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EVA HUNTINGDON.*

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CHAPTER XX.

About a week after her first visit, Eva's phaeton again drew up one beautiful afternoon before Honeysuckle Cottage. The door was opened by a smart looking girl of fourteen—Mrs. Huntingdon's only attendant,—and on Eva's inquiring for her mistress, she pointed mysteriously to the drawing-room, and then disappeared down a flight of steep stairs. Eva hesitated a moment, and finally entered; but she paused on the threshold, for her sister-in-law was lying on the sofa, her face entirely shrouded by her long luxuriant curls. The sudden suspicion that flashed across her was confirmed as Mrs. Huntingdon raised her head and revealed her countenance, pale and disfigured with tears. With a startled exclamation she sprang to her feet, and, crimson with shame and confusion, stood motionless, unable to accost or welcome her guest. The latter, however, instantly approached her, and kindly inquired, "if anything had happened to grieve her?"

"Nothing, nothing. Oh! my dear Miss Huntingdon, I am unpardonably foolish"; but Eva gently insisted, and at length drew from the young wife a sobbing confession "that she was wretchedly miserable, and that her husband was very cross and unreasonable." Her grief, however, soon yielded to the soothing words of her companion, and after a while she took her seat beside her, tolerably calm and composed.

"Yes, my dear young lady," she exclaimed, "since you are so kind and good as to take an interest in the affairs of one so humble as myself, I will disguise nothing from you. Well, this morn-

ing, as you know, the weather was very fine, and after talking a whole lot of nonsense about fresh breezes and bright sunshine, Augustus told me to prepare for a walk through the woods with him. Now, I leave it to yourself, Miss Huntingdon, whether any one woman, married or single, with a house to attend to, and none to assist her save a stupid, giddy, workhouse girl of fourteen, can leave it to take morning rambles. To put such an idea entirely out of the question, I had yesterday morning gathered fruit for preserving, so I entreated him to dispense with my company for this time. He insisted, so I then quietly said, I would not, nor could not, for that my household duties must be attended to, before idle, useless walks. Upon this he flew into a violent passion, saying all sorts of cruel things about his having been a fool to change his single condition, and that in marrying me, he had sought a companion, not a cook. Indeed, he said so much, that I could not help telling him, 'he should have wedded a titled lady, then, and not a poor country curate's daughter, and that it would have been happier for us both, had he done so.' Oh! my dear Miss Huntingdon, had you heard the dreadful way he swore! It shocked me, doubly, because I had often heard my poor dear papa, who is now in his grave, affirm that none but reprobates and godless people ever swear. This, I felt it my duty to tell him, and instead of its producing any good effect, he only turned cruelly on poor papa's memory, calling him an old credulous simpleton, and saying that no greater proof of his folly could be required than the ridiculous manner in which he

*Continued from page 346.