

of London, as a general rule, think differently. Much as they might admire his mind or elegant figure, Arlingford Castle would come for a double share of admiration, whilst his polished, high-bred manners would not ensure as much respect as his close connection with the Herberts, Grevilles and Ponsonbys. Do you think the proud widow of the Earl of Delamere, or the young and elegant heiress of the Howards, would have smiled on him openly, or, a while winter, if his mind and manners were his only attractions. Ask Eva, and see what she will tell you. Five years' residence abroad, must have considerably enlightened her. Perhaps, not as much as five years' residence at home," rejoined his sister in a low tone; "but, I am sure, did he—did Mr. Arlingford seem to return with the partiality of his fair admirers?"

"Not very markedly, but rumour says, that regardless of the connections of the Countess of Arlaine, and the wealth and youthful charms of her daughter, he has honored with his special attention the plain, unattractive daughter of some low baronet, who has half a dozen dowerless girls to dispose of."

"Did you hear the name?" was the rapid interrogation.

"Yes, Stanton, a former *belle* of that witless and of my father's, George Leland. Why, Eva, what makes you color so! Ah! I remember the old story. His visit to the Hall, and his gossip and conjectures of the neighborhood. I think he had all escaped my memory, but to return to Arlingford's attentions to Miss Stanton, I really think there was nothing in them beyond general generosity on his part, and a feeling of friendship for Sir Wilmot Stanton, who had been an intimate friend of the deceased Mrs. Arlingford. Edgar, feeling for the neglect and disregard which poverty had brought on an amiable and respectable family, did his best to bring her again into notice. He introduced the Stanton family to us, and Helen, the eldest, who is really amiable, and rather sensible sort of girl, became a great favorite with Carry. She was on a visit with us last Spring."

"And, was Mr. Arlingford here also?" asked Helen, shading her glowing face mid the glossy curls of her little namesake.

"Yes, part of the time. He and Helen undertook to teach Master Edgar to read, but their pupils proved most refractory, ungallantly declaring that Mr. Arlingford might teach him, he would learn from Miss Stanton, because she had not a pretty smile and sweet voice like his own dear Mamma."

Eva involuntarily pressed the child closer to her, whilst the father smilingly exclaimed:

"Well, young gentleman, would you condescend to learn from Aunt Eva."

For a moment the boy's beautiful bright eyes earnestly scanned Eva's features, and then throwing his arms around her neck, he murmured:

"Yes, yes, I would, even though she is not rosy, and smiling like my own Mamma."

The young mother instantly, though gently, drew the child away, kindly exclaiming:

"Come, dear Eva, to the drawing room; those little ones will fatigue you."

Eva, afraid to trust her voice in dissent, had no alternative but to follow, and she was some minutes seated on the couch in the former apartment, ere composure was entirely restored. The conversation freely, happily flowed on, yet, though her companions spoke most unreservedly of their own affairs, present and past, their hopes and plans, their lights and shadows of life, Eva returned not their confidence. How could she tell them with that sad, pale face, and spiritless voice, that she was about to become a bride! Would they not at once infer the truth, and anxious for her happiness, weary her with importunity to retract what she felt was now indeed irrevocable. Silently then, she listened to their smiling allusions to the probable cause of her return, their conjectures as to whether she had met any fortunate fellow-traveller abroad, whose society might compensate in itself for home and country, and when she rose to leave, both felt assured that Eva had returned to them as free in heart and fancy, as when they had last parted. Taking advantage of her sister-in-law's momentary absence, with a brief request to her brother to await her under the portico, she hastened to the nursery. Rapidly, though affectionately, kissing her little namesake, whose bright lips were instantly raised to her own, she turned to the boy Edgar, and strained him passionately to his heart. Much the child wondered at the deep fervor of that long embrace, surpassing even in warmth, those of his own mother, and still more at the bright tears that fell on his ivory brow, and dark curls. Gently twining his tiny arm around her neck, he whispered:

"Wait! I will send for my Mr. Arlingford, and he will give you a handsome carriage and pony like he gave Edgar, and he will not let poor Aunt Eva cry any more."

The boy's only answer was another passionate embrace, and then, like a spirit, Eva had glided from the room. The little fellow, after a moment's quiet thought, turned to his baby sister, and