

after their arrival, as they were slowly driving through one of the principal streets, Eva sitting back beside her mother in the carriage, wondering at the crowds of happy smiling faces they encountered, and recalling with a sigh, the time when her own had been as happy as the happiest they met, a startled exclamation of:

"God bless me! Is that you, Miss Eva?" struck upon her ear. The adjuration as well as the accent itself were purely English and with a strange feeling of apprehension she turned. It was as she feared. Mounted on a thorough-bred, English hunter, that shewed his tall figure and commandment to tolerable advantage, was Sir George Leland. The sudden shade, so palpable, so oppressive, that flitted across Eve's features was lost on the young baronet, and bending towards her, he whispered:

"Have, no fears of any farther annoyance from me, Miss Eva, for, I address you, now, as a friend, not a lover. To, convince you entirely of that, I have only to say that the magnet which detains me in Rome, is the society of a charming young woman, a country-women of my own who is now gone with her family."

Eva again breathed and Sir George instantly turned to Lady Huntingdon, who either pleased to meet a friendly face in a land of strangers, or animated by her usual spirit of haughty opposition, received him with marked cordiality. That they slowly moved on, Sir George imagining, Lady Huntingdon receiving with equal satisfaction the latest London gossip, a plain, green chariot, drove past them. It contained an elderly gentleman and three young ladies, decidedly English in their appearance. Sir George bowed to them with the most smiling courtesy, at the same time eagerly whispering to Eva:

"There, that is Miss Stanton, the lady I was speaking of, in the blue bonnet."

The latter, a gentle though plain-looking girl, turned to her very temples as she returned the glance, glancing at the same time eagerly at Eva and by confusion coupled with the Baronet's announcement, at once dispelled some uneasy doubts she had previously entertained as to the real existence of the "charming young person."

"Hem! What, do, you, think, of her?" enquired Sir George.

"She has a very gentle, prepossessing countenance," was the unhesitating reply.

"Glad you think so and by-the-way she really has a sweet temper. Those are her sisters, she has three more at home and all

unmarried, herself the eldest. The family are very poor, but I do not mind that, as I am rich and the young lady, this is in strict confidence, a little partial to myself."

Assured on this important point, no longer importuned by lover-like attentions on the part of Sir George, Eva soon lost the species of dislike she had acquired for him during his visit at Huntingdon Hall. His willingness to share with her the burden of amusing Lady Huntingdon and supporting her Ladyship's countless whims and ill-temper, which he did with a certain dogged composure that might easily have been mistaken for the most imperturbable good-humour, farther did away with her prejudices, and when her mother informed her, some weeks after, that she had invited the Baronet to spend a month at their villa, she was conscious, at least, of no feeling of dissatisfaction. The month was lengthened to three, Sir George's conduct all the while so unexceptionable, that when Eva learned by chance that the "charming young person" had returned long since to England, unwooed and unwon, it caused her no uneasiness. Her security, however, was ill-founded, for the Baronet took occasion on the eve of his departure, to again renew his proposals. He listened, however, to Eva's second rejection, so resignedly, begging "she would still continue to look on him as a friend and permit him to contribute, as formerly, to Lady Huntingdon's amusement or comfort, as far as lay in his power," that so far from feeling any irritation against him, Eva was only sorry for the pain she had been compelled to inflict.

Lady Huntingdon too, either controlled by her promise to Mr. Arlingford, or by the conviction that harshness was not the best policy, made no open effort to force her daughter's inclinations. She quietly represented to her, indeed, the advantages of a union with a man of Sir George's position and unexceptionable character and temper, recapitulating all the arguments she had once brought forward on a similar occasion. Wisely, but briefly, she spoke too, of the only alternative awaiting Eva, a life spent in a home, which from circumstances, could never be otherwise than dull and cheerless and in which she would ever be entirely dependent on the will of others. That argument was perhaps the best chosen of all, and when after another six months, during which Sir George accompanied them on all their wanderings abroad, bearing with Lady Huntingdon's imperfections and atoning for the indolent negligence of her husband, who when travelling, always "left every thing to Providence," he again humbly proffered his hand, Eva