

the joyousness of her own heart, and the varied and glowing beauty of the country through which they were passing would permit her, when a new and more powerful cause of distraction presented itself, in the approach of a horseman, who was advancing at a rapid gallop along the same road, and in whom her quick eye at once recognized the handsome stranger who had already twice crossed her path, and contrived to evince during those two brief moments so flattering, so unaccountable an interest in herself. Whether by accident or design, he reined up his horse in a narrow winding of the road, rendering it necessary for the carriage to pass quite close to him. Eva felt her heart beat most uncomfortably, and she wished herself at home, anywhere out of her present predicament. Her countenance, so perfect, so cloudless a mirror of everything that passed in her heart, reflected plainly in her crimsoning cheeks and averted glance, the feeling of uncomfortable, of almost guilty consciousness, that filled her at the moment. In passing the rider, she involuntarily raised her eyes, and encountered the fixed admiring gaze of his dark speaking orbs, almost startling in their deep earnestness. As he met her glance, he slightly, almost imperceptibly, inclined his head, and Eva crimson to her temples, turned for refuge from his speaking glances, to Mrs. Wentworth, who, happily for her, had been too profoundly engrossed by her botanical lecture to perceive the rapid pantomime that had just been enacted. She suddenly stopped short, however, and Eva, fearful that she was about to question her on the cause of her evident discomposure, hurriedly exclaimed:

"There, Mrs. Wentworth, is not that yellow flower on the bank, an illustration of the class you have just been describing?"

Mrs. Wentworth was short-sighted, so Eva asked the groom to dismount and gather the flower she alluded to. The man did so, smiling at the caprice that attached any value to a common weed. On Eva's handing the blossom to her companion for her inspection, the latter exclaimed in a tone of profound astonishment:

"What! that, belong to the class I have just been describing? It does not possess a single characteristic of it. Really, I must say, Miss Huntingdon, that your studies in the open air are not always equally successful."

Eva bent her head over the unlucky blossom to conceal her embarrassment, but the heavy moisture with which the leaves were charged, discoloured her delicate glove, and she threw it from her. Some moments afterwards, a sharp bark from Hector, who had followed the carriage,

caused her to turn her head, when, to her overwhelming surprise, she saw the handsome unknown, who had alighted from his horse, stoop, raise the flower she had rejected, and carefully put it in his bosom. Eva waited for no more, but her thoughts involved in one confused chaos, sank back into her former position, as deaf to the words of her companion as a statue of marble. Fortunately for her, Mrs. Wentworth had now drawn forth a work on botany, and had proceeded to follow up her own lecture, by a chapter from its pages.

"Who the stranger was? Why did he take so deep, so undeserved an interest in her?" were questions that Eva asked herself fifty times. Then, as she reflected how utterly undeserved such friendship was on her part, a feeling of sincere gratitude succeeded, which in its turn was replaced by one of admiration, as the handsome and distinguished appearance of the stranger rose upon her recollection. Finally, she came to the conclusion, that he was another generous, kind-hearted being of the same stamp as Mr. Arlingford, and as she thought of all the kindness, the gentle attentions evinced towards her by the latter, she felt that fortune was already atoning to her, in some degree, through the kindness of strangers, for the desolateness that filled her own home. Oh! how distracted were Eva's thoughts that evening, how doubly dull and unintelligible did her French studies appear. In vain she fixed her eyes upon the book, in vain she shaded them with her hand, the lineage of the graceful unknown was ever before her, gathering, as a thing of price, the unattractive flower she had cast away, and bringing with it, the ever recurring question: "What had he seen in her, what had she done to earn or win such interest?" And yet, again, what claims had she either on Mr. Arlingford, he who from the first had advised, encouraged her, with the tenderness of a father. Oh! were the stranger ten times more flattering and handsome, she could never like him half as well. The sharp question, "Miss Huntingdon, do you know your verb, yet?" broke in most unpleasantly upon her meditations, for, as may be supposed, Miss Huntingdon knew very little of it. Indeed, she had been too deeply engaged in the study of her two new friends, in all their persons, moods and tempers, to attend to anything else. The consequence was, she was severely reprimanded, informed there should be no carriage drive the following day, and politely requested to learn two verbs instead of one. She sought her couch that night, restless and unhappy, now wishing herself again in her old home, then