

given to her thoughts by the approach of her daughter who was driving rapidly in a homeward direction. The recognition was almost simultaneous, and Eva instantly drew up her horse with a strangely nervous feeling, which Mr. Arlingford's kind, encouraging smile served but in a slight measure to re-assure.

"Would Miss Huntingdon have the kindness to inform us whence she comes, and where she is now going?" imperatively enquired Lady Huntingdon, who could not have been in a more unfavorable mood for the meeting.

"I am returning to the Hall," timidly answered Eva, most judiciously selecting the latter question for reply.

"Returning to the Hall," was her mother's angry retort; "Yes, after having spent the whole day amusing yourself in solitary walks and drives. Your contempt for your family and future husband, young lady, is certainly most unequivocally displayed."

"Nay, as far as I am concerned," interrupted Mr. Arlingford, endeavoring to dismiss the matter with a pleasantry; "your Ladyship need make no reproaches to Eva. The present is her time of rule, my day of power will come hereafter."

"If you are so easily satisfied, Mr. Arlingford, so little tenacious of the respect and claims due to yourself, I am not. Have the kindness to leave us till my daughter gives me the explanation, I have asked of her. Miss Huntingdon, I request, nay, I insist on an answer to my first question. Whence come you?"

Poor Eva, thus hard pressed, could only glance imploringly towards her lover, and the appeal was not long unanswered. In a cold tone, he exclaimed:

"And I equally insist, your Ladyship, on Miss Huntingdon's being freed from all farther importunities on the subject. We have annoyed her sufficiently, as it is. Eva dear, you had better drive on. We will join you shortly at the Hall."

With a timid, covert glance to her mother, followed by another of beaming gratitude and confidence towards the speaker, Eva obeyed and the feeling of security attending this first overt act of rebellion against her mother's long and absolute dominion, afforded her a foreshadowing of that happy time when she would have only the gentle sway of Edgar Arlingford to acknowledge or fear.

Lady Huntingdon at first petrified by her future son-in-law's daring mode of proceeding, was silent for some moments and then turning towards him, enquired in her haughtiest accents,

by what authority did he thus interfere between herself and her daughter?"

"I am only assuming, a week earlier, my marital rights," was the smiling but very determined reply; "Your Ladyship has often reproached me of late, with my unbecoming neglect of my own just claims, so I have asserted them to-day for the first time."

Lady Huntingdon felt the deep sting conveyed in his words, the cutting sarcasm which pierced through the thin veil of outward respect in which he had clothed his rebuke and her lips quivered with passion, but Edgar Arlingford was no weak-minded, irresolute George Leland to be ruled by a frown or won by a smile, still less was he a suitor to be trifled with or willingly, wilfully offended. No, the master of Arlingford Castle, the nephew and favorite of the powerful Duchess of Fitz-Ormond was above all that, and when, after a moment, he again proffered his arm, remarking in his usual calm, respectful tones that "the evening air was beginning to grow chill," she accepted it without farther demur. Still ruled by the new power that had sprung up to oppose so successfully her own long undisputed sway, she addressed no farther reproaches to her daughter on her arrival at home, and a slight cutting remark regarding the happy independence of engaged young ladies, was Eva's only penalty for a fault that would have won her, one month previous, weeks of wearisome lecturing and bitter reproaches.

The following evening a pleasant little party were assembled in the drawing room at Elmswater, the beautiful residence of Augustus Huntingdon. Of course Arlingford and his affianced bride were there, and as young Huntingdon leaned over his sister's chair, jesting her on her change of suitors with much the same boyish vivacity that he used to tease her about old Humdrum, as he had titled the much calumniated governess, his young wife conversed with Mr. Arlingford whose attention was more than fairly divided by the caresses of the youthful Edgar and Eva to whom his arrival was ever the signal of entire freedom and bliss. Another couple, seated in a quiet nook at some distance were not less happy though infinitely more quiet. These were Sir George and "the charming person," and as the baronet earnestly assured her "that indeed she was as dear to him as Miss Huntingdon had ever been; at the same time entreating her like a sensible woman to consent to the immediate celebration of their nuptials, as the triumphal arches of Leland Park would be all down and the materials for the bon-fires carried off," a smile of