled. "Don't you see I'm in a hurry? poor little girl." his harsh voice strangely softened as he said the last words.

Poor James thought Mr. Mourdant had gone crazy. As he threw open the door he was nearly knocked down by the impatient old man, who hurried down the road without a word to him.

About a hundred yards back by the side of the road, completely covered with dust there appeared to be a bundle of gaudy rags. The keen eyes of John Mourdant had seen that it was a girl. His own little girl had been gone nearly fifteen years. Now he always helped poor girls he saw.

"What's the matter, my child, are you —" he broke off sharply as he saw that the girl was much older than he had at first thought. Why she might even be twenty or more. Perhaps she wouldn't like to be called "my child."

The girl, seeing the old man's confusion, smiled wanly at him. "Nothing, I'm just—I'm just tired. I thought I could walk to Pikesville by night and er—er—er have time to earn something to eat before dark. But I didn't think it was so far. I just stopped to rest a minute."

The old gentleman cleared his throat a couple of times and finally got out, "Well, I'm going through Pikesville. If you would like to ride, I have plenty of room."

He waited anxiously for his answer. He wanted to see more of this brave girl who was trying to walk twenty miles before supper.

"I don't know," came slowly from the tired girl. Then seeing the hurt look on the old man's face. "I'd get your car so messed up—"

"That won't matter," he hastily interrupted, "if that's all that's bothering you, come on."

"Alright," she suddenly decided. "I wouldn't have time to get there before dark if I walked."

James scowled his disapproval as his master helped the dusty, dirty girl into the car. He hurriedly tried to slip a rug over the seat, thinking he would protect the luxurious upholstery.

"That's all right, James, I'll fix the little girl," came pleasantly from Mr. Mourdant as he took the rug away from James.

The car rushed on as night drew nearer and nearer. For several moments there was a deep silence in the tourney.

Finally Mr. Mourdant asked somewhat testily "What do your people mean to let you start out on such a journey when it's so near dark?"

"I have no people," wistfully replied the girl. "Nobody cares what I do." She burst into a torrent of tears.

"By Jove, look what I've started," muttered the man. He patted her shoulder gently "There, there, don't cry. Nothing's worth so many precious tears. Come, child, tell me the trouble. Perhaps I can help."

"No no," sobbed the girl, "nobody can help."

"Well, tell me any way. A

trouble shared is only a half trouble after all. Ah! that's it," as she tried to stop crying, "Tell me. It'll do you good to talk about it."

"Well, you see I always thought I was a gypsy. I often wondered why Mag treated me so bad, but I thought maybe it was because I lost her rabbit foot. Anyway she got mad yesterday and said that I was only an alley waif, that she'd adopted me out of the kindness of her heart. She said I'd have to get out of the camp and look after myself now. I can cook and I thought maybe I could get a job at Pikesville. "She paused a moment and big brown eyes looked pleadingly at him. "Do you think I can?"

"We'll see! We'll see! perhaps you can. What's your name?"

"I—don't—know," the halting words were so slow that he scarcely heard them. "Mag always called me Liza Jane, but I know most that's not my name. Oh— I know it's not. Nobody with a face like this would name a little baby Liza Jane." She fumbled in the pocket of her calico skirt and produced an old fashioned locket set in pearls.

Mourdant started as if he had seen a ghost. Surely there was but one locket in all the world like that! How well he remembered that day long ago when he and his young wife had bought a locket for little Dorothy. He could hear her say, "I'll put my picture in it so she'll have her mother's picture when she grows up." How the wee Dorothy had played with the shining bauble! The very next day she had run away from her nurse and had never been seen since! In spite of all money and the best detective could do, the little girl had not been found. His wife had died soon after. What a difference a daughter would have made in his dreary home! How long it had been since then. Something splashed down on his glove. A tear!

He looked hastily around to see if the girl had noticed. She was trying to open the locket.

"I opened it the other day but it won't open now," she put it into his hand saying eagerly "Maybe you can open it."

His hand trembled as he took it. His daughter would have been about this size if she were alive. Suppose, just suppose this was she! "Where did you get this?" his voice sounded queer to his own ears.

The girl looked at him in wonder. "Why Mag has kept it for me a long time. She said I had it on when she found me. If it were only my mother's picture!" she choked and then went on eagerly "Do you think it could be? I look a little like that, only not half as pretty."

He at last got the locket open. His wife smiled gayly up at him!

He looked again at the waif. Now he saw a slight resemblance. The same big brown eyes, the same curly hair only this hair was red while his wife's had been brown. The same saucy, turned-up nose: Of course this was Dorothy!

"At last," he cried, "after all these long years—"

She looked at him wonderingly. What could be the matter? he looked so strange!

"Of course, dear, you don't understand," he said huskily. "I suppose I'd better explain."

And then stumbling a little as he reviewed his lonely, grief-stricken

life, he told her of the little Dorothy he had lost and that he believed she was that Dorothy.

The girl's eyes were wet when he finished. "If I only were! How wonderful it would be to have a father who really cared!"

"Of course you are! No one else could have that hair, eyes, and nose. What did you say?"

"But suppose I'm not. Think what your real daughter would be missing! Isn't there some way to find out?"

"We'll find Mag, as you call her, she'll know the truth. When can we find her?"

"The camp is way back the way we came. I think I could find it."

"James, go back the way we came. I want to find the Gypsy camp," he spoke hastily into the tube.

"Yes, sir," came promptly from James.

In a twinkling the car was turned about and shot down the other way. They twisted about country lanes, mired up to the hub in many places.

"There it is! There it is!" exclaimed the eager Dorothy (!) "There's Mag, too!"

A fat, dirty, mean looking, old woman stood with folded arms looking at the car. In answer to Mourdant's eager questions, she steadily replied that she knew nothing.

"Offer her money," whispered his companion, "she'd sell her soul for a little money."

Finally for five hundred dollars the old hag told how she had found the child wandering around in the park lost. She had intended to hold her for ransom, but the detectives had been too close and dared not. Therefore she had kept the girl.

Six Months Later

A beautiful young girl, dressed in the height of style came slowly down the steps of a big house on H— St.

"Who is that?" whispered a passing old woman to her companion.

"Why that's Dorothy Mourdant, Haven't you heard about her? It's really quite a romantic story. Her father spoils her to death, they say. Well, he ought to I think, she had such a hard life when she was a little girl."

—Bessie Watson.

PARENT-TEACHERS' CLUB

(Continued from page 1)
ship. John Sykes continued the discussion, setting forth the possibilities of its being a medium between the school and the town, by boosting the many activities of the various organizations of the city. Especially would this prove beneficial in athletics.

Miss Elliott, of North Carolina College, in concluding the discussion, said making a citizen is developing a point of view, and, in contrasting the child movement of Germany with that of the City of Mexico, the former being a case of misdirected or rather non-directed energy, the latter directed, she showed the danger that lies in the home failing to cultivate the studying and thinking habit.

During the course of the meeting, Norman Block made an earnest appeal to the parents, to patronize the school athletics, assuring them that, while the money would be acceptable, the students wanted them rather in the spirit of encouragement than for whatever financial aid they might be, offering them complimentary tickets to the coming

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games.

In an effort to raise money for the treasury, the ladies hit upon a most happy scheme, deciding to save all papers, magazines and pasteboard boxes for one month and to sell some to the Anderson

Container company. Many mothers volunteered to solicit their neighborhoods for this work.

After a most delightful half hour at the cafeteria, enjoying social intercourse around the tea-cup, the assembly disbanded.