

"I will do no such thing, Mr. Huntingdon," was the decided reply. "Such a request after your conduct during the whole of this day, is but heaping insult on insult."

"So be it, lady mine! Eva, would you like to see the gardens and the exterior of Honeysuckle Cottage, so that you may judge if they correspond with the sunshine and harmony within?"

Eva, who saw that the patience of her young sister-in-law was fairly at an end, declined, alleging, "that it was time for her to return." This, her brother, after glancing at his watch, positively interdicted, asserting "that she had yet a full half hour to remain," and Eva, who knew that he was correct, had no alternative but to submit. Fully alive to the awkwardness of her position, at a total loss for conversation, she at length took up a pretty shell from the stand beside her, making some remark on its delicate, roseate hue.

"Yes," rejoined her hostess, "'tis handsome, but I do not prize it alone for its beauty. 'Tis the gift of an early and a dear friend."

"Probably of my *ci-devant* rival, the elegant and irresistible Mr. Moore," interrupted her husband, with a mischievous smile.

"Mr. Huntingdon, will you ever have done insulting me?" passionately retorted his wife, bursting into a paroxysm of tears. "I wish to Heavens I had married poor Moore! he would not have worried and outraged my feelings as you are daily and hourly doing."

Eva would have felt more for the speaker, had her tears been entirely those of grief; but there was a passionate inflection in the tones of her voice, a childish anger in the beating of her small foot on the ground, that told there was as much temper there as wounded feeling; and she really felt relieved when her sister-in-law swept from the room in a perfect hurricane of sobs and tears.

"Well, Eva!" exclaimed the young husband, with a bitterness which he neither strove to conceal or subdue, "what think you of the prize for which I have incurred the anger and resentment of my family, the mockery of the world, poverty and its endless trials; the prize for which I have alienated all my early friends and companions, and forfeited my place in the sphere I was born, brought up in. Tell me, Eva, when you think of all this, and recall what you have seen and heard to-day, can you yet look me in the face, and tell me that I am not a lost, miserable wretch?"

"Augustus, my dear brother, to be sincere with you, there are faults on both sides. Your wife is young, very young, and you must not expect perfection."

"Aye! there it is. When I married Carry

Hamilton, I thought I had chosen a gentle, loving woman; I find too late, to my sorrow, that I have wedded a silly, wayward child. 'Twas a fearful error; equally fearful was that of my taking ignorance for artlessness, shallowness for simplicity. Eva, Eva, my good girl, let my sad fate serve as a warning to yourself, and do not mar your destiny, as I have madly, rashly, marred mine!"

"Oh! in mercy do not talk thus!" hurriedly rejoined his companion. "You do not, you cannot mean it. Speaking as you now are, under the influence of angry and excited feelings, you say things in which your heart and judgment have no share. Even if your wife has her little imperfections, her moments of waywardness, think, Augustus dear, are you entirely irreproachable? Her senior by several years, older and more experienced than herself, you should bear with and counsel, not irritate her continually with provoking jests and taunts."

"But remember, Eva, how honorably I have acted towards her. It is not one young fellow out of fifty who would have had either the principle or the courage to make her his wife."

"I grant you all that, but would you ever have forgiven yourself, would you ever have known a moment's happiness, had you acted otherwise?"

"Well, I dare say not, Eva; for she was such a confiding, innocent little creature, that the very extent of her simplicity, proved her strongest weapon. Besides, too, I really loved her. Her artlessness, her timidity, though the latter quality has entirely disappeared, by-the-bye, presented such a refreshing contrast to the false, hackneyed smiles of the husband-hunting belles of London. Her very ignorance, too, had its charm, wearied, heart-sick as I was of the eternal accomplishments, the literary and learned twaddle, that half of the women, nowadays, think it a duty to bore a man with. Why, Eva, after leaving some aristocratic dwelling, with its dull stale grandeur, this simple little cottage used to seem to me a perfect Eden. Oh! many a delightful evening have I spent here, talking with the good old curate about field-sports, fishing, &c., all of which he had been passionately fond of in his youth, whilst Carry used to sit at her simple work, (not that confounded worsted work so fashionable amongst our ladies) her long curls, half shading the bright face at which I so often glanced, and whose glowing, animated expression, told she was no uninterested listener to our conversation. And every now and then, when surprised by some mirthful anecdote out of her usual sweet, timid seriousness, how the childish, silvery accents of her merry laugh, used to thrill my very heart with pleasure. Before either of us