

ulation on my part, whatever it would have been on yours, for I would have loved, ay, did love you. It was the dawning presentiment of that feeling, the singular interest I took in you, the intensity of which I could not account for, even to myself, but which seemed unconquerable folly in our relative positions and circumstances, that exiled me from your presence, and prompted the constrained, reserved tone of my later letters, for which you so often and so touchingly upbraided me. But all this is idle folly. Whatever may have been the distance that separated Edgar Arlingford from Eva Huntingdon, between him and the affianced wife of Rockingham, there lies a gulf that can never be passed. The heart which, free and unengaged, might have been ultimately won by my devotion and tenderness, could never respond to it, once filled with the image of another."

Eva had again covered her face with her hands, but the flush of burning scarlet that had replaced her late ghastly pallor, shewed even between her small transparent fingers. Arlingford, fearing for her self-control, for his own, exclaimed in a rapid, indistinct tone—

"It may be, Eva, that I have erred, even more widely than yourself, in pouring this tale into your ear, but the full heart must have utterance, and mine could not be silent in such an hour as this. Let us leave the past, however; 'tis but a sad and unavailing retrospect, and turn to the future, which demands our undivided attention. 'Tis better for us to separate now, but do not mention that you have seen me. I will return in a few hours, to seek an interview with your parents, and put an end, if possible, to all thoughts of this hateful union with Sir George Leland."

Eva silently rose, and as she turned away, Arlingford took her icy hand in his, gently exclaiming—

"Tell me, Eva, that you have forgiven me for un deceiving you with regard to Chester Rockingham—that you have forgiven me for the terrible anguish I have inflicted on your heart, in revealing to it the perfidy of the man you had loved and trusted."

Had worlds depended on it, Eva could not have spoken then, but she bowed her head, and the utter hopelessness, the weary despair of her look, as she turned away, haunted Arlingford long long after. Two hours later, Lady Huntingdon was summoned in all haste to the bedside of her daughter who had been taken suddenly and dangerously ill. That fragile frame had been tasked beyond its strength, and for many days Eva hovered between life and death. At length, however, life and youth triumphed, and she was pro-

nounced out of danger. That very day, Mr. Arlingford took his departure from Huntingdon Hall. It was Sefton who mentioned the fact to Eva, and the latter listened to it in silence, but an hour afterwards she asked "if he had left no word, no message for her!"

"Yes, Miss, he expressed a thousand regrets that business in Ireland, of the most important nature, compelled him to leave before you were well enough to see him, and he also gave me this small note for you."

Eva hurriedly opened it. It was brief—only a few lines:

"I have waited, Eva, till you were out of danger, but I dare not wait to risk a parting interview. It would be painful and trying to both and to you, in your present weak state, perhaps dangerous. I have done all I could with your parents, and assisted Lord Huntingdon to settle the affairs of his ward, with tolerable accuracy. I have his solemn promise, as well as that of your mother, that for the future you will be importuned no more on account of Sir George Leland. The latter received his formal dismissal in my presence, and set out an hour after for London. May the one whose image will next engross your heart, be more worthy of it than either he or Chester Rockingham. And now, Eva, before bidding you farewell, perhaps for the last time, accept my warmest prayers and wishes for your future happiness, and believe me, through good and ill,

"Your devoted and unchanging friend,

"EDGAR ARLINGFORD."

CHAPTER XIX.

EVA'S recovery was slow, so slow that the physician who attended her, abandoned in despair all hopes in the efficacy of his own prescriptions, whilst the servants, one and all, prophesied, with many a sorrowful sigh, "that dear, good Miss Eva, was not long for earth." A full month had elapsed since Mr. Arlingford's departure, and, still emaciated, pale as a shadow, she glided about, her feeble strength scarce permitting her to reach the gardens of the house. Mrs. Wentworth, her duties of course entirely suspended, occasionally sought the side of her pupil, but to the poor, heart-broken invalid, that cold and unsympathizing companionship was worse than solitude, and the governess perceiving it, left her to herself. Had the future possessed one ray of hope, one single sunny gleam, Eva might have rallied sooner, but to the young girl's spirit, it, as well as the present and past, were alike all bitterness and gloom. The maddening remembrance of Rock-