

"No, but I could describe him to you. He is handsome, oh! very handsome," and Eva commenced describing, with great eloquence, his dark wavy hair and faultless figure. "Ah! you are laughing at me," she exclaimed, pausing suddenly, as she perceived a very ominous smile stealing over her listener's features.

"No, Eva dear, I am not laughing at you, but at the idea of the Quixotic enterprise it would be, to undertake to seek out any single individual on the strength of the colour of his hair or eyes. However, should I meet in my travels, with any one answering to the description you have given me of this Apollo, I shall enquire his name and inform you of it, as well as of any other particulars I can gather concerning him."

"Thank you, Mr. Arlingford. Oh! you cannot imagine how happy I feel, now that I have told you all. I wonder how I could have ever thought of disguising it from you, which, part of the time, I was foolish enough to contemplate. Now, I can talk to you about it—tell you if he sends me any more flowers—ask your advice—but will you give me frankly first, your opinion of him!"

He looked earnestly at her a moment, and then smilingly rejoined:

"I do not know, Eva, but perhaps he has been smitten by your pretty face."

"Oh! Mr. Arlingford, you are mocking me!" was the reproachful reply.

"Nay, Eva, I am not; and now tell me, with your customary sweet candour, has the same idea never yet presented itself to your own thoughts?"

If ever Eva blushed, it was then, and at length she rejoined, in a voice almost inaudible:

"Yes, it lately did, and I was rejoiced to think, that however beautiful and superior mamma might be, there was yet one individual who could see more attractions in myself than in her. And now, Mr. Arlingford, what do you think of me?"

"Think of you, Eva! Why, that you are a good, gentle child. A little inclined, perhaps, to attach too much importance to trifles, to view things through a romantic medium, but nobly sincere and docile. I have only to add, that your conduct throughout the whole affair, has been admirable. Pursue the same course. Prohibit your maid from talking at all about this stranger—reject his flowers—listen to no messages from him, and above all, Eva," and he meaningly smiled, "put no more of his white roses in water. Nay, do not blush so deeply. I know you only wanted to study a lesson in botany. Such a one as your unknown friend doubtless derived from the rejected flower, which he gathered with such commendable zeal."

Eva replied by neither word nor smile, for Mr. Arlingford's raillery, on a subject which her own imagination had already magnified in a most disproportionate degree, sounded greatly like a mockery or reproach. Her companion instantly saw that she was hurt, and he kindly exclaimed:

"Nay, my dear child, I was but jesting; but I will not speak so lightly again, since it pains you."

Eva had no time to reply, for she heard her mother's step in the hall, and with one eloquent glance of gratitude, one friendly pressure of his hand, she was gone.

"How can such a being be the daughter of such a woman?" he murmured. "And yet 'tis easily accounted for. She was brought up miles away—far from her evil influence and example. Brought up in innocence and simplicity, by a sensible and superior woman, one suited in every respect for the charge imposed on her. Oh! how little the Huntingdons know how to prize the inestimable treasure that God has given them! May they learn her worth, ere it be too late! But here comes the tender, affectionate mother, herself—the fitting type of many of her class. Difficult as the task is at present, I must be doubly agreeable, for I have a point to gain. Eva must accompany her ladyship, be the latter willing or unwilling, to London. This handsome unknown, as she romantically styles him, renders that necessary."

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CHAPTER IX.

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Four weeks after the conversation related above, Eva was seated alone in a small, but elegantly furnished dressing-room, in — Square, London, endeavoring to beguile the monotony of a rainy day, by a still more monotonous work, selected for her perusal by Mrs. Wentworth. We will see from this, that Mr. Arlingford had carried his point with lady Huntingdon, and her daughter had accompanied her to town, though sorely it must be confessed, against the wishes of both parties. What rendered the prospect of a winter's seclusion in London doubly unendurable to Eva, was the knowledge that Mr. Arlingford would not visit the metropolis that season; however, his advice and encouragement reconciled her at length in some degree to her lot; and though she wept passionately at parting, declared she could never be happy till they returned again to Huntingdon Hall, she succeeded in disguising her feelings from her parents and governess, and thus escaped the taunts and rebukes a knowledge of them would have drawn down upon her. On the arrival of the Huntingdons at their town residence, Eva and