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## EVA HUNTINGDON. \*

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### CHAPTER XXII.

PURSUANT to her determination, Eva took advantage of the indisposition which confined Lady Huntingdon to her own room the following day, and having waited to see her wrapped in deep slumber, the natural result of a sleepless night, set out on her mission to Honey-suckle Cottage. How interminably long did that drive appear to her—how she yearned, yet dreaded to arrive at its close! At length she reached the sudden turn of the road that brought her in full view of the Cottage, and her eager, straining glance was instantly fixed upon it. Oh! what a change was there! Her worst, her darkest fears seemed realized. For a moment she pressed her hands upon her eyes, hoping she had not seen aright—but a second look, alas! confirmed her. The very spirit of ruin and misery seemed brooding over the spot. The pretty green jealousies were broken and weather-stained—the little palisade in front of the house, trampled into the dust, whilst tall, unsightly weeds, choked up the honeysuckles that, here and there, struggled to show their pale, weakly blossoms.

With a heart sick almost unto death, Eva approached the door and after a moment's pause to recover from the overwhelming feeling of weakness that stole over her, knocked with a trembling hand for admittance. The summons was answered by an awkward, miserable looking girl of fourteen, who stared at Eva with a degree of

wondering amazement, betokening that visitors of her class were very rare.

"Does—does Mr. Huntingdon live here?" faltered the latter.

"No, father does," was the reply.

"Thank God!" was Eva's heartfelt ejaculation; "Oh! I might have known they could not have fallen as low as this! Can you tell me, my good girl, where the gentleman has gone to, that occupied this house before you came to it! his name was Huntingdon."

The girl knew of no such person. The house was empty when they had come to live in it.

Again disheartened, Eva silently turned away. Though relieved from her first fearful supposition that this wretched habitation was her brother's home; she was far from recovered yet from the terrible shock she had received, nor could she entirely overcome the superstitious feeling that whispered, there was something ominous in this utter ruin that had fallen on his early home, on the roof that had first witnessed his young affection and happiness. Not knowing where to direct her steps, or whom to apply to, haunted by voiceless fears and conjectures to which it was almost madness to listen, she proceeded on her way. In passing a cottage whose climbing plants and well tended garden reminded her mournfully of Honey-suckle Cottage in by-gone days, she resolved to stop and enquire if they could give her the information she sought. As she alighted, the door opened and a young, blooming looking woman, stepped out on the verandah.

\*Continued from page 441.