A Shabby Genteel Story

William Makepeace Thackeray

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Chapter I.

At that remarkable period when Louis XVIII. was restored for a second time to the throne of his fathers, and all the English who had money or leisure rushed over to the Continent, there lived in a certain boarding−house at Brussels a genteel young widow, who bore the elegant name of Mrs. Wellesley Macarty.

In the same house and room with the widow lived her mamma, a lady who was called Mrs. Crabb. Both professed to be rather fashionable people. The Crabbs were of a very old English stock; and the Macartys were, as the world knows, county Cork people, related to the Sheenys, Finnigans, Clancys, and other distinguished families in their part of Ireland. But Ensign Wellesley Mac, not having a shilling, ran off with Miss Crabb, who possessed the same independence; and after having been married about six months to the lady, was carried off suddenly, on the 18th of June, 1815, by a disease very prevalent in those glorious times—the fatal cannot−shot morbus. He, and many hundred young fellows of his regiment, the Clonakilty Fencibles, were attacked by this epidemic on the same day, at a place about ten miles from Brussels, and there perished. The ensign's lady had accompanied her husband to the Continent, and about five months after his death brought into the world two remarkably fine female children.

Mrs. Wellesley's mother had been reconciled to her daughter by this time, —for, in truth, Mrs. Crabb had no other child but her runaway Juliana, to whom she flew when she heard of her destitute condition. And, indeed, it was high time that some one should come to the young widow's aid; for as her husband did not leave money, nor any thing that represented money, except a number of tailors' and boot−makers' bills, neatly docketed in his writing−desk, Mrs. Wellesley was in danger of starvation, should no friendly person assist her.

Mrs. Crabb, then, came off to her daughter, whom the Sheeneys, Finnigans, and Clancys, refused, with one scornful voice, to assist. The fact is, that Mr. Crabb had once been butler to a lord, and his lady a lady's maid; and at Crabb's death, Mrs. Crabb disposed of the Ram hotel and posting−house, where her husband had made three thousand pounds, and was living in genteel ease in a country town, when Ensign Macarty came, saw, and run away with Juliana. Of such a connexion, it was impossible that the great Clancys and Finnigans could take notice; and so once more widow Crabb was compelled to share with her daughter her small income of a hundred and twenty a−year.

Upon this, at a boarding−house in Brussels, the two managed to live pretty smartly, and to maintain an honourable reputation. The twins were put out, after the foreign fashion, to nurse, at a village in the neighbour−hood; for Mrs. Macarty had been too ill to nurse them; and Mrs. Crabb could not afford to purchase that most expensive article, a private wet−nurse.

There had been numberless tiffs and quarrels between mother and daughter when the latter was in her maiden state; and Mrs. Crabb was, to tell the truth, in nowise sorry when her Jooly disappeared with the ensign,—for the old lady dearly loved a gentleman, and was not a little flattered at being the mother to Mrs. Ensign Macarty. Why the ensign should have run away with his lady at all, as he might have had her for the asking, is no business of ours; nor are we going to rake up old stories and village scandals, which insinuate that Miss Crabb ran away with him, for with these points the writer and the reader have nothing to do.

Well, then, the reconciled mother and daughter lived once more together, at Brussels. In the course of a year, Mrs. Macarty's sorrow had much abated; and having a great natural love of dress, and a tolerably handsome face and person, she was induced, without much reluctance, to throw her weeds aside, and to appear in the most becoming and varied costumes which her means and ingenuity could furnish. Considering, indeed, the smallness of the former, it was agreed on all hands that Mrs. Crabb and her daughter deserved wonderful credit,—that is, they managed to keep up as respectable an appearance as if they had five hundred a−year; and at church, at tea−parties, and abroad in the streets, to be what is called quite the gentlewomen. If they starved at home, nobody saw it; if they patched and pieced, nobody (it was to be hoped) knew it; if they bragged about their relations and property, could any one say them nay? Thus they lived, hanging on with desperate energy to the skirts of genteel society; Mrs. Crabb, a sharp woman, rather respected her daughter's superior rank; and Mrs. Macarty did not quarrel so much as heretofore with her mamma, on whom herself and her two children were entirely dependent.

While affairs were at this juncture, it happened that a young Englishman, James Gann, Esq., of the great

oil−house of Gann, Blubbery, and Gann (as he took care to tell you before you had been an hour in his company),—it happened, I say, that James Gann, Esq. came to Brussels for a month, for the purpose of perfecting himself in the French language; and while in that capital went to lodge at the very boarding−house which contained Mrs. Crabb and her daughter. Gann was young, weak, inflammable; he saw and adored Mrs. Wellesley Macarty; and she, who was at this period all but engaged to a stout, old, wooden−legged Scotch regimental surgeon, pitilessly sent Dr. M'Lint about his business, and accepted the addresses of Mr. Gann. How the young man arranged matters with his papa, the senior partner, I don't know; but it is certain that there was a quarrel, and afterwards a reconciliation; and it is also known that James Gann fought a duel with the surgeon,—receiving the Æseulapian fire, and discharging his own bullet into the azure skies. About nine thousand times, in the course of his after−years, did Mr. Gann narrate the history of the combat; it enabled him to go through life with the reputation of a man of courage, and won for him, as he said with pride, the hand of his Juliana: perhaps this was rather a questionable benefit.

One part of the tale, however, honest James never did dare to tell, except when peculiarly excited by wrath or liquor; it was this: that on the day after the wedding, and in the presence of many friends who had come to offer their congratulations, a stout nurse, bearing a brace of chubby little ones, made her appearance; and these rosy urchins, springing forward at the sight of Mr. James Gann, shouted, affectionately, "Maman! Maman!" at which the lady, blushing rosy red, said, "James, these two are yours;" and poor James well nigh fainted at this sudden paternity so put upon him. "Children!" screamed he, aghast; "whose children?" at which Mrs. Crabb, majestically checking him said, "These, my dear James, are the daughters of the gallant and good Ensign Macarty, whose widow you yesterday led to the altar. May you be happy with her, and may these blessed children (tears) find in you a father, who shall replace him that fell in the field of glory!"

Mrs. Crabb, Mrs. James Gann, Mrs. Major Lolly, Mrs. Piffer, and several ladies present, set up a sob immediately; and James Gann, a good−humoured, soft−hearted man, was quite taken aback. Kissing his lady hurriedly, he vowed that he would take care of the poor little things; and proposed to kiss them likewise; which caress the darlings refused with many roars. Gann's fate was sealed from that minute; and he was properly henpecked by his wife and mother−in−law during the life of the latter. Indeed, it was to Mrs. Crabb that the stratagem of the infant concealment was due; for when her daughter innocently proposed to have or to see the children, the old lady strongly pointed out the folly of such an arrangement, which might, perhaps, frighten away Mr. Gann from the delightful matrimonial trap into which (lucky rogue!) he was about to fall.

Soon after the marriage, the happy pair returned to England, occupying the house in Thames Street, city, until the death of Gann, senior; when his son, becoming head of the firm of Gann and Blubbery, quitted the dismal precincts of Billingsgate and colonised in the neighbourhood of Putney; where a neat box, a couple of spare bedrooms, a good cellar, and a smart gig to drive into and out from town, made a real gentleman of him. Mrs. Gann treated him with much scorn, to be sure, called him a sot, and abused hugely the male companions that he brought down with him to Putney. Honest James would listen meekly, would yield, and would bring down a brace more friends the next day, with whom he would discuss his accustomed number of bottles of port. About this period, a daughter was born to him, called Caroline Brandenburg Gann; so named after a large yellow mansion near Hammersmith, and an injured queen who lived there at the time of the little girl's birth, and who was greatly compassionated and patronised by Mrs. James Gann, and other ladies of distinction. Mrs. James was a lady in those days, and gave evening parties of the very first order.

At this period of time, Mrs. James Gann sent the twins, Rosalind Clancy and Isabella Finnigan Wellesley Macarty, to a boarding−school for young ladies, and grumbled much at the amount of the half−year's bill which her husband was called upon to pay for them; for though James discharged them with perfect good humour, his lady began to entertain a mean opinion indeed of her pretty young children. They could expect no fortune, she said, from Mr. Gann, and she wondered that he should think of bringing them up expensively, when he had a darling child of his own, for whom he was bound to save all the money that he could lay by.

Grandmamma, too, doted on the little Caroline Brandenburgh, and vowed that she would leave her three thousand pounds to this dear infant; for in this way does the world shew its respect for that most respectable thing prosperity. Who in this life get the smiles, and the acts of friendship, and the pleasing legacies?—The rich. And I do, for my part, heartily wish that some one would leave me a trifle—say twenty thousand pounds,—being perfectly confident that some one else would leave me more; and that I should sink into my grave worth a plum at

least.

Little Caroline then had her maid, her airy nursery, her little carriage to drive in, the promise of her grandmamma's consols, and that priceless treasure—her mamma's undivided affection. Gann, too, loved her sincerely, in his careless, good−humoured way; but he determined, notwithstanding, that his step−daughters should have something handsome at his death, but—but for a great But.

Gann and Blubbery were in the oil line,—have we not said so? Their profits arose from contracts for lighting a great number of streets in London; and about this period Gas came into use. Gann and Blubbery appeared in the Gazette; and, I am sorry to say, so bad had been the management of Blubbery,—so great the extravagance of both partners and their ladies,—that they only paid their creditors fourteen pence halfpenny in the pound.

When Mrs. Crabb heard of this dreadful accident—Mrs. Crabb, who dined thrice a−week with her son−in−law; who never would have been allowed to enter the house at all had not honest James interposed his good nature between her quarrelsome daughter and herself —Mrs. Crabb, I say, proclaimed James Gann to be a swindler, a villain, a disreputable, tipsy, vulgar man, and and made over her money to the Misses Rosalind Clancy and Isabella Sheeny Macarty; leaving poor little Caroline without one single maravedi. Half of 1500 pounds allotted to each was to be paid at marriage, the other half on the death of Mrs. James Gann, who was to enjoy the interest thereof. Thus do we rise and fall in this world —thus does Fortune shake her swift wings, and bid us abruptly to resign the gifts (or rather loans) which we have had from her.

How Gann and his family lived after their stroke of misfortune, I know not; but as the failing tradesman is going through the process of bankruptcy, and for some months afterwards, it may be remarked, that he has usually some mysterious means of subsistence —stray spars of the wreck of his property, on which he manages to seize, and to float for a while. During his retirement, in an obscure lodging in Lambeth, where the poor fellow was so tormented by his wife as to be compelled to fly to the public−house for refuge, Mrs. Crabb died; a hundred a−year thus came into the possession of Mrs. Gann; and some of James's friends, who thought him a good fellow in his prosperity, came forward, and furnished a house, in which they placed him, and came to see and comfort him. Then they came to see him not quite so often; then they found out that Mrs. Gann was a sad tyrant, and a silly woman; then the ladies declared her to be insupportable, and Gann to be a low, tipsy fellow; and the gentlemen could but shake their heads, and admit that the charge was true. Then they left off coming to see him altogether; for such is the way of the world, where many of us have good impulses, and are generous on an occasion, but are wearied by perpetual want, and begin to grow angry at its importunities —being very properly vexed at the daily recurrence of hunger, and the impudent unreasonableness of starvation. Gann, then, had a genteel wife and children, a furnished house, and a hundred pounds a−year. How should he live? The wife of James Gann, Esq., would never allow him to demean himself by taking a clerk's place; and James himself, being as idle a fellow as ever was known, was fain to acquiesce in this determination of hers, and to wait for some more genteel employment. And a curious list of such genteel employments night be made out, were one inclined to follow this interesting subject far; shabby compromises with the world, into which poor fellows enter, and still fondly talk of their "position," and strive to imagine that they are really working for their bread.

Numberless lodging−houses are kept by the females of families who have met with reverses: are not "boarding−houses, with a select musical society, in the neighbourhood of the squares," maintained by such? Do not the gentlemen of the boarding−houses issue forth every morning to the city, or make−believe to go thither, on some mysterious business which they have? After a certain period, Mrs. James Gann kept a lodging−house (in her own words, received "two inmates into her family"), and Mr. Gann had his mysterious business.

In the year 1835, when this story begins, there stood in a certain back street in the town of Margate a house, on the door of which might be read in gleaming brass the name of Mr. Gann. It was the work of a single smutty servant−maid to clean this brass plate every morning, and to attend as far as possible to the wants of Mr. Gann, his family, and lodgers; and his house being not very far from the sea, and as you might, by climbing up to the roof, get a sight between two chimneys of that multitudinous element, Mrs. Gann set down her lodgings as fashionable; and declared on her cards that her house commanded "a fine view of the sea."

On the wire window−blind of the parlour was written, in large characters, the word Office; and here it was that Gann's services came into play. He was very much changed, poor fellow! and humbled; and from two cards that hung outside the blind, I am led to believe that he did not disdain to be agent to the "London and Jamaica Ginger−Beer Company," and also for a certain preparation called "Gaster's Infants' Farinacio, or Mothers'

Invigorating Substitute,"—a damp, black, mouldy, half−pound packet of which stood in permanence at one end of the "office" mantelpiece; while a flyblown ginger−beer bottle occupied the other extremity. Nothing else indicated that this ground−floor chamber was an office, except a huge black inkstand, in which stood a stumpy pen, richly crusted with ink at the nib, and to all appearance for many months enjoying a sinecure.

To this room you saw every day, at two o'clock, the employé from the neighbouring hotel bring two quarts of beer; and if you called at that hour, a tremendous smoke, and smell of dinner, would gush out upon you from the "office," as you stumbled over sundry battered tin dish−covers, which lay gaping at the threshold. Thus had that great bulwark of gentility, the dining at six o'clock, been broken in; and the reader must therefore judge that the house of Gann was in a demoralised state.

Gann certainly was. After the ladies had retired to the back parlour (which, with yellow gauze round the frames, window−curtains, a red silk cabinet piano, and an album, was still tolerably genteel), Gann remained, to transact business in the office. This took place in the presence of friends, and usually consisted in the production of a bottle of gin from the corner−cupboard, or, mayhap, a litre of brandy, which was given by Gann with a knowing wink, and a fat finger placed on a twinkling red nose: when Mrs. G. was out, James would also produce a number of pipes, that gave this room a constant and agreeable odour of shag−tobacco.

In fact, Mr. Gann had nothing to do from morning till night. He was now a fat, bald−headed man, of fifty; a dirty dandy on week−days, with a shawl waistcoat, a tuft of hair to his great double chin, a snuffy shirt−frill, and enormous breast−pin and seals: he had a pilot−coat, with large mother−of−pearl buttons, and always wore a great rattling telescope, with which he might be seen for hours on the seashore or the pier, examining the ships, the bathing machines, the ladies' schools as they paraded up and down the Esplanade, and all other objects which the telescopic view might give him. He knew every person connected with every one of the Deal and Dover coaches, and was sure to be witness to the arrival or departure of several of them in the course of the day; he had a word for the hostler about "that grey mare," a nod for the "shooter" or guard, and a bow for the dragsman; he could send parcels for nothing up to town; had twice had Sir Rumble Tumble (the noble driver of the Flash−o'−lightning−light−four−inside−post−coach) "up at his place," and took care to tell you that some of the party were pretty considerably "sewn up," too. He did not frequent the large hotels; but in revenge he knew every person who entered or left them; and was a great man at the Bag of Nails and the Magpie and Punchbowl, where he was president of a club; he took the bass in "Mynheer Van Dunk," "the Wolf," and many other morsels of concerted song, and used to go backwards and forwards to London in the steamers as often as ever he liked, and have his "grub," too, on board. Such was James Gann. Many people, when they wrote to him, addressed him James Gann, Esq.

His reverses and former splendours afforded a never−failing theme of conversation to honest Gann and the whole of his family; and it may be remarked, that such pecuniary misfortunes, as they are called, are by no means misfortunes to people of certain dispositions, but actual pieces of good luck. Gann, for instance, used to drink liberally of port and claret, when the house of Gann and Blubbery was in existence, and was henceforth compelled to imbibe only brandy and gin. Now he loved these a thousand times more than the wine; and had the advantage of talking about the latter, and of his great merit in giving them up. In those prosperous days, too, being a gentleman, he could not frequent the public−house as he did at present; and the sanded tavern−parlour was Gann's supreme enjoyment. He was obliged to spend many hours daily in a dark unsavoury room in an alley off Thames Street; and Gann hated books and business, except of other people's. His tastes were low; he loved public−house jokes and company; and now being fallen, was voted at the Bag of Nails and the Magpie before−mentioned a tip−top fellow and real gentleman, whereas he had been considered an ordinary vulgar man by his fashionable associates at Putney. Many men are there who are made to fall, and to profit by the tumble.

As for Mrs. G., or Jooly as she was indifferently called by her husband, she, too, had gained by her losses. She bragged of her former acquaintances in the most extraordinary way, and to hear her you would fancy that she was known and connected to half the peerage. Her chief occupation was taking medicine, and mending and altering of her gowns. She had a huge taste for cheap finery, loved raffles, tea−parties, and walks on the pier, where she flaunted herself and daughters as gay as butterflies. She stood upon her rank, did not fail to tell her lodgers that she was "a gentlewoman," and was mighty sharp with Becky the maid, and poor Carry, her youngest child.

For the tide of affection had turned now, and the "Misses Wellesley Macarty" were the darlings of their mother's heart, as Caroline had been in the early days of Putney prosperity. Mrs. Gann respected and loved her

elder daughters, the stately heiresses of fifteen hundred pounds, and scorned poor Caroline, who was likewise scorned (like Cinderella in the sweetest of all stories) by her brace of haughty, thoughtless sisters. These young women were tall, well−grown, black−browed girls, little scrupulous, fond of fun, and having great health and spirits. Caroline was pale and thin, and had fair hair and meek grey eyes; nobody thought her a beauty in her moping cotton gown; whereas the sisters, in flaunting printed muslins, with pink scarfs, and artificial flowers, and brass ferronières and other fallals, were voted very charming and genteel by the Ganns' circle of friends. They had pink cheeks, white shoulders, and many glossy curls stuck about their shining foreheads, as damp and as black as leeches. Such charms, madam, cannot fail of having their effect; and it was very lucky for Caroline that she did not possess them, for she might have been rendered as vain, frivolous, and vulgar, as these young ladies were.

While these enjoyed their pleasures and tea−parties abroad, it was Carry's usual fate to remain at home, and help the servant in the many duties which were required in Mrs. Gann's establishment. She dressed that lady and her sisters, brought her papa his tea in bed, kept the lodgers' bells, bore their scoldings, if they were ladies, and sometimes gave a hand in the kitchen if any extra pie−crust or cookery was required. At two she made a little toilet for dinner, and was employed on numberless household darnings and mending in the long evenings, while her sisters giggled over the jingling piano, mamma sprawled on the sofa, and Gann was over his glass at the club. A weary lot, in sooth, was yours, poor little Caroline! since the days of your infancy, not one hour of sunshine, no friendship, no cheery play−fellows, no mother's love; but that being dead, the affections which would have crept round it, withered and died too. Only James Gann, of all the household, had a good−natured look for her, and a coarse word of kindness; nor, indeed, did Caroline complain, nor shed many tears, nor call for death, as she would if she had been brought up in genteeler circles. The poor thing did not know her own situation; her misery was dumb and patient; it is such as thousands and thousands of women in our society bear, and pine, and die of; made up of sums of small tyrannies, and long indifference, and bitter wearisome injustice, more dreadful to bear than any tortures that we of the stronger sex are pleased to cry Ai! Ai! about. In our intercourse with the world (which is conducted with that kind of cordiality that we see in Sir Harry and my lady in a comedy—a couple of painted, grinning fools, talking parts that they have learned out of a book); as we sit and look at the smiling actors, we get a glimpse behind the scenes, from time to time, and alas for the wretched nature that appears there!— among women especially, who deceive even more than men, having more to hide, feeling more, living more than we who have our business, pleasure, ambition, which carries us abroad. Ours are the great strokes of misfortune, as they are called, and theirs the small miseries. While the male thinks, labours, and battles without, the domestic woes and wrongs are the lot of the women; and the little ills are so bad, so infinitely fiercer and bitterer than the great, that I would not change my condition—no, not to be Helen, Queen Elizabeth, Mrs. Coutts, or the luckiest she in history.

Well, then, in the manner we have described lived the Gann family. Mr. Gann all the better for his "misfortunes," Mrs. Gann little the worse; the two young ladies greatly improved by the circumstance, having been cast thereby into a society where their expected two thousand pounds made great heiresses of them; and poor Caroline, as luckless a being as any that the wide sun shone upon. Better to be alone in the world and utterly friendless, than to have sham friends and no sympathy; ties of kindred which bind one as it were to the corpse of relationship, and oblige one to bear through life the weight and the embraces of this lifeless, cold connexion.

I do not mean to say that Caroline would ever have made use of this metaphor, or suspected that her connexion with her mamma and sisters was any thing so loathsome. She only felt that she was ill−treated, and had no companion; but was not on that account envious, only humble and depressed, not desiring so much to resist as to bear injustice, and hardly venturing to think for herself. This tyranny and humility served her in place of education, and formed her manners, which were wonderfully gentle and calm. It was strange to see such a person growing up in such a family; the neighbours spoke of her with much scornful compassion. "A poor half−witted thing," they said, "who could not say bo to a goose;" and I think it is one good test of gentility to be thus looked down on by vulgar people.

It is not to be supposed that the elder girls had reached their present age without receiving a number of offers of marriage, and being warmly in love a great many times. But many unfortunate occurrences had compelled them to remain in their virgin condition. There was an attorney who had proposed to Rosalind; but finding that she would receive only 750l. down, instead of 1500l., the monster had jilted her pitilessly, handsome as she was. An apothecary, too, had been smitten by her charms; but to live in a shop was beneath the dignity of a

Wellesley−Macarty, and she waited for better things. Lieutenant Swabber of the coast−guard service, had lodged two months at Gann's; and if letters, long walks, and town−talk could settle a match, a match between him and Isabella must have taken place. Well, Isabella was not married; and the lieutenant, a colonel in Spain, seemed to have given up all thoughts of her. She meanwhile consoled herself with a gay young wine−merchant, who had lately established himself at Brighton, kept a gig, rode out with the hounds, and was voted perfectly genteel; and there was a certain French marquess, with the most elegant black mustachios, who had made a vast impression upon the heart of Rosalind, having met her first at the circulating library, and afterwards, by the most extraordinary series of chances, coming upon her and her sister daily in their walks upon the pier.

Meek little Caroline, meanwhile, trampled upon though she was, was springing up to womanhood; and though pale, freckled, thin, meanly dressed, had a certain charm about her which some people might prefer to the cheap splendours and rude red and white of the Misses Macarty. In fact we have now come to a period of her history when, to the amaze of her mamma and sisters, and not a little to the satisfaction of James Gann, Esquire, she actually inspired a passion in the breast of a very respectable young man.

Chapter II.

How Mrs. Gann received two lodgers.

It was the winter season when the events recorded in this history occurred; and as at that period not one out of a thousand lodging−houses in Margate are let, Mrs. Gann, who generally submitted to occupy her own first and and second floors during this cheerless season, considered herself more than ordinarily lucky when circumstances occurred which brought no less than two lodgers to her establishment.

She had to thank her daughters for the first inmate; for, as these two young ladies were walking one day down their own street, talking of the joys of the last season, and the delight of the raffles and singing at the libraries, and the intoxicating pleasures of the Vauxhall balls, they were remarked and evidently admired by a young gentleman who was sauntering listlessly up the street.

He stared, and it must be confessed that the fascinating girls stared too, and put each other's head into each other's bonnet, and giggled and said, "Lor!" and then looked hard at the young gentleman again. Their eyes were black, their cheeks were very red. Fancy how Miss Bella's and Miss Linda's hearts beat when the gentleman, dropping his glass out of his eye, actually stepped across the street, and said, "Ladies, I am seeking for lodgings, and should be glad to look at those which I see are to let in your house."

"How did the conjurer know it was our house?" thought Bella and Linda (they always thought in couples),—from the very simple fact that Miss Bella had just thrust into the door a latchkey.

Most bitterly did Mrs. James Gann regret that she had not on her best gown when a stranger—a stranger in February—actually called to look at the lodgings. She made up, however, for the slovenliness of her dress by the dignity of her demeanour; and asked the gentleman for references, informed him that she was a gentlewoman, and that he would have peculiar advantages in her establishment; and, finally, agreed to receive him at the rate of twenty shillings per week. The bright eyes of the young ladies had done the business; but to this day Mrs. James Gann is convinced that her peculiar dignity of manner, and great fluency of brag regarding her family, have been the means of bringing hundreds of lodgers to her house, who but for her would never have visited it.

"Gents," said Mr. James Gann at the Bag of Nails that very evening, "we have got a new lodger, and I'll stand glasses round to his jolly good health!"

The new lodger, who was remarkable for nothing except very black eyes, a sallow face, and a habit of smoking segars in bed until noon, gave his name George Brandon, Esquire. As to his temper and habits, when humbly requested by Mrs. Gann to pay in advance, he laughed and presented her with a bank−note, never quarrelled with a single item in her bills, walked much, and ate two mutton−chops per diem. The young ladies, who examined all the boxes and letters of the lodgers, as young ladies will, could not find one single document relative to their new inmate, except a tavern−bill of the Albion, to which the name of George Brandon, Esquire, was prefixed. Any other papers which might elucidate his history, were locked up in a Bramah box, likewise marked G. B.; and though these were but unsatisfactory points by which to judge a man's character, there was a something about Mr. Brandon which caused all the ladies at Mrs. Gann's to vote he was quite a gentleman.

When this was the case, I am happy to say it would not unfrequently happen that Miss Rosalind or Miss Isabella would appear in the lodger's apartments, bearing in the breakfast−cloth, or blushingly appearing with the weekly bill, apologising for mamma's absence, "and hoping that every thing was to the gentleman's liking."

Both the Misses Wellesley Macarty took occasion to visit Mr. Brandon in this manner; and he received both with such a fascinating ease and gentlemanlike freedom of manner, scanning their points from head to foot, and fixing his great black eyes so earnestly in their faces, that the blushing creatures turned away abashed, and yet pleased, and had many conversations about him.

"Law, Bell," said Miss Rosalind, "what a chap that Brandon is! I don't half like him, I do declare!" Than which there can be no greater compliment from a woman to a man.

"No more do I neither," says Bell. "The man stares so, and says such things! Just now, when Becky brought his paper and sealing−wax—the silly girl brought black and red too—I took them up to ask which he would have, and what do you think he said?"

"Well, dear, what!" said Mrs. Gann.

"Miss Bell," says he, looking at me, and with such eyes! "I'll keep every thing: the red wax, because it's like your lips; the black wax, because it's like your hair; and the satin paper, because it's like your skin! Wasn't it genteel?"

"Law, now!" exclaimed Mrs. Gann.

"Upon my word, I think it's very rude!" said Miss Lindy; "and if he'd have said so to me, I'd have slapped his face for his imperence!" And, much to her credit, Miss Lindy went to his room ten minutes after to see if he would say any thing to her. What Mr. Brandon said, I never knew; but the little pang of envy which had caused Miss Lindy to retort sharply upon her sister, had given place to a pleased good−humour, and she allowed Bella to talk about the new lodger as much as ever she liked.

And now if the reader is anxious to know what was Mr. Brandon's character, he had better read the following letter from him. It was addressed to no less a person than a viscount; and given, perhaps, with some little ostentation to Becky, the maid, to carry to the post. Now Becky, before she executed such errands, always shewed the letters to her mistress or one of the young ladies (it must not be supposed that Miss Caroline was a whit less curious on these matters than her sisters); and when the family beheld the name of Lord Viscount Cinqbars upon the superscription, their respect for their lodger was greater than ever it had been:—

"Margate, January 1835.

"My dear Viscount,—For a reason I have, on coming down to Margate, I with much gravity informed the people of the White Hart that my name was Brandon, and intend to bear that honourable appellation during my stay. For the same reason (I am a modest man, dear Simon, and love to do good in secret), I left the public hotel immediately, and am now housed in private lodgings, humble, and at a humble price. I am here, thank Heaven, quite alone. Robinson Crusoe had as much society in his island, as I in this of Thanet. In compensation I sleep a great deal, do nothing, and walk much, silent, by the side of the roaring sea, like Calchas, priest of Apollo.

"The fact is, that until papa's wrath is appeased, I must live with the utmost meekness and humility, and have barely enough money in my possession to pay such small current expenses as fall on me here, where strangers are many and credit does not exist. I pray you, therefore, to tell Mr. Snipson the tailor, Mr. Jackson the bootmaker, honest Solomonson the discounter of bills, and all such friends in London and Oxford as may make inquiries after me, that I am at this very moment at the city of Munich in Bavaria, from which I shall not return until my marriage with Miss Goldmore, the great Indian heiress; who, upon my honour, will have me, I believe, any day for the asking. "Nothing else will satisfy my honoured father I know, whose purse has already bled pretty freely for me, I must confess, and who has taken the great oath that never is broken, to bleed no more unless this marriage is brought about. Come it must. I can't work, I can't starve, and I cant live under a thousand a−year.

"Here, to be sure, the charges are not enormous; for your edification read my week's bill:—

'George Brandon, Esquire,

'To Mrs. James Gann.

	£. s. d.
A week's lodging	1 0 0
Breakfast, cream, eggs	0 9 0
Dinner(fourteen mutton−chops)	0 10 6
Fire, boot−cleaning, &c.	0 3 6
	£2 3 0

'Settled, Juliana Gann.'

"Juliana Gann! Is it not a sweet name? it sprawls over half the paper. Could you but see the owner of the name, my dear fellow! I love to examine the customs of natives of all countries, and upon my word there are some barbarians in our own; less known, and more worthy of being known, than Hottentots, wild Irish, Otaheiteans, or any such savages. If you could see the airs that this woman gives herself; the rouge, ribands, rings, and other female gimcracks that she wears; if you could hear her reminiscences of past times, 'when she and Mr. Gann

moved in the very genteelest circles of society;' of the peerage, which she knows by heart; and of the fashionable novels, in every word of which she believes, you would be proud of your order, and admire the intense respect which the canaille shew towards it. There never was such an old woman, not even our tutor at Christchurch.

"There is a he Gann, a vast, bloated old man, in a rough coat, who has met me once, and asked me, with a grin, if my mutton−chops was to my liking? The satirical monster! What can I eat in this place but mutton−chops? A great bleeding beefsteak, or a filthy, reeking gigot á l'eau, with a turnip poultice? I should die of I did. As for fish in a watering− place, I never touch it; it is sure to be bad. Nor care I for little, sinewy, dry, black−legged fowls. Cutlets are my only resource. I have them nicely enough broiled by a little humble companion of the family (a companion, ye gods, in this family!), who blushed hugely when she confessed that the cooking was hers, and that her name was Caroline. For drink I indulge in gin, of which I consume two wine glasses daily, in two tumblers of cold water; it is the only liquor that one can be sure to find genuine in a common house in England.

"This Gann, I take it, has similar likings, for I hear him occasionally at midnight floundering up the stairs (his boots lie dirty in the passage)—floundering, I say, up the stairs, and cursing the candlestick, whence escape now and anon the snuffers and extinguisher, and with brazen rattle disturb the silence of the night. Thrice a−week, at least, does Gann breakfast in bed—sure sign of pridian intoxication; and thrice a−week, in the morning, I hear a hoarse voice roaring for 'my soda−water.' How long have the rogues drunk soda−water?

"At nine, Mrs. Gann and daughters are accustomed to breakfast; a handsome pair of girls, truly, and much followed, as I hear, in the quarter. These dear creatures are always paying me visits—visits with the tea−kettle, visits with the newspaper (one brings it, and one comes for it); but the one is always at the other's heels, and so one cannot shew oneself to be that dear, gay, seducing fellow that one has been, at home and on the Continent. Do you remember cette chère marquise at Pau? That cursed conjugal pistolbullet still plays the deuce with my shoulder. Do you remember Betty Bundy, the butcher's daughter? A pretty race of fools are we to go mad after such women, and risk all—oaths, prayers, promises, long wearisome courtships— for what? for vanity, truly. When the battle is over, behold your conquest! Betty Bundy is a vulgar country wench; and cette belle marquise is old, rouged, and has false hair. Vanitas, vanitatum! what a moral man I will be some day or other!

"I have found an old acquaintance (and be hanged to him!), who has come to lodge in this very house. Do you recollect at Rome a young artist, Fitch by name, the handsome gaby with the large beard, that mad Mrs. Carrickfergus was doubly mad about? On the second floor of Mrs. Gann's house dwells this youth. His beard brings the gamins of the streets trooping and yelling about him; his fine braided coats have grown somewhat shabby now; and the poor fellow is, like your humble servant (by the way, have you a 500 franc billet to spare?)— like your humble servant, I say, very low in pocket. The young Andrea bears up gaily, however; twangles the guitar, paints the worst pictures in the world, and pens sonnets to his imaginary mistress's eyebrow. Luckily the rogue did not know my name, or I should have been compelled to unbosom to him; and when I called out to him, dubious as to my name, 'Don't you know me? I met you at Rome. My name is Brandon,' the painter was perfectly satisfied, and majestically bade me welcome.

"Fancy the continence of this young Joseph—he has absolutely run away from Mrs. Carrickfergus! 'Sir,' said he, with some hesitation and blushes, when I questioned him about the widow, 'I was compelled to leave Rome in consequence of the fatal fondness of that woman. I am an 'andsome man, sir—I know it—all the chaps in the Academy want me for a model; and that woman, sir, is sixty. Do you think I would ally myself with her; sacrifice my happiness for the sake of a creature that's as hugly as an 'arpy? I'd rather starve, sir. I'd rather give up my hart, and my 'opes of rising in it, than do a haction so dishhhhonorable.'

"There is a stock of virtue for you! and the poor fellow half−starved. He lived at Rome upon the seven portraits that the Carrickfergus ordered of him, and, as I fancy, now does not make twenty pounds in the year. O rare chastity! O wondrous silly hopes! O motus animorum, atque O certamina tanta! pulveris exigui jactu, in such an insignificant little lump of mud as this! Why the deuce does not the fool marry the widow? His betters would. There was a captain of dragoons, an Italian prince, and four sons of Irish peers, all at her feet; but the Cockney's beard and whiskers have overcome them all. Here my paper has come to an end; and I have the honour to bid your lordship a respectful farewell.

"G. B."

Of the young gentleman who goes by the name of Brandon the reader of the above letter will not be so

misguided, we trust, as to have a very exalted opinion. The noble viscount read this document to a supper party at Christchurch, in Oxford, and left it in a bowl of milk−punch; whence a scout abstracted it, and handed it over to us. My lord was twenty years of age when he received the epistle; and had spent a couple of years abroad, before going to the university, under the guardianship of the worthy individual who called himself George Brandon.

Mr. Brandon was the son of a halfpay colonel, of good family, who, honouring the great himself, thought his son would vastly benefit by an acquaintance with them, and sent him to Eton, at cruel charges upon a slender purse. From Eton the lad went to Oxford, took honours there, frequented the best society, followed with a kind of proud obsequiousness all the tufts of the university, and left it owing exactly two thousand pounds. Then there came storms at home; fury upon the part of the stern old "governor;" and final payments of the debt. But while this settlement was pending, Master George had contracted many more debts among bill−discounters, and was glad to fly to the Continent as tutor to young Lord Cinqbars, in whose company he learned every one of the vices in Europe; and having a good natural genius, and a heart not unkindly, had used these qualities in such an admirable manner as to be at twenty−seven utterly ruined in purse and principle—an idler, a spendthrift, and a glutton. He was free of his money; would spend his last guinea for a sensual gratification; would borrow from his neediest friend; had no kind of conscience or remorse left, but believed himself to be a good−natured devil−may−care fellow; had a good deal of wit, and indisputably good manners, and a pleasing, dashing frankness, in conversation with men. I should like to know how many such scoundrels our universities have turned out; and how much rain has been caused by that accursed system, which is called in England "the education of a gentleman." Go, my son, for ten years to a public school, that "world in miniature;" learn "to fight for yourself" against the time when your real struggles shall begin. Begin to be selfish at ten years of age; study for other ten years; get a competent knowledge of boxing, swimming, rowing, and cricket, with a pretty knack of Latin hexameters, and a decent smattering of Greek plays,—do this and a fond father shall bless you—bless the two thousand pounds which he has spent in acquiring all these benefits for you. And, besides, what else have you not learned! You have been many hundreds of times to chapel, and have learned to consider the religious service performed there as the vainest parade in the world. If your father is a grocer, you have been beaten for his sake, and have learned to be ashamed of him. You have learned to forget (as how should you remember, being separated from them for three−fourths of your time?) the ties and natural affections of home. You have learned, if you have a kindly heart and an open hand, to compete with associates much more wealthy than yourself; and to consider money as not much, but honour—the honour of dining and consorting with your betters—as a great deal. All this does the public−school and college−boy learn; and wo be to his knowledge! Alas, what natural tenderness and kindly−clinging filial affection is he taught to trample on and despise! My friend Brandon had gone through this process of education, and had been irretrievably ruined by it—his heart and his honesty had been ruined by it, that is to say; and he had received, in return for them, a small quantity of classics and mathematics—pretty compensation for all he had lost in gaining them!

But I am wandering most absurdly from the point; right or wrong, so nature and education had formed Mr. Brandon, who is one of a considerable class. Well, this young gentleman was established at Mrs. Gann's house; and we are obliged to enter into all these explanations concerning him, because they are necessary to the right understanding of our story—Brandon not being altogether a bad man, nor much worse than many a one who goes through a course of regular selfish swindling all his life−long, and dies religious, resigned, proud of himself, and universally respected by others: for this eminent advantage has the getting−and−keeping scoundrel over the extravagant and careless one.

One day, then, as he was gazing from the window of his lodging−house, a cart, containing a vast number of easels, portfolios, wooden−cases of pictures, and a small carpet−bag that might hold a change of clothes, stopped at the door. The vehicle was accompanied by a remarkable young fellow, dressed in a frock−coat covered over with frogs, a dirty turned−down shirtcollar, with a blue satin cravat, and a cap placed wonderfully on one ear, who had evidently hired apartments at Mr. Gann's. This new lodger was no other than Mr. Andrew Fitch; or, as he wrote on his cards, without the prefix,

Andrea Fitch.

Preparations had been made at Gann's for the reception of Mr. Fitch, whose aunt (an auctioneer's lady in the town) had made arrangements that he should board and lodge with the Gann family, and have the apartments on the second floor as his private rooms. In these, then, young Andrea was installed. He was a youth of a poetic

temperament, loving solitude; and where is such to be found more easily than on the storm−washed shores of Margate in winter? Then the boarding− house keepers have shut up their houses, and gone away in anguish; then the taverns take their carpets up, and you can have your choice of a hundred and twenty beds in any one of them; then but one dismal waiter remains to superintend this vast eehoing pile of loneliness, and the landlord pines for summer; then the flies for Ramsgate stand tenantless beside the pier; and about four sailors, in peajackets, are to be seen in the three principal streets; in the rest, silence, silence, closed shutters, torpid chimneys, enjoying their unnatural winter sinecure—not the clack of a patten echoing over the cold dry flags!

This solitude had been chosen by Mr. Brandon for good reasons of his own; Gann and his family would have fled, but that they had no other house wherein to take refuge; and Mrs. Hammerton, the auctioneer's lady, felt so keenly the kindness which she was doing to Mrs. Gann, in providing her with a lodger at such a period, that she considered herself fully justified in extracting from the latter a bonus of two guineas, threatening on refusal to send her darling nephew to a rival establishment over the way.

Andrea was here, then, in loneliness that he loved,—a fantastic youth, who lived but for his art; to whom the world was like the Coburg Theatre, and he in a magnificent costume acting a principal part. His art, and his beard and whiskers, were the darlings of his heart. His long pale hair fell over a high polished brow, which looked wonderfully thoughtful; and yet no man was more guiltless of thinking. He was always putting himself into attitudes; he never spoke the truth; and was so entirely affected and absurd, as to be quite honest at last: for it is my belief that the man did not know truth from falsehood any longer, and was when he was alone, when he was in company, nay, when he was unconscious and sound asleep snoring in bed, one complete lump of affectation. When his apartments on the second floor were arranged according to his fancy, they made a tremendous show. He had a large Gothic chest, in which he put his wardrobe (namely, two velvet waistcoats, four varied satin under ditto, two pairs braided trousers, two shirts, half−a−dozen false collars, and a couple of pairs of dreadfully dilapidated Blucher boots). He had some pieces of armour; some China jugs and Venetian glasses; some bits of old damask rags, to drape his doors and windows; and a ricketty lay−figure, in a Spanish hat and cloak, over which slung a long Toledo rapier, and a guitar, with a riband of dirty skyblue.

Such was our poor fellow's stock in trade. He had some volumes of poems —Lalla Rookh, and the sterner compositions of Byron; for, to do him justice, he hated Don Juan, and a woman was in his eyes an angel: a hangel, alas! he would call her, for nature and the circumstances of his family had taken sad Cockney advantages over Andrea's pronunciation.

The Misses Wellesley Macarty were not, however, very squeamish with regard to grammar, and, in this dull season, voted Mr. Fitch an elegant young fellow. His immense beard and whiskers gave them the highest opinion of his genius; and before long the intimacy between the young people was considerable, for Mr. Fitch insisted upon drawing the portraits of the whole family. He painted Mrs. Gann in her rouge and ribands, as described by Mr. Brandon; Mr. Gann, who said that his picture would be very useful to the artist, as every soul in Margate knew him; and the Misses Macarty (a neat group, representing Miss Bella embracing Miss Linda, who was pointing to a pianoforte).

"I suppose you'll do my Carry next," said Mr. Gann, expressing his approbation of the last picture.

"Law, sir," said Miss Linda, "Carry, with her red hair!—it would be ojus."

"Mr. Fitch might as well paint Becky, our maid," said Miss Bella.

"Carry is quite impossible, Gann," said Mrs. Gann: "she hasn't a gown fit to be seen in. She's not been at church for thirteen Sundays in consequence."

"And more shame for you, ma'am," said Mr. Gann, who liked his child: "Carry shall have a gown, and the best of gowns." And jingling three−and−twenty shillings in his pocket, Mr. Gann determined to spend them all in the purchase of a robe for Carry. But, alas, the gown never came; half the money was spent that very evening at the Bag of Nails.

"Is that—that young lady, your daughter?" said Mr. Fitch, surprised, for he fancied Carry was a humble companion of the family.

"Yes, she is, and a very good daughter, too, sir," answered Mr. Gann. "Fetch and Carry I call her, or else Carryvan—she's so useful: An't you, Carry?"

"I'm very glad if I am, papa," said the young lady, who was blushing violently, and in whose presence all this conversation had been carried on.

"Hold your tongue, miss," said her mother; "you're very expensive to us, that you are, and need not brag about the work you do. You would not live on charity, would you, like some folks (here she looked fiercely at Mr. Gann); and if your sisters and me starve to keep you and some folks, I presume you are bound to make us some return."

When any allusion was made to Mr. Gann's idleness and extravagance, or his lady shewed herself in any way inclined to be angry, it was honest James's habit not to answer, but to take his hat and walk abroad to the public−house; or if haply she scolded him at night, he would turn his back and fall a snoring. These were the only remedies he found for Mrs. James's bad temper; and the first of them he adopted on hearing these words of his lady, which we have just now transcribed.

Poor Caroline had not her father's refuge of flight, but was obliged to stay and listen: and a wondrous eloquence, God wot! had Mrs. Gann upon the subject of her daughter's ill conduct. The first lecture Mr. Fitch heard, he set down Caroline for a monster. Was she not idle, sulky, scornful, and a sloven? For these and many more of her daughter's vices Mrs. Gann vouched, declaring that Caroline's misbehaviour was hastening her own death, and finishing by a fainting fit. In the presence of all these charges, there stood Miss Caroline, dumb, stupid, and careless; nay, when the fainting−fit came on, and Mrs. Gann fell back on the sofa, the unfeeling girl took the opportunity to retire, and never offered to smack her mamma's hands, to give her the smelling−bottle, or to restore her with a glass of water.

One stood close at hand; for Mr. Fitch, when this first fit occurred, was sitting in the Gann parlour, painting that lady's portrait; and he was making towards her with his tumbler, when Miss Linda cried out, "Stop! the water's full of paint!" and straightway burst out laughing. Mrs. Gann jumped up at this, cured suddenly, and left the room, looking somewhat foolish.

"You don't know ma," said Miss Linda, still giggling; "she's always fainting."

"Poor thing!" cried Fitch; "very nervous, I suppose?"

"Oh, very!" answered the lady, exchanging arch glances with Miss Bella.

"Poor, dear lady!" continued the artist; "I pity her from my hinmost soul. Doesn't the himmortal bard of Havon observe, how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child? And is it true, ma'am, that that young woman has been the ruin of her family?"

"Ruin of her fiddlestick!" replied Miss Bella. "Law, Mr. Fitch, you don't know ma yet: she is in one of her tantrums."

"What, then, it isn't true?" cried simple−minded Fitch; to which neither of the young ladies made any answer in words: nor could the little artist comprehend why they looked at each other, and burst out laughing. But he retired pondering on what he had seen and heard; and being a very soft young fellow, most implicitly believed the accusations of poor dear Mrs. Gann, and thought her daughter Caroline was no better than a Regan or Goneril.

A time, however, was to come when he should believe her to be a most pure and gentle Cordelia; and of this change in Fitch's opinions we shall speak in Chapter III.

Chap. III.
A shabby genteel dinner, and other incidents of a like nature.

Mr. Brandon's letter to Lord Cinqbars produced, as we have said, a great impression upon the family of Gann; an impression which was considerably increased by their lodger's subsequent behaviour: for although the persons with whom he now associated were of a very vulgar, ridiculous kind, they were by no means so low or ridiculous that Mr. Brandon should not wish to appear before them in the most advantageous light; and, accordingly, he gave himself the greatest airs when in their company, and bragged incessantly of his acquaintance and familiarity with the nobility. Mr. Brandon was a tufthunter of the genteel sort; his pride being quite as slavish, and his haughtiness as mean and cringing, in fact, as poor Mrs. Gann's stupid wonder and respect for all the persons whose names are written with titles before them. O free and happy Britons, what a miserable, truckling, cringing race you are!

The reader has no doubt encountered a number of such swaggerers in the course of his conversation with the world—men of a decent middle rank, who affect to despise it, and herd only with persons of the fashion. This is an offence in a man which none of us can forgive; we call him tuft−hunter, lickspittle, sneak, unmanly; we hate, and profess to despise him. I fear it is no such thing. We envy Lickspittle, that is the fact; and therefore hate him. Were he to plague us with stories of Jones and Brown, our familiars, the man would be a simple bore, his stories heard patiently; but so soon as he talks of my lord or the duke, we are in arms against him. I have seen a whole merry party in Russell Square grow suddenly gloomy and dumb, because a pert barrister, in a loud shrill voice, told a story of Lord This or the Marquess of That. We all hated that man; and I would lay a wager that every one of the fourteen persons assembled round the boiled turkey and saddle of mutton (not to mention side−dishes from the pastry−cook's opposite the British Museum) —I would wager, I say, that every one was muttering inwardly, "A plague on that fellow! he knows a lord, and I never spoke to more than three in the whole course of my life." To our betters we can reconcile ourselves, if you please, respecting them very sincerely, laughing at their jokes, making allowance for their stupidities, meekly suffering their insolence; but we can't pardon our equals going beyond us. A friend of mine, who lived amicably and happily among his friends and relatives at Hackney, was on a sudden disowned by the latter, cut by the former, and doomed in innumerable prophecies to ruin, because he kept a footboy,—a harmless, little, blowsyfaced urchin, in light snuff−coloured clothes, glistering over with sugar−loaf buttons. There is another man, a great man, a literary man, whom the public loves, and who took a sudden leap from obscurity into fame and wealth. This was a crime; but he bore his rise with so much modesty, that even his brethren of the pen did not envy him. One luckless day he set up a one−horse chaise; from that minute he was doomed.

"Have you seen his new carriage?" says Snarley.

"Yes," says Yow; "he's so consumedly proud of it, that he can't see his old friends while he drives."

The fact is that our author, not much accustomed to the whip, is in a little flurry when he takes the reins, and looks at his horse's head during the whole drive.

"Ith it a donkey−cart," lisps Simper, "thith gwand new cawwiage? I always thaid that the man, from hith thtile, wath fitted to be a vewy dethent cothtermonger."

"Yes, yes," cries old Candour, "a sad pity indeed!—dreadfully extravagant, I'm told—bad health—expensive family—works going down every day— and now he must set up a carriage, forsooth!"

Snarley, Yow, Simper, Candour, hate their brother. If he is ruined, they will be kind to him and just; but he is successful, and wo be to him!

This trifling digression of half a page or so, although it seems to have nothing to do with the story in hand, has, nevertheless, the strongest relation to it; and you shall hear what.

In one word, then, Mr. Brandon bragged so much, and assumed such airs of superiority, that after a while he perfectly disgusted Mrs. Gann and the Misses Macarty, who were gentlefolks themselves, and did not at all like his way of telling them that he was their better. Mr. Fitch was swallowed up in his hart, as he called it, and cared nothing for Brandon's airs. Gann, being a low−spirited fellow, completely submitted to Mr. Brandon, and looked up to him with deepest wonder. And poor little Caroline followed her father's faith, and in six weeks after Mr.

Brandon's arrival at the lodgings had grown to believe him the most perfect, finished, polished, agreeable of mankind. Indeed, the poor girl had never seen a gentleman before, and towards such her gentle heart turned instinctively. Brandon never offended her by hard words; insulted her by cruel scorn, such as she met with from her mother and her sisters; there was a quiet manner about the man quite different to any that she had before seen amongst the acquaintances of her family; and if he assumed a tone of superiority in his conversation with her and the rest, Caroline felt that he was their superior, and as such admired and respected him.

What happens when in the innocent bosom of a girl of sixteen such sensations arise? What has happened ever since the world began?

I have said that Miss Caroline had no friend in the world but her father, and must here take leave to recall that assertion;—a friend she most certainly had, and that was honest Becky, the smutty maid, whose name has been mentioned before. Miss Caroline had learned, in the course of a life spent under the tyranny of her mamma, some of the notions of the latter, and would have been very much offended to call Becky her friend: but friends, in fact, they were; and a great comfort it was for Caroline to descend to the calm kitchen from the stormy back−parlour, and there vent some of her little woes to the compassionate servant of all work.

When Mrs. Gann went out with her daughters, Becky would take her work and come and keep Miss Caroline company; and, if the truth must be told, the greatest enjoyment the pair used to have was in these afternoons, when they read together out of the precious greasy marble−covered volumes that Mrs. Gann was in the habit of fetching from the library. Many and many a tale had the pair so gone through. I can see them over Manfrone; or, the One−handed Monk—the room dark, the street silent, the hour ten—the tall, red, lurid candlewick waggling down, the flame flickering pale upon Miss Caroline's pale face as she read out, and lighting up honest Becky's goggling eyes, who sat silent, her work in her lap: she had not done a stitch of it for an hour. As the trap−door slowly opens, and the scowling Alonzo, bending over the sleeping Imoinda, draws his pistol, cocks it, looks well if the priming be right, places it then to the sleeper's ear, and—thunder−under−under—down fall the snuffers! Becky has had them in hand for ten minutes, afraid to use them. Up starts Caroline, and flings the book back into her mamma's basket. It is that lady returned with her daughters from a tea−party, where two young gents from London have been mighty genteel indeed.

For the sentimental, too, as well as for the terrible, Miss Caroline and the cook had a strong predilection, and had wept their poor eyes out over Thaddeus of Warsaw and the Scottish Chiefs. Fortified by the examples drawn from those instructive volumes, Becky was firmly convinced that her young mistress would meet with a great lord some day or other, or be carried off, like Cinderella, by a brilliant prince, to the mortification of her elder sisters, whom Becky hated. And when, therefore, the new lodger came, lonely, mysterious, melancholy, elegant, with the romantic name of George Brandon —when he wrote a letter directed to a lord, and Miss Caroline and Becky together examined the superscription, such a look passed between them as the pencil of Leslie or Maclise could alone describe for us. Becky's orbs were lighted up with a preternatural look of wondering wisdom; whereas, after an instant, Caroline dropped hers, and blushed, and said, "Nonsense, Becky."

"Is it nonsense?" said Becky, grinning and snapping her fingers with a triumphant air; "the cards comes true; I knew they would. Didn't you have king and queen of hearts three deals running? What did you dream about last Tuesday, tell me that?"

But Miss Caroline never did tell, for her sisters came bouncing down the stairs, and examined the lodger's letter. Caroline, however, went away musing much upon these points; and she began to think Mr. Brandon more wonderful and beautiful every day.

In the meantime, while Miss Caroline was innocently indulging in her inclination for the brilliant occupier of the first floor, it came to pass that the tenant of the second was inflamed by a most romantic passion for her.

For, after partaking for about a fortnight of the family dinner, and passing some evenings with Mrs. Gann and the young ladies, Mr. Fitch, though by no means quick of comprehension, began to perceive that the nightly charges that were brought against poor Caroline could not be founded upon truth. "Let's see," mused he to himself; "Tuesday, the old lady said her daughter was bringing her grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, because the cook had not boiled the potatoes. Wednesday, she said Caroline was an assassin, because she could not find her own thimble. Thursday, she vows Caroline has no religion, because that old pair of silk stockings were not darned. And this can't be," reasoned Fitch, deeply. "A gal haint a murderess because her ma can't find her thimble. A woman that goes to slap her grown−up daughter on the back, and before company too, for such a paltry thing as

a hold pair of stockings, can't be surely a−speaking the truth." And thus gradually his first impression against Caroline wore away. As this disappeared, pity took possession of his soul—and we know what pity is akin to; and, at the same time, a corresponding hatred for the oppressors of a creature so amiable.

To sum up, in six short weeks after the appearance of the two gentlemen, we find our chief dramatis personæ as follows:—

Caroline, an innocent young woman in love with Brandon.

Fitch, a celebrated painter, almost in love with Caroline.

Brandon, a young gentleman in love with himself.

At first he was pretty constant in his attendance upon the Misses Macarty when they went out to walk, nor were they displeased at his attentions; but he found that there were a great number of Margatebeaux—ugly, vulgar fellows as ever were—who always followed in the young ladies' train, and made themselves infinitely more agreeable than he was. These men Mr. Brandon treated with a great deal of scorn; and, in return, they hated him cordially. So did the ladies speedily: his haughty manners, though quite as impertinent and free, were not half so pleasant to them as Jones's jokes or Smith's charming romps; and the girls gave Brandon very shortly to understand that they were much happier without him. "Ladies, your humble," he heard Bob Smith say, as that little linendraper came skipping to the door from which they were issuing, "the sun's hup and trade is down; if you're for a walk, I'm your man." And Miss Linda and Miss Bella each took an arm of Mr. Smith and sailed down the street. "I'm glad you aint got that proud gent with the glass hi," said Mr. Smith; "he's the most hillbred, supercilious beast I ever see."

"So he is," says Bella.

"Hush!" says Linda.

The "proud gent with the glass hi" was at this moment lolling out of the first−floor window, smoking his accustomed cigar; and his eye−glass was fixed upon the ladies, to whom he made a very low bow. It may be imagined how fond he was of them afterwards, and what looks he cast at Mr. Bob Smith the next time he met him. Mr. Bob's heart beat for a day afterwards; and he found he had business in town.

But the love of society is stronger than even pride; and as we saw the other day, in York gaol, how the illustrious Mr. Feargus O'Connor preferred to be locked up with a couple of felons rather than to remain solitary, in like manner the great Mr. Brandon was sometimes fain to descend from his high station, and consort with the vulgar family with whom he lodged. But, as we have said, he always did this with a wonderfully condescending air, giving his associates to understand how great was the honour he did them.

One day, then, he was absolutely so kind as to accept of an invitation from the ground−floor, which was delivered in the passage by Mr. James Gann, who said, "It was hard to see a gent eating mutton−chops from week's end to week's end; and if Mr. Brandon had a mind to meet a devilish good fellow as ever was, my friend Swigby, a man who rides his horse, and has his five hundred a−year to spend, and to eat a prime cut out of as good a leg of pork (though he said it) as ever a knife was stuck into, they should dine that day at three o'clock sharp, and Mrs. G. and the gals would be glad of the honour of his company."

The person so invited was rather amused at the terms in which Mr. Gann conveyed his hospitable message; and at three o'clock made his appearance in the back−parlour, whence he had the honour of conducting Mrs. Gann (dressed in a sweet yellow mousseline de laine, with a large red turban, a ferronière, and a smelling−bottle, attached by a ring to a very damp, fat hand) to the "office," where the repast was set out. The Misses Macarty were in costumes equally tasty; one on the guest's right hand; one near the boarder, Mr. Fitch, who, in a large beard, an amethyst velvet waistcoat, his hair fresh wetted, and parted accurately down the middle to fall in curls over his collar, would have been irresistible, if the collar had been a little, little whiter than it was.

Mr. Brandon, too, was dressed in his very best suit; for though he affected to despise his hosts very much, he wished to make the most favourable impression upon them, and took care to tell Mrs. Gann that he and Lord So−and−so were the only two men in the world who were in possession of that particular waistcoat which she admired: for Mrs. Gann was very gracious, and had admired the waistcoat, being desirous to impress with awe Mr. Gann's friend and admirer, Mr. Swigby, who, man of fortune as he was, was a constant frequenter of the club at the Bag of Nails.

About this club and its supporters Mr. Gann's guest, Mr. Swigby, and Gann himself, talked very gaily before dinner; all the jokes about all the club being roared over by the pair.

Mr. Brandon, who felt he was the great man of the party, indulged himself in his great propensities without restraint, and told Mrs. Gann stories about half the nobility. Mrs. Gann conversed knowingly about the opera; and declared that she thought Taglioni the sweetest singer in the world.

"Mr.—a—Swigby, have you ever seen Lablache dance?" asked Mr. Brandon of that gentleman, to whom he had been formally introduced.

"At Vauxhall is he?" said Mr. Swigby, who was just from town.

"Yes, on the tight−rope; a charming performer."

On which Mr. Gann told how he had been to Vauxhall when the princes were in London; and his lady talked of these knowingly. And then they fell to conversing about fire−works and rack−punch; Mr. Brandon assuring the young ladies that Vauxhall was the very pink of the fashion, and longing to have the honour of dancing a quadrille with them there. Indeed, Brandon was so very sarcastic, that not a single soul at table understood him.

The table, from Mr. Brandon's plan of it, which was afterwards sent to my Lord Cinqbars, was arranged as follows:— [Figure: *32Kb*]

Mr. Gann. "Taste that sherry, sir. Your 'ealth, and my services to you, sir. That wine, sir, is given me as a particular favour by my—ahem!—my wine−merchant, who only will part with a small quantity of it, and imports it direct, sir, from—ahem!—from—"

Mr. Brandon. "From Xeres, of course. It is, I really think, the finest wine I ever tasted in my life—at a commoner's table, that is."

Mrs. Gann. "Oh, in course, a commoner's table!—we have no titles, sir (Mr. Gann, I will trouble you for some more crackling), though my poor dear girls are related, by their blessed father's side, to some of the first nobility in the land, I assure you."

Mr. Gann. "Gammon, Jooly, my dear. Them Irish nobility you know, what are they? And, besides, it's my belief that the gals are no more related to them than I am."

Miss Bella (to Mr. Brandon, confidentially). "You must find that poor par is sadly vulgar, Mr. Brandon."

Mrs. Gann. "Mr. Brandon has never been accustomed to such language, I am sure; and I entreat you will excuse Mr. Gann's rudeness, sir."

Miss Linda. "Indeed, I assure you, Mr. Brandon, that we've high connexions as well as low; as high as some people's connexions, per'aps, though we are not always talking of the nobility." This was a double shot; the first barrel of Miss Linda's sentence hit her stepfather, the second part was levelled directly at Mr. Brandon. "Don't you think I'm right, Mr. Fitch?"

Mr. Brandon. "You are quite right, Miss Linda, in this as in every other instance; but I am afraid Mr. Fitch has not paid a proper attention to your excellent remark: for, if I don't mistake the meaning of that beautiful design which he has made with his fork upon the table−cloth, his soul is at this moment wrapped up in his art."

This was exactly what Mr. Fitch wished that all the world should suppose. He flung back his hair, and stared wildly for a moment, and said, "Pardon me, madam; it is true my thoughts were at that moment far away in the regions of my hart." He was really thinking that his attitude was a very elegant one, and that a large garnet ring which he wore on his forefinger must be mistaken by all the company for a ruby.

"Art is very well," said Mr. Brandon; "but with such pretty natural objects before you, I wonder you were not content to think of them."

"Do you mean the mashed potatoes, sir?" said Andrea Fitch, wondering.

"I mean Miss Rosalind Macarty," answered Brandon, gallantly, and laughing heartily at the painter's simplicity. But this compliment could not soften Miss Linda, who had an uneasy conviction that Mr. Brandon was laughing at her, and disliked him accordingly.

At this juncture, Miss Caroline entered and took the place marked as hers, to the left hand of Mr. Gann, vacant.

An old ricketty wooden stool was placed for her, instead of that elegant and commodious Windsor chair, which supported every other person at table; and by the side of the plate stood a curious old battered tin mug, on which the antiquarian might possibly discover the inscription of the word "Caroline." This, in truth, was poor Caroline's mug and stool, having been appropriated to her from childhood upwards; and here it was her custom meekly to sit, and eat her daily meal.

It was well that the girl was placed near her father, else I do believe she would have been starved; but Gann was much too good−natured to allow that any difference should be made between her and her sisters. There are some meannesses which are too mean even for man—woman, lovely woman alone, can venture to commit them. Well, on the present occasion, and when the dinner was half over, poor Caroline stole gently into the room and took her ordinary place. Caroline's pale face was very red; for the fact must be told that she had been in the kitchen helping Becky, the universal maid; and having heard how the great Mr. Brandon was to dine with them upon that day, the simple girl had been shewing her respect for him, by compiling, in her very best manner, a certain dish, for the cooking of which her papa had often praised her. She took her place, blushing violently when she saw him; and if Mr. Gann had not been making a violent clattering with his knife and fork, it is possible that you might have heard Miss Caroline's heart thump, which it did violently. Her dress was somehow a little smarter than usual; and Becky the maid, who brought in that remove of hashed mutton, which has been set down in the bill of fare, looked at her young lady with a good deal of complacency, as, loaded with plates, she quitted the room. Indeed the poor girl deserved to be looked at; there was an air of gentleness and innocence about her that was apt to please some persons, much more than the bold beauties of her sisters. The two young men did not fail to remark this; one of them, the little painter, had long since observed it.

"You are very late, miss," cried Mrs. Gann, who affected not to know what had caused her daughter's delay. "You're always late!" and the elder girls stared and grinned at each other knowingly, as they always did when mamma made such attacks upon Caroline, who only kept her eyes down upon the tablecloth, and began to eat her dinner without saying a word.

"Come, my dear," cried honest Gann, "if she is late, you know why. A girl can't be here and there too, as I say; can they, Swigby?"

"Impossible!" said Swigby.

"Gents," continued Mr. Gann, "our Carry, you must know, has been down stairs, making the pudding for her old pappy; and a good pudding she makes, I can tell you."

Miss Caroline blushed more vehemently than ever; the artist stared her full in the face; Mrs. Gann said, "nonsense" and "stuff," very majestically; only Mr. Brandon interposed in Caroline's favour.

"I would sooner that my wife should know how to make a pudding," said he, "than how to play the best piece of music in the world!"

"Law, Mr. Brandon! I, for my part, wouldn't demean myself by any such kitchen−work!" cries Miss Linda.

"Make puddns, indeed; it's ojous!" cries Bella.

"For you, my loves, of course!" interposed their mamma.

"Young women of your family and circumstances is not expected to perform any such work. It's different with Miss Caroline; who, if she does make herself useful now and then, don't make herself near so useful as she should, considering that she's not a shilling, and is living on our charity, like some other folks!"

Thus did this amiable woman neglect no opportunity to give her opinions about her husband and daughter. The former, however, cared not a straw; and the latter, in this instance, was perfectly happy. Had not kind Mr. Brandon approved of her work; and could she ask for more?

"Mamma may say what she pleases to−day," thought Caroline, "I am too happy to be made angry by her."

Poor little mistaken Caroline, to think you were safe against three women! The dinner had not advanced much further, when Miss Isabella, who had been examining her younger sister curiously for some short time, telegraphed Miss Linda across the table; and nodded, and winked, and pointed to her own neck; a very white one, as I have before had the honour to remark, and quite without any covering, except a smart necklace of twenty−four rows of the lightest blue glass beads, finishing in a neat tassel. Linda had a similar ornament of a vermillion colour; whereas Caroline, on this occasion, wore a handsome new collar up to the throat, and a brooch, which looked all the smarter for the shabby frock over which they were placed. As soon as she saw her sisters' signals, the poor little thing, who had only just done fluttering and blushing, fell to this same work over again.

Down went her eyes once more, and her face and neck lighted up to the colour of Miss Linda's sham cornelian.

"What's the gals giggling and ogling about?" said Mr. Gann, innocently.

"What is it, my darling loves?" said stately Mrs. Gann.

"Why, don't you see, ma?" said Linda. "Look at Miss Carry! I'm blessed if she has not got on Becky's collar and brooch that Sims, the pilot, gave her!"

The young ladies fell back in uproarious fits of laughter, and laughed all the time that their mamma was thundering out a speech, in which she declared that her daughter's conduct was unworthy a gentlewoman, and bid her leave the room and take off those disgraceful ornaments.

There was no need to tell her; the poor little thing gave one piteous look at her father, who was whistling, and seemed indeed to think the matter a good joke; and after she had managed to open the door and totter into the passage, you might have heard her weeping there, weeping tears more bitter than any of the many she had shed in the course of her life. Down she went to the kitchen, and when she reached that humble place of refuge, first pulled at her neck, and made as if she would take off Becky's collar and brooch, and then flung herself into the arms of that honest scullion, where she cried and cried till she brought on the first fit of hysterics that ever she had had.

This crying could not at first be heard in the parlour, where the young ladies, Mrs. Gann, Mr. Gann, and his friend from the Bag of Nails were roaring at the excellence of the joke. Mr. Brandon, sipping sherry, sat by looking very sarcastically and slyly from one party to the other; Mr. Fitch was staring about him too, but with a very different expression, anger and wonder inflaming his bearded countenance. At last, as the laughing died away and a faint voice of weeping came from the kitchen below, Andrew could bear it no longer, but bounced up from his chair, and rushed out of the room exclaiming,—

"By Jove, it's too bad!"

"What does the man mean?" said Mrs. Gann.

He meant that he was from that moment over head and ears in love with Caroline; and that he longed to beat, buffet, pummel, thump, tear to pieces, those callous ruffians who so piteously laughed at her.

"What's that chop wi' the beard in such tantrums about?" said the gentleman from the Bag of Nails.

Mr. Gann answered this query by some joke intimating that, "Praps Mr. Fitch's dinner did not agree with him," at which these worthies roared again.

The young ladies said, "Well, now, upon my word!"

"Mighty genteel behaviour, truly!" cried mamma; "but what can you expect from the poor thing?"

Brandon only sipped more sherry, but he looked at Fitch as the latter flung out of the room, and his countenance was lighted up by a more unequivocal smile.

These two little adventures were followed by a silence of some few minutes, during which the meats remained on the table, and no signs were shewn of that pudding upon which poor Caroline had exhausted her skill. The absence of this delicious part of the repast was first remarked by Mr. Gann; and his lady, after jangling at the bell for some time in vain, at last begged one of her daughters to go and hasten matters.

"Becky!" shrieked Miss Linda from the hall, but Becky replied not. "Becky, are we to be kept waiting all day?" continued the lady in the same shrill voice. "Mamma wants the pudding!"

"Tell her to fetch it herself!" roared Becky, at which remark Gann and his facetious friend once more went off into fits of laughter.

"This is too bad!" said Mrs. G. starting up; "she shall leave the house this instant!" and so no doubt Becky would but that the lady owed her five quarters' wages; which she, at that period, did not feel inclined to pay.

Well, the dinner at last was at an end; the ladies went away to tea, leaving the gentlemen to their wine; Brandon, very condescendingly, partaking of a bottle of port, and listening with admiration to the toasts and sentiments with which it is still the custom among persons of Mr. Gann's rank of life to preface each glass of wine. As thus:— Glass 1. "Gents," says Mr. Gann, rising, "this glass I need say nothink about. Here's the king, and long life to him and the family!"

Mr. Swigby, with his glass, goes knock, knock, knock on the table; and saying gravely, "The king!" drinks off his glass, and smacks his lips afterwards.

Mr. Brandon, who had drank half his, stops in the midst and says, "Oh, 'the king!'"

Mr. Swigby. "A good glass of wine that, Gann, my boy!"

Mr. Brandon. "Capital, really; though, upon my faith, I'm no judge of port."

Mr. Gann. (Smacks.) "A fine fruity wine as ever I tasted. I suppose you, Mr. B., are accustomed only to claret. I've 'ad it, too, in my time, sir, as Swigby there very well knows. I travelled, sir, sure le Continong, I assure you, and drank my glass of claret with the best man in France, or England either. I wasn't always what I am, sir."

Mr. Brandon. "You don't look as if you were."

Mr. Gann. "No, sir. Before that —gas came in, I was head, sir, of one of the fust 'ouses in the hoil trade. Gann, Blubbery, and Gann, sir— Thames Street, City. I'd my box at Putney, as good a gig and horse as my friend there drives."

Mr. Swigby. "Ay, and a better too, Gann, I make no doubt."

Mr. Gann. "Well, say a better. I had a better, if money could fetch it, sir; and I didn't spare that, I warrant you. No, no, James Gann didn't grudge his purse, sir; and had his friends around him, as he's 'appy to 'ave now, sir. Mr. Brandon, your 'ealth, sir, and may we hoften meet under this ma'ogany. Swigby, my boy, God bless you!"

Mr. Brandon. "Your very good health."

Mr. Swigby. "Thank you, Gann. Here's to you, and long life and prosperity and happiness to you and yours. Bless you, Jim, my boy; Heaven bless you! I say this, Mr. Bandon—Brandon—what's your name—there aint a better fellow in all Margate than James Gann,—no, nor in all England. Here's Mrs. Gann, gents, and the family. Mrs. Gann?!" (drinks.)

Mr. Brandon. "Mrs. Gann. Hip, hip, hurra!"(drinks.)

Mr. Gann. "Mrs. Gann, and thank you, gents. A fine woman, Mr. B.; aint she, now? Ah, if you'd seener when I married her! Gad, she was fine then—an out and outer, sir! Such a figure!"

Mr. Swigby. "You'd choose none but a good 'un, I war'nt. Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Gann. "Did I ever tell you of my duel along with the regimental doctor? No! Then I will. I was a young chap, you see, in those days; and when I saw her at Brussels— (Brusell, they call it)—I was right slick up over head and ears in love with her at once. But what was to be done? There was another gent in the case—a regimental doctor, sir—a reg'lar dragon. 'Faint heart,' says I, 'never won a fair lady,' and so I made so bold. She took me, sent the doctor to the right about. I met him one morning in the Park at Brussels, and stood to him, sir, like a man. When the affair was over, my second, a leftenant of dragoons, told me, 'Gann,' says he, 'I've seen many a man under fire—I'm a Waterloo man,' says he,— 'and have rode by Wellington many a long day; but I never, for coolness, see such a man as you.' Gents, here's the Duke of Wellington and the British harmy!" (the gents drink.)

Mr. Brandon. "Did you kill the doctor, sir?"

Mr. Gann. "Why no, sir; I shot in the hair."

Mr. Brandon. "Shot him in the hair! Egad, that was a severe shot, and a very lucky escape the doctor had of it? Whereabouts in the hair? a whisker, sir; or, perhaps, a pigtail?"

Mr. Swigby. "Haw, haw, haw! shot'n in the hair—capital, capital!"

Mr. Gann, who has grown very red. "No, sir, there may be some mistake in my pronounciation, which I didn't expect to have laughed at my hown table."

Mr. Brandon. "My dear sir! I protest and vow—"

Mr. Gann. "Never mind it, sir. I gave you my best, and did my best to make you welcome. If you like better to make fun of me, do, sir. That may be the genteel way, but hang me if it's hour way; is it, Jack? Our way; I beg your pardon, sir."

Mr. Swigby. "Jim, Jim! for Heaven's sake!—peace and harmony of the evening—conviviality—social enjoyment—didn't mean it—did you mean any think, Mr. Whatd−ye−call−'em?"

Mr. Brandon. "Nothing, upon my honour as a gentleman!"

Mr. Gann. "Well, then, there's my hand!" and good−natured Gann tried to forget the insult, and to talk as if nothing had occurred: but he had been wounded in the most sensitive point in which a man can be touched by his superior, and never forgot Brandon's joke. That night at the club, when dreadfully tipsy, he made several speeches on the subject, and burst into tears many times. The pleasure of the evening was quite spoiled; and, as the conversation became rapid and dull, we shall refrain from reporting it. Mr. Brandon speedily took leave, but had not the courage to face the ladies at tea; to whom, it appears the reconciled Becky had brought that refreshing beverage.

Chap. IV.
In which Mr. Fitch proclaims his love, and Mr. Brandon prepares for war.

From the splendid halls in which Mrs. Gann was dispensing her hospitality, the celebrated painter, Andrea Fitch rushed forth in a state of mind even more delirious than that which he usually enjoyed. He looked abroad into the street, all there was dusk and lonely; the rain falling heavily, the wind playing Pandæan pipes and whistling down the chimney−pots. "I love the storm," said Fitch, solemnly; and he put his great Spanish cloak round him in the most approved manner (it was of so prodigious a size that the tail of it, as it twirled over his shoulder, whisked away a lodging−card from the door of the house opposite Mr. Gann's). "I love the storm and solitude," said he, lighting a large pipe filled full of the fragrant Oronooko; and thus armed, he passed rapidly down the street, his hat cocked over his ringlets.

Andrea did not like smoking, but he used a pipe as a part of his profession as an artist, and as one of the picturesque parts of his costume; in like manner, though he did not fence, he always travelled about with a pair of foils; and quite unconscious of music, nevertheless had a guitar constantly near at hand. Without such properties a painter's spectacle is not complete, and now he determined to add to them another indispensable requisite—a mistress. "What great artist was ever without one?" thought he. Long, long had he sighed for some one whom he might love, some one to whom he might address the poems which he was in the habit of making. Hundreds of such fragments had he composed, addressed to Leila, Ximena, Ada—imaginary beauties, whom he courted in dreamy verse. With what joy would he replace all those by a real charmer of flesh and blood! Away he went, then, on this evening, the tyranny of Mrs. Gann towards poor Caroline having awakened all his sympathies in the gentle girl's favour, determined now and for ever to make her the mistress of his heart. Monna−Lisa, the Fornarina, Leonardo, Raphael—he thought of all these, and vowed that his Caroline should be made famous and live for ever on his canvass. While Mrs. Gann was preparing for her friends, and entertaining them at tea and whist; while Caroline, all unconscious of the love she inspired, was weeping up stairs in her little garret; while Mr. Brandon was enjoying the refined conversation of Gann and Swigby, over their glass and pipe in the office, Andrea walked abroad by the side of the ocean; and, before he was wet through, walked himself into the most fervid affection for poor persecuted Caroline. The reader might have observed him (had not the night been very dark, and a great deal too wet to allow a sensible reader to go abroad on such an errand) at the sea−shore standing on a rock, and drawing from his bosom a locket which contained a curl of hair tied up in riband. He looked at it for a moment, and then flung it away from him into the black boiling waters below him.

"No other 'air but thine, Caroline, shall ever rest near this 'art!" he said, and kissed the locket and restored it to its place. Light−minded youth, whose hair was it that he thus flung away? How many times had Andrea shewn that very ringlet in strictest confidence to several brethren of the brush, and declared that it was the hair of a dear girl in Spain whom he loved to madness? Alas! 'twas but a fiction of his fevered brain; every one of his friends had a locket of hair, and Andrea, who had no love until now, had clipped this precious token from the wig of a lovely lay−figure, with cast−iron joints and a card−board head, that had stood for some time in his atelier. I don't know that he felt any shame about the proceeding, for he was of such a warm imagination that he had grown to believe that the hair did actually come from a girl in Spain, and only parted with it on yielding to a superior attachment.

This attachment being fixed on, the young painter came home wet through; passed the night in reading Byron; making sketches, and burning them; writing poems to Caroline, and expunging them with pitiless Indian rubber. A romantic man makes a point of sitting up all night, and pacing his chamber; and you may see many a composition of Andrea's dated "Midnight, 10th of March, A. F." with his peculiar flourish over the initials. He was not sorry to be told in the morning, by the ladies at breakfast, that he looked dreadfully pale; and answered, laying his hand on his forehead, and shaking his head gloomily, that he could get no sleep: and then he would heave a huge sigh; and Miss Bella and Miss Linda would look at each other, and grin according to their wont. He was glad, I say, to have his wo remarked, and continued his sleeplessness for two or three nights; but he was certainly still more glad when he heard Mr. Brandon, on the fourth morning, cry out, in a shrill angry voice, to Becky the maid, to give the gentleman up−stairs his compliments—Mr. Brandon's compliments —and tell him

that he could not get a wink of sleep for the horrid trampling he kept up. "I am hauged if I stay in the house a night longer," added the first floor, sharply, "if that Mr. Fitch kicks up such a confounded noise!" Mr. Fitch's point was gained, and henceforth he was as quiet as a mouse; but his wish was not only to be in love, but to let every body know that he was in love, or where is the use of a belle passion?

So, whenever he saw Caroline, at meals, or in the passage, he used to stare at her with the utmost power of his big eyes, and fall to groaning most pathetically. He used to leave his meals untasted, groan, heave sighs, and stare incessantly. Mrs. Gann and her eldest daughters were astonished at these manoeuvres; for they never suspected that any man could possibly be such a fool as to fall in love with Caroline. At length the suspicion came upon them, created immense laughter and delight; and the ladies did not fail to rally Caroline in their usual elegant way. Gann, too, loved a joke (much polite waggery had this worthy man practised in select innparlours for twenty years past), and would call poor Caroline "Mrs. F.;" and say that, instead of Fetch−and−Carry, as he used to name her, he should style her Fitch−and−Carry for the future; and laugh at this great pun, and make many others of a similar sort, that set Caroline blushing.

Indeed, the girl suffered a great deal more from this raillery than at first may be imagined; for after the first awe inspired by Fitch's whiskers had passed away, and he had drawn the young ladies' pictures, and made designs in their albums, and in the midst of their jokes and coversation had remained perfectly silent, the Gann family had determined that the man was an idiot: and, indeed, were not very wide of the mark. In every thing except his own peculiar art honest Fitch was an idiot; and as upon the subject of painting, the Ganns, like most people of their class in England, were profoundly ignorant, it came to pass that he would breakfast and dine for many days in their company, and not utter one single syllable. So they looked upon him with extreme pity and contempt, as a harmless, good−natured, crack−brained creature, quite below them in the scale of intellect, and only to be endured because he paid a certain number of shillings weekly to the Gann exchequer. Mrs. Gann in all companies was accustomed to talk about her idiot. Neighbours and children used to peer at him as he strutted down the street; and though every young lady, including my dear Caroline, is flattered by having a lover, at least they don't like such a lover as this. The Misses Macarty (after having set their caps at him very fiercely, and quarrelled concerning him on his first coming to lodge at their house) vowed and protested now that he was no better than a chimpanzee; and Caroline and Becky agreed that this insult was as great as any that could be paid to the former. "He's a good creature, too," said Becky, "crack−brained as he is. Do you know, miss, he gave me half a sovereign to buy a new collar, after that business t'other day?"

"And did—did Mr—,—did the first−floor say any thing?" asked Caroline.

"Didn't he! he's a funny gentleman, that Brandon, sure enough; and when I took him up breakfast next morning, asked about Sims the pilot, and what I gied Sims for the collar and brooch,—he, he!"

And this was indeed a correct report of Mr. Brandon's conversation with Becky; he had been infinitely amused with the whole transaction, and wrote his friend the viscount a capital facetious account of the manners and customs of the native inhabitants of the Isle of Thanet.

And now, when Mr. Fitch's passion was fully developed—as far, that is, as sighs and ogles could give it utterance —a curious instance of that spirit of contradiction for which our race is remarkable was seen in the behaviour of Mr. Brandon. Although Caroline, in the depths of her little silly heart, had set him down for her divinity, her wondrous fairy prince, who was to deliver her from her present miserable durance, she had never by word or deed acquainted Brandon with her inclination for him, but had, with instinctive modesty, avoided him more sedulously than before. He, too, had never bestowed a thought upon her. How should such a Jove as Mr. Brandon, from the cloudy summit of his fashionable Olympus, look down and perceive such an humble, retiring being as poor little Caroline Gann? Thinking her at first not disagreeable, he had never, until the day of the dinner, bestowed one single further thought upon her; and only when exasperated by the Miss Macartys' behaviour towards him, did he begin to think how sweet it would be to make them jealous and unhappy.

"The uncouth grinning monsters," said he, "with their horrible court of Bob Smiths and Jack Joneses, daring to look down upon me, a gentleman, —me, the celebrated mangeur des caurs —a man of genius, fashion, and noble family! If I could but revenge myself on them! What injury can I invent to wound them?"

It is curious to what points a man in his passion will go. Mr. Brandon had long since, in fact, tried to do the greatest possible injury to the young ladies; for it had been, at the first dawn of his acquaintance, as we are bound with much sorrow to confess, his fixed intention to ruin one or the other of them. And when the young ladies had,

by their coldness and indifference to him, frustrated this benevolent intention, he straightway facied that they had injured him severely, and cast about for means to revenge himself upon them.

This point, is to be sure, a very delicate one to treat,—for in words, at least, the age has grown to be wonderfully moral, and refuses to hear discourses upon such subjects. But human nature, as far as I am able to learn, has not much changed since the time when Richardson wrote and Hogarth painted, a century ago. There are wicked Lovelaces abroad, ladies, now, as then, when it was considered no shame to expose the rogues; and pardon us, therefore, for hinting that such there be. Elegant acts of rouérie, such as that meditated by Mr. Brandon, are often performed still by dashing young men of the world, who think no sin of an amourette, but glory in it, especially if the victim be a person of mean condition. Had Brandon succeeded (such is the high moral state of our British youth), all his friends would have pronounced him, and he would have considered himself, to be a very lucky, captivating dog; nor, as I believe, would he have had a single pang of conscience for the rascally action which he had committed. This supreme act of scoundrelis has man permitted to himself—to deceive women. When we consider how he has availed himself of the privilege so created by him, indeed one may sympathise with the advocates of woman's rights who point out this monstrous wrong. We have read of that wretched woman of old whom the pious Pharisees were for stoning incontinently; but we don't hear that they made any outcry against the man who was concerned in the crime. Where was he? Happy, no doubt, and easy in mind, and regaling some choice friends over a bottle with the history of his success.

Being thus injured then, Mr. Brandon longed for revenge. How should he repay these impertinent young women for slighting his addresses? "Pardi!" said he; "just, to punish their pride and insolence, I have a great mind to make love to their sister."

He did not, however, for some time condescend to perform this threat. Eagles such as Brandon do not sail down from the clouds in order to pounce upon small flies, and soar airwards again, contented with such an ignoble booty. In a word, he never gave a minute's thought to Miss Caroline, until further circumstances occurred which caused this great man to consider her as an object somewhat worthy of his remark.

The violent affection suddenly exhibited by Mr. Fitch, the painter, towards poor little Caroline was the point which determined Brandon to begin to act.

"My dear Viscount," wrote he to the same Lord Cinqbars, whom he formerly addressed, "give me joy, for in a week's time it is my intention to be violently in love,—and love is no small amusement in a watering−place in winter.

"I told you about the fair Juliana Gann and her family. I forgot whether I mentioned how the Juliana had two fair daughters, the Rosalind and the Isabella; and another, Caroline by name, not so good−looking as her half−sisters, but, nevertheless, a pleasing young person.

"Well, when I came hither, I had nothing to do but to fall in love with the two handsomest; and did so, taking many walks with them, talking much nonsense; passing long, dismal evenings over horrid tea with them and their mamma; laying regular siege, in fact, to these Margate beauties, who, according to the common rule in such cases, could not, I thought, last long.

"Miserable deception! disgusting aristocratic blindness!" (Mr. Brandon always assumed that his own high birth and eminent position were granted.) "Would you believe it, that I, who have seen, fought, and conquered in so many places, should have been ignominiously defeated here? Just as American Jackson defeated our Peninsular veterans, I, an old Continental conqueror too, have been overcome by this ignoble enemy. These women have entrenched themselves so firmly in their vulgarity, that I have been beaten back several times with disgrace, being quite unable to make an impression. The monsters, too, keep up a dreadful fire from behind their entrenchments; and, besides, have raised the whole country against me: in a word, all the snobs of their acquintance are in arms. There is Bob Smith, the linen−draper; Harry Jones, who keeps the fancy tea−shop; young Glauber, the apothecary; and sundry other persons, who are ready to eat me when they see me in the streets; and are all at the beck of the victorious Amazons.

"How is a gentleman to make head against such a canaille as this?—a regular jacquerie. Once or twice I have thought of retreating; but a retreat, for sundry reasons I have, is inconvenient. I can't go to London; I am known at Dover; I believe there is a bill against me at Canterbury; at Chatham, there are sundry quartered regiments whose recognition I should be unwilling to risk. I must stay here—and be hanged to the place,—until my better star shall rise.

"But I am determined that my stay shall be to some purpose; and so, to shew how persevering I am, I shall make one more trial upon the third daughter,—yes, upon the third daughter, a family Cinderella, who shall, I am determined, make her sisters crever with envy. I merely mean fun, you know— not mischief,—for Cinderella is but a little child; and, besides, I am the most harmless fellow breathing, but must have my joke. Now, Cinderella has a lover, the bearded painter of whom I spoke to you in a former letter. He has lately plunged into the most extraordinary fits of passion for her, and is more mad than even he was before. Wo betide you, O painter! I have nothing to do; a mouth to do that nothing in: in that time, mark my words, I will laugh at that painter's beard. Should you like a lock of it, or a sofa stuffed with it? there is beard enough: or, should you like to see a specimen of poor little Cinderella's golden ringlets? Command your slave. I wish I had paper enough to write you an account of a grand Gann dinner, at which I assisted, and of a scene which there took place; and how Cinderella was dressed out, not by a fairy, but by a charitable kitchen,−maid, and was turned out of the room by her indignant mamma, for appearing in the scullion's finery. But my forte does not lie in such descriptions of polite life. We drank port, and toasts after dinner: here is the menu, and the names and order of the eaters."

The bill of fare has been given already, and need, not, therefore, be again laid before the public.

"What a fellow that is!" said young Lord Cinqbars, reading the letter to his friends, and in a profound admiration of his tutor's genius.

"And to think that he was a reading man too, and took a double first," cried another; "why, the man's an Admirable Crichton."

"Upon my life, though, he's a little too bad," said a third, who was a moralist. And with this a fresh bowl of milk−punch came reeking from the college butteries, and the jovial party discussed that.

Chapter V.
Contains a great deal of complicated love−making.

The Misses Macarty were excessively indignant that Mr. Fitch should have had the audacity to fall in love with their sister; and poor Caroline's life was not, as may be imagined, made much the happier by the envy and passion thus excited. Mr. Fitch's amour was the source of a great deal of pain to her. Her mother would tauntingly say, that as both were beggars, they could not do better than marry; and declared, in the same satirical way, that she should like nothing better than to see a large family of grandchildren about her, to be plagues and burdens upon her, as her daughter was. The short way would have been, when the young painter's intentions were manifest, which they pretty speedily were, to have requested him immediately to quit the house; or, as Mr. Gann said, "to give him the sack at once;" to which measure the worthy man indignantly avowed that he would have resort. But his lady would not allow of any such rudeness; although, for her part, she professed the strongest scorn and contempt for the painter. For the painful fact must be stated: Fitch bad a short time previously paid no less a sum than a whole quarter's board and lodging in advance, at Mrs. Gann's humble request, and he possessed his landlady's receipt for that sum; the mention of which circumstance silenced Gann's objections at once. And, indeed, it is pretty certain that, with all her taunts to her daughter, and just abuse of Fitch's poverty, Mrs. Gann in her heart was not altogether averse to the match. In the first place, she loved match−making; next, she would be glad to be rid of her daughter at any rate: and, besides, Fitch's aunt, the auctioneer's wife, was rich, and had no children; painters, as she had heard, make often a great deal of money, and Fitch might be a clever one for aught she knew. So he was allowed to remain in the house, an undeclared but very assiduous lover; and to sigh, and to moan, and make verses and portraits of his beloved, and build castles in the air as best he might. Indeed, our humble Cinderella was in a very curious position. She felt a tender passion for the first floor, and was adored by the second floor, and had to wait upon both at the summons of the bell of either; and as the poor little thing was compelled not to notice any of the sighs and glances which the painter bestowed upon her, she also had schooled herself to maintain a quiet demeanour towards Mr. Brandon, and not allow him to discover the secret which was labouring in her little breast.

I think it may be laid down as a pretty general rule, that most romantic little girls of Caroline's age have such a budding sentiment as this young person entertained; quite innocent, of course; nourished and talked of in delicious secrecy to the confidante of the hour. Or else what are novels made for? Had Caroline read of Valancourt and Emily for nothing, or gathered no good example from those five tear−fraught volumes which describe the loves of Miss Helen Mar and Sir William Wallace? Many a time had she depicted Brandon in a fancy costume, such as the fascinating Valancourt wore; or painted herself as. Helen, tying a sash round her knight's cuirass, and watching him forth to battle. Silly fancies, no doubt; but consider, madam, the poor girl's age and education: the only instruction she had ever received was from these tender, kind−hearted, silly books; the only happiness which Fate had allowed her was in this little silent world of fancy. It would be hard to grudge the poor thing her dreams; and many such did she have, and impart blushingly to honest Becky, as they sat by the humble kitchen−fire.

Although it cost her heart a great pang, she had once ventured to implore her mother not to send her upstairs to the lodgers' rooms, for she shrunk at the notion of the occurrence that Brandon should discover her regard for him; but this point had never entered Mrs. Gann's sagacious head. She thought her daughter wished to avoid Fitch, and sternly bade her do her duty, and not give herself such impertinent airs; and, indeed, it can't be said that poor Caroline was very sorry at being compelled to continue to see Brandon. To do both gentlemen justice, neither ever said a word unfit for Caroline to hear. Fitch would have been torn to pieces by a thousand wild horses rather than have breathed a single syllable to hurt her feelings; and Brandon, though by no means so squeamish on ordinary occasions, was innately a gentleman, and, from taste rather than from virtue, was carefully respectful in his behaviour to her.

As for the Misses Macarty themselves, it has been stated that they had already given away their hearts several times; Miss Isabella being at this moment attached to a certain young wine−merchant, and to Lieutenant or Colonel Swabber of the Spanish service; and Miss Rosalind having a decided fondness for a foreign nobleman, with black mustachios, who had paid a visit to Margate. Of Miss Bella's lovers, Swabber had disappeared; but she

still met the wine−merchant pretty often, and it is believed had gone very nigh to accept him. As for Miss Rosalind, I am sorry to say that the course of her true love ran by no means smoothly: the Frenchman had turned out to be not a marquess, but a biliard−marker; and a sad, sore subject the disappointment was with the neglected lady.

We should have spoken of it long since, had the subject been one that was much canvassed in the Gann family; but once when Gann had endeavoured to rally his step−daughter on this unfortunate attachment (using for the purpose those delicate terms of wit for which the honest gentleman was always famous), Miss Linda had flown into such a violent fury, and comported herself in a way so dreadful, that James Gann, Esquire, was fairly frightened out of his wits by the threats, screams, and imprecations which she uttered. Miss Bella, who was disposed to be jocose likewise, was likewise awed into silence; for her dear sister talked of tearing her eyes out that minute, and uttered some hints, too, regarding love matters personally affecting Miss Bella herself, which caused that young lady to turn pale−red, to mutter something about "wicked lies," and to leave the room immediately. Nor was the subject ever again broached by the Ganns. Even when Mrs. Gann once talked about that odious French impostor, she was stopped immediately, not by the lady concerned, but by Miss Bella, who cried, sharply, "Mamma, hold your tongue, and don't vex our dear Linda by alluding to any such stuff." It is most probable that the young ladies had had a private conference, which, beginning a little fiercely at first, had ended amicably: and so the marquess was mentioned no more.

Miss Linda, then, was comparatively free (for Bob Smith, the linendraper, and young Glauber, the apothecary, went for nothing); and, very luckily for her, a successor was found for the faithless Frenchman, almost immediately.

This gentleman was a commoner, to be sure, but had a good estate of five hundred a−year, kept his horse and gig, and was, as Mr. Gann remarked, as good a fellow as ever lived. Let us say at once that the new lover was no other than Mr. Swigby. From the day when he had been introduced to the family he appeared to be very much attracted by the two sisters; sent a turkey off his own farm, and six bottles of prime Hollands, to Mr. and Mrs. Gann, in presents; and, in ten short days after his first visit, had informed his friend Gann that he was violently in love with two women, whose names he would never—never breathe. The worthy Gann knew right well how the matter was; for he had not failed to remark Swigby's melancholy, and to attribute it to its right cause.

Swigby was forty−eight years of age, stout, hearty, gay, much given to drink, and had never been a lady's man, or, indeed, passed half−a−dozen evenings in ladies society. He thought Gann the noblest and finest fellow in the world. He never heard any singing like James's, nor any jokes like his; nor had met with such an accomplished gentleman or man of the world. "Gann has his faults," Swigby would say at the Bag of Nails; "which of us has not?—but I tell you what, he's the greatest trump I ever see." Many scores of scores had he paid for Gann, many guineas and crown−pieces had he lent him, since he came into his property some three years before. What were Swigby's former pursuits I can't tell. What need we care? Hadn't he five hundred a−year now, and a horse and gig? Ay, that he had.

Since his accession to fortune, this gay young bachelor had taken his share (what he called "his whack") of pleasure; had been at one—nay, perhaps, at two—public−houses every night; and had been drunk, I make no doubt, nearly a thousand times in the course of the three years. Many people had tried to cheat him; but, no, no! he knew what was what, and in all matters of money was simple and shrewd. Gann's gentility won him; his bragging, his ton, and the stylish tuft on his chin. To be invited to his house was a proud moment; and when he went away, after the banquet described in the last chapter, he was in a perfect ferment of love and liquor.

"What a stylish woman is that Mrs. Gann!" thought he, as he tumbled into bed at his inn: "fine she must have been as a gal!—fourteen stone now, without saddle and bridle, and no mistake. And them Miss Macartys, Jupiter! what spanking, handsome, elegant creatures!—real elegance in both on 'em! Such hair!—black's the word—as black as my mare; such cheeks, such necks, and shoulders!" At noon he repeated these observations to Gann himself, as he walked up and down the pier with that gentleman, smoking Manilla cheroots. He was in raptures with his evening. Gann received his praises with much majestic good−humour.

"Blood, sir!" said he, "blood's every thing! Them gals have been brought up as few ever have. I don't speak of myself; but their mother— their mother's a lady, sir. Shew me a woman in England as is better bred or knows the world more than my Juliana!"

"It's impawsible," said Swigby.

"Think of the company we've kep, sir, before our misfortunes—the fust in the land. Brandenburg House, sir—England's injured queen. Law bless you, Juliana was always there!"

"I make no doubt, sir; you can see it in her," said Swigby, solemnly.

"And as for those gals, why, aint they related to the fust families in Ireland, sir?—In course, they are. As I said before, bood's every thing; and those young women have the best of it: they are connected with the reglar old noblesse."

"They have the best of every think, I'm sure," said Swigby, "and deserve it too," and relapsed into his morning remarks. "What creatures! what elegance! what hair and eyes, sir!— black, and all's black, as I say. What complexion, sir!—ay, and what makes too! Such a neck and shoulders I never see!"

Gann, who had his hands in his pockets (his friend's arm being hooked into one of his), here suddenly withdrew his hand from its hiding−place, clenched his fist, assumed a horrible knowing grin, and gave Mr. Swigby such a blow in the ribs as well−nigh sent him into the water. "You sly dog!" said Mr. Gann, with inexpressible emphasis, "you've found that out too, have you? Have a care, Joe, my boy,—have a care."

And herewith Gann and Joe burst into tremendous roars of laughter, fresh explosions taking place at intervals of five minutes during the rest of the walk. The two friends parted excedingly happy; and when they met that evening at "The Nails," Gann drew Swigby mysteriously into the bar, and thrust into his hand a triangular piece of pink paper, which the latter read:—

"Mrs. Gann and the Misses Macarty request the honour and pleasure of Mr. Swigby's company (if you have no better engagement) to tea to−morrow evening, at half−past five. "Margaretta Cottage,
Salamanca Road North.
Thursday evening."

The faces of the two gentlemen were wonderfully expressive of satisfaction as this communication passed between them. And I am led to believe that Mrs. Gann had been unusually pleased with her husband's conduct on that day, for honest James had no less than thirteen and sixpence in his pocket, and insisted, as usual, upon standing glasses all round. Joe Swigby, left alone in the little parlour behind the bar, called for a sheet of paper, a new pen and a wafer, and in the space of half−an−hour concocted a very spirited and satisfactory answer to this note; which was carried off by Gann, and duly delivered. Punctually at half−past five Mr. Joseph Swigby knocked at Margaretta Cottage door, in his new coat with glistering brass buttons, his face clean shaved, and his great ears shining over his great shirt−collar, delightfully bright and red.

What happened at this tea−party it is needless here to say; but Swigby came away from it quite as much enchanted as before, and declared that the duets, sung by the ladies in hideous discord, were the sweetest music he had ever heard. He sent the gin and the turkey the next day; and, of course, was invited to dine. The dinner was followed up on his part by an offer to drive all the young ladies and their mamma into the country; and he hired a very smart barouche to conduct them. The invitation was not declined; and Fitch, too, was asked by Mr. Swigby, in the height of his good−humour, and accepted with the utmost delight. "Me and Joe will go on the box," said Gann. "You four ladies and Mr. Fitch shall go inside. Carry must go bodkin; but she aint very big."

"Carry, indeed, will stop at home," said her mamma; "she's not fit to go out."

At which poor Fitch's jaw fell: it was in order to ride with her that he had agreed to accompany the party; nor could he escape now, having just promised so eagerly.

"Oh, don't let's have that proud Brandon," said the young ladies, when the good−natured Mr. Swigby proposed to ask that gentleman; and therefore he was not invited to join them in their excursion: but he stayed at home very unconcernedly, and saw the barouche and its load drive off. Somebody else looked at it from the parlour−window with rather a heavy heart, and that some one was poor Caroline. The day was bright and sunshiny; the spring was beginning early; it would have been pleasant to have been a lady for once, and to have driven along in a carriage with prancing horses. Mr. Fitch looked after her in a very sheepish, melancholy way; and was so dismal and silly during the first part of the journey, that Miss Linda, who was next him, said to her papa that she would change places with him; and actually mounted the box by the side of the happy, trembling Mr. Swigby. How proud he was, to be sure! How knowingly did he spank the horses along, and fling out the shillings at the turnpikes!

"Bless you, he don't care for change!" said Gann, as one of the toll−takers offered to render some copers; and Joe felt infinitely obliged to his friend for setting off his amiable qualities in such a way.

O mighty Fate, that over us miserable mortals rulest supreme, with what small means are thy ends

effected!—with what scornful ease and mean instruments does it please thee to govern mankind! Let each man think of the circumstances of his life, and how its lot has been determined. The getting up a little earlier or later, the turning down this street or that, the eating of this dish or the other, may influence all the years and actions of a future life. Mankind walks down the left−hand side of Regent Street instead of the right, and meets a friend who asks him to dinner, and goes, and finds the turtle remarkably good, and the iced punch very cool and pleasant; and, being in a merry, jovial, idle mood, has no objection to a social rubber of whist—nay, to a few more glasses of that cool punch. In the most careless, good−humoured way, he loses a few points; and still feels thirsty, and loses a few more points; and, like a man of spirit, increases his stakes, to be sure, and just by that walk down Regent Street is ruined for life. Or he walks down the right−hand side of Regent Street instead of the left, and, good Heavens! who is that charming young creature who has just stepped into her carriage from Mr. Fraser's shop, and to whom and her mamma Mr. Fraser has made the most elegant bow in the world? It is the lovely Miss Moidore, with a hundred thousand pounds, who has remarked your elegant figure, and regularly drives to town on the first of the month, to purchase her darling Magazine. You drive after her as fast as the hack−cab will carry you. She reads the Magazine the whole way. She stops at her papa's elegant villa at Hampstead, with a conservatory, a double coach−house, and a parklike paddock. As the lodge−gate separates you from that dear girl, she looks back just once, and blushes. Erubuit, salva est res. She has blushed, and you are all right. In a week you are introduced to the family, and pronounced a charming young fellow of high principles. In three weeks you have danced twenty−nine quadrilles with her, and whisked her through several miles of waltzes. In a month Mrs. O'Flaherty has flung herself into the arms of her mother, just having come from a visit to the village of Gretna, near Carlisle; and you have an account at your banker's ever after. What is the cause of all this good fortune?—A walk on a particular side of Regent Street. And so true and indisputable is this fact, that there is a young north country gentleman, with whom I am acquainted, that daily paces up and down the abovenamed street for many hours, fully expecting that such an adventure will happen to him; for which end he keeps a cab in readiness at the corner of Vigo Lane.

Now, after a dissertation in this history, the reader is pretty sure to know that a moral is coming; and the facts connected with our tale, which are to be drawn from the above little essay on fate, are simply these:—1. If Mr. Fitch had not heard Mr. Swigby invite all the ladies, he would have refused Swigby's invitation, and stayed at home. 2. If he had not been in the carriage, it is quite certain that Miss Rosalind Macarty would not have been seated by him on the back seat. 3. If he had not been sulky, she never would have asked her papa to let her take his place on the box. 4. If she had not taken her papa's place on the box, not one of the circumstances would have happened which did happen; and which were as follows:—

1. Miss Bella remained inside.

2. Mr. Swigby, who was wavering between the two, like a certain animal between two bundles of hay, was determined by this circumstance, and made proposals to Miss Linda, whispering to Miss Linda: "Miss, I aint equal to the like of you; but I'm hearty, healthy, and have five hundred a−year. Will you marry me?" In fact, this very speech had been taught him by cunning Gann, who saw well enough that Swigby would speak to one or other of his daughters. And to it the young lady replied, also in a whispering, agitated tone, "Law, Mr. S.! What an odd man! How can you?" And, after a little pause, added, "Speak to mamma."

3. (And this is the main point of my story.) If little Caroline had been allowed to go out, she never would have been left alone with Brandon at Margate. When Fate wills that something should come to pass, she sends forward a million of little circumstances to clear and prepare the way.

In the month of April (as indeed in half−a−score of other months of the year) the reader may have remarked that the cold north−east wind is prevalent; and that when, tempted by a glimpse of sunshine he issues forth to take the air, he receives not only it, but such a quantity of it as is enough to keep him shivering through the rest of the miserable month. On one of these happy days of English weather (it was the very day before the pleasure party described in the last chapter) Mr. Brandon, cursing heartily his country, and thinking how infinitely more congenial to him were the winds and habits prevalent in other nations, was marching over the cliffs near Margate, in the midst of a storm of shrill east wind which no ordinary mortal could bear, when he found perched on the cliff, his fingers blue with cold, the celebrated Andrea Fitch, employed in sketching a land or a sea−scape on a sheet of grey paper.

"You have chosen a fine day for sketching," said Mr. Brandon, bitterly, his thin aquiline nose peering out livid

from the fur collar of his coat.

Mr. Fitch smiled, understanding the allusion.

"An hartist, sir," said he, "doesn't mind the coldness of the weather. There was a chap in the Academy who took sketches twenty degrees below zero in Hiceland—Mount 'Ecla, sir! E was the man that gave the first hidea of Mount 'Ecla for the Surrey Zoological Gardens."

"He must have been a wonderful enthusiast!" said Mr. Brandon; "I fancy that most men would prefer to sit at home, and not numb their fingers in such a freezing storm as this!"

"Storm, sir!" replied Fitch, majestically; "I live in a storm, sir! A true artist is never so 'appy as when he can have the advantage to gaze upon yonder tempestuous hocean in one of its hangry moods."

"Ay, there comes the steamer," answered Mr. Brandon; "I can fancy that there are a score of unhappy people on board who are not artists, and would wish to behold your ocean quiet."

"They are not poets, sir; the glorious hever−changing expression of the great countenance of Nature is not seen by them, no more than the storm and the sunshine which rages and gleams halternately in the face of my favourite hactor, Mr. M'Hasterisk, is seen by the gents in the gallery. They are too far away from it, sir; those vulgar people, sucking their horanges and paying their shilling. I should consider myself unworthy my hart, if I could not bear a little privation of cold or 'eat for its sake. And besides, sir, whatever their hardships may be, such a sight hamply repays me; for, although my private sorrows may be (has they are) tremendous, I never can look abroad upon the green hearth and hawful sea, without in a measure forgetting my personal woes and wrongs; for what right has a poor creature like me to think of his affairs in the presence of such a spectacle as this? I can't, sir; I feel ashamed of myself; I bow my head and am quiet. When I set myself to examining hart, sir (by which I mean nature), I don't dare to think of any thing else."

"You worship a very charming and consoling mistress," answered Mr. Brandon, with a supercilious air, lighting and beginning to smoke a cigar; "your enthusiasm does you credit."

"If you have another," said Andrea Fitch, "I should like to smoke one, for you seem to have a real feeling about hart, and I was a−getting so deucedly cold here that really there was scarcely any bearing of it."

"The cold is very severe," replied Mr. Brandon.

"No, no, it's not the weather, sir!" said Mr. Fitch; "it's here, sir, here" (pointing to the left side of his waistcoat).

"What you, too, have had sorrows?"

"Sorrows, sir! hagonies—hagonies, which I have never unfolded to any mortal! I have endured halmost heavery thing. Poverty, sir, 'unger, hobloquy, 'opeless love!—but for my hart, sir, I should be the most miserable wretch in the world!"

And herewith Mr. Fitch began to pour forth into Mr. Brandon's ears the history of some of those sorrows under which he laboured, and which he communcated to every single person who would listen to him.

Mr. Brandon was greatly amused by Fitch's prattle, and the latter told him under what privations he had studied his art; how he had starved for three years in Paris and Rome, while labouring at his profession; how meanly jealous the Royal Academy was, which would never exhibit a single one of his pictures; how he had been driven from the Heternal City by the attentions of an immense fat Mrs. Carrickfergus, who absolutely proposed marriage to him; and how he was at this moment (a fact of which Mr. Brandon was already quite aware) madly

and desperately in love with one of the most beautiful maidens in this world. For Fitch, having a mistress to his heart's desire, was boiling with impatience to have a confidant; what, indeed, would be the joy of love, if one were not allowed to speak of one's feelings to a friend who could know how to sympathise with them? Fitch was sure Brandon did, because Brandon was the very first person with whom the painter had talked since he had come to the resolution recorded in the last chapter.

"I hope she is as rich as that unlucky Mrs. Carrickfergus, whom you treated so cruelly?" said the confidant, affecting entire ignorance.

"Rich, sir! no, I thank Heaven, she has not a penny!" said Fitch.

"I presume, then, you are yourself independent," said Brandon, smiling; "for, in the marriage state, one or the other of the parties concerned should bring a portion of the filthy lucre?"

"Haven't I my profession, sir?" said Fitch, majestically, having declared five minutes before that he starved in his profession. "Do you suppose a painter gets nothing? Haven't I horders from the first people in Europe?—commissions, sir, to hexecute history−pieces, battle−pieces, halter−pieces?"

"Master−pieces, I am sure," said Brandon, bowing politely; "for a gentleman of your astonishing genius can do no other."

The delighted artist received this compliment with many blushes, and vowed and protested that his performances were not really worthy of such high praise; but he fancied Mr. Brandon a great connoisseur, nevertheless, and unburdened his mind to him in a manner still more open. Fitch's sketch was by this time finished; and, putting his drawing implements together, he rose, and the gentlemen walked away. The sketch was hugely admired by Mr. Brandon, and when they came home, Fitch, culling it dexterously out of his book, presented it in a neat speech to his friend, "the gifted hamateur."

"The gifted hamateur" received the drawing with a profusion of thanks, and so much did he value it, that he had actually torn off a piece to light a cigar with, when he saw that words were written on the other side of the paper, and deciphered the following:—

"SONG OF THE VIOLET.

A humble flower long time I pined,
  Upon the solitary plain,
And trembled at the angry wind,
  And shrunk before the bitter rain.
And, oh! how in a blessed hour,
  A passing wanderer chanced to see;
And, pitying the lonely flower,
  To stoop and gather me. I fear no more the tempest rude,
  Or dreary heath no more I pine;
But left my cheerless solitude,
  To deck the breast of Caroline.
Alas! our days are brief at best,
  Nor loug I feel will mine endure,
Though shelter'd here upon a breast
  So gentle and so pure. It draws the fragrance from my leaves,
  It robs me of my sweetest breath;
And every time it falls and heaves,
  It warns me of my coming death.
But one I know would glad forego
  All joys of life to be as I;
An hour to rest on that sweet breast,
  And then, contented die.

"Andrea."

When Mr. Brandon had finished the perusal of these verses, he laid them down with an air of considerable vexation. "Egad!" said he, "this fellow, fool as he is, is not so great a fool as he seems; and if he goes on in this way, may finish by turning the girl's head. They can't resist a man if he but presses hard enough—I know they can't!" And here Mr. Brandon mused over his various experience, which confirmed his observation, that be a man ever so silly, a gentlewoman will yield to him out of sheer weariness. And he thought of several cases in which, by the persevering application of copies of verses, young ladies had been brought, from dislike to sufferance of a man, from sufferance to partiality, and from partiality to St. George's, Hanover Square. "A ruffian who murders his h's to carry off such a delicate little creature as that!" cried he in a transport: "it shall never be if I can prevent it!" He thought Caroline more and more beautiful every instant, and was himself by this time almost as much in love with her as Fitch himself.

Mr. Brandon, then, saw Fitch depart in Swigby's carriage with no ordinary feelings of pleasure. Miss Caroline was not with them. "Now is my time!" though Brandon; and, ringing the bell, he inquired with some anxiety, from Becky, where Miss Caroline was? It must be confessed that mistress and maid were at their usual occupation, working and reading novels in the back−parlour. Poor Carry! what other pleasure had she?

She had not gone through many pages, or Becky advanced many stitches in the darning of that table−cloth which the good housewife, Mrs. Gann, had confided to her charge, when an humble knock was heard at the door of the sitting−room, that caused the blushing Caroline to tremble and drop her book, as Miss Lydia Languish does in the play.

Mr. George Brandon entered with a very demure air. He held in his hand a black satin neck−scarf, of which a part had come to be broken. He could not wear it in its present condition, that was evident; but Miss Caroline was blushing and trembling a great deal too much to suspect that this wicked Brandon had himself torn his own scarf with his own hands one moment before he entered the room. I don't know whether Becky had any suspicions of this fact, or whether it was only the ordinary roguish look which she had when any thing pleased her, that now lighted up her eyes and caused her mouth to expand smilingly, and her fat, red cheeks to gather up into wrinkles.

"I have had a sad misfortune," said he, "and should be very much obliged indeed to Miss Caroline to repair it."

(Caroline was said with a kind of tender hesitation that caused the young woman, so named, to blush more than ever.) "It is the only stock I have in the world, and I can't go bare−necked into the streets; can I, Mrs. Becky?"

"No sure," said Becky.

"Not unless I was a celebrated painter, like Mr. Fitch," added Mr. Brandon, with a smile, which was reflected speedily upon the face of the lady whom he wished to interest. "Those great geniuses," he added, "may do any thing."

"For," says Becky, "hee's got enough beard on hees faze to keep hees neck warm!" At which remark, though Miss Caroline very properly said, "For shame, Becky!" Mr. Brandon was so convulsed with laughter, that he fairly fell down upon the sofa on which Miss Caroline was seated. How she startled and trembled, as he flung his arm upon the back of the couch! Mr. Brandon did not attempt to apologise for what was an act of considerable impertinence, but continued mercilessly to make many more jokes concerning poor Fitch, which were cleverly suited to the comprehension of the maid and the young mistress, as to elicit a great number of roars of laughter from the one, and to cause the other to smile in spite of herself. Indeed Brandon had gained a vast reputation for wit with Becky in his morning colloquies with her, and she was ready to laugh at any single word which it pleased him to utter. How many of his good things had this honest scullion carried down stairs to Caroline, and how pitilessly had she contrived to estropier them in their passage from the drawing−room to the kitchen.

Well, then, while Mr. Brandon "was a−going on," as Becky said, Caroline had taken his stock, and her little fingers were occupied in repairing the damage he had done to it. Was it clumsiness on her part? Certain it is that the rent took several minutes to repair: of them the mangeur des caurs did not fail to profit, conversing in an easy, kindly, confidential way, which set our fluttering heroine speedily at rest, and enabled her to reply to his continual queries, addressed with much adroitness and an air of fraternal interest, by a number of those pretty, little, timid, whispering, yeses and noes, and those gentle quick looks of the eyes, where−with young and modest maidens are wont to reply to the questions of seducing young bachelors. Dear yeses and noes, how beautiful you are when gently whispered by pretty lips!— glances of quick innocent eyes, how charming are you!—and how charming the soft blush that steals over the cheek, towards which the dark lashes are drawing the full blue−veined eyelids down. And here let the writer of this solemnly declare, upon his veracity, that he means nothing but what is right and moral. But look, I pray you, at an innocent, bashful girl, of sixteen; if she be but good, she must be pretty. She is a woman now, but a girl still. How delightful all her ways are! How exquisite her instinctive grace! All the arts of all the Cleopatras are not so captivating as her nature. Who can resist her confiding simplicity, or fail to be touched and conquered by her gentle appeal to protection?

All this Mr. Brandon saw and felt, as many a gentleman educated in his school will. It is not because a man is a rascal himself that he cannot appreciate virtue and purity very keenly; and our hero did feel for this simple, gentle, tender, artless creature, a real respect and sympathy—a sympathy so fresh and delicious, that he was but too glad to yield to it and indulge in it, and which he mistook, probably, for a real love of virtue, and a return to the days of his innocence.

Indeed, Mr. Brandon, it was no such thing. It was only because vice and debauch were stale for the moment, and this pretty virtue new. It was only because your cloyed appetite was long unused to this simple meat that you felt so keen a relish for it; and I thought of you only the last blessed Saturday, at Mr. Lovegrove's, West India Tavern, Blackwall, where a company of fifteen epicures, who had scorned the turtle, poohpoohed the punch, and sent away the whitebait, did suddenly and simultaneously make a rush upon—a dish of beans and bacon. And if the assiduous reader of novels will think upon some of the most celebrated works of that species, which have lately appeared in this and other countries, he will find, amidst much debauch of sentiment, and enervating dissipation of intellect, that the writers have from time to time a returning appetite for innocence and freshness, and indulge us with occasional repasts of beans and bacon. How long Mr. Brandon remained by Miss Caroline's side I have no means of judging; it is probable, however, that he stayed a much longer time than was necessary for the mending of his black satin stock. I believe, indeed, that he read to the ladies a great part of the Mysteries of Udolpho, over which they were engaged; and interspersed his reading with many remarks of his own, both tender and satirical. Whether he was in her company half−an−hour or four hours, this is certain, that the time slipped away very swiftly with poor Caroline; and when a carriage drove up to the door, and shrill voices were heard crying "Becky!" "Carry!" and Rebecca, the maid, starting up, cried, "Lor', here's missus!" and Brandon jumped rather suddenly off the sofa, and fled up the stairs—when all these events took place, I know Caroline felt very

sad indeed, and opened the door for her parents with a very heavy heart.

Swigby helped Miss Linda off the box with excessive tenderness. Papa was bustling and roaring in high goodhumour, and called for "hot water and tumblers immediately." Mrs. Gann was gracious; and Miss Bell sulky, as she had good reason to be, for she insisted upon taking the front seat in the carriage before her sister, and had lost a husband by that very piece of obstinancy.

Mr. Fitch, as he entered, bestowed upon Carloline a heavy sigh and a deep stare, and silently ascended to his own apartment. He was lost in thought. The fact is, he was trying to remember some verses regarding a violet, which he had made five years before, and which he had somehow lost from among his papers. So he went up stairs, muttering, "A humble flower long since I pined
Upon a solitary plain—"

Chapter VI.
Describes a shabby−genteel Marriage, and more Love−making.

It will not be necessary to describe the particulars of the festivities which took place on the occasion of Mr. Swighy's marriage to Miss Macarty. The happy pair went off in a postchaise and four to the bridegroom's country−seat, accompanied by the bride's blushing sister: and when the first week of their matrimonial bliss was ended, that worthy woman, Mrs. Gann, with her excellent husband, went to visit the young couple. Miss Caroline was left, therefore, sole mistress of the house, and received especial cautions from her mamma as to prudence, economy, the proper management of the lodgers' bills, and the necessity of staying at home.

Considering that one of the gentlemen remaining in the house was a declared lover of Miss Caroline, I think it is a little surprising that her mother should leave her unprotected; but in this matter the poor are not so particular as the rich; and so this young lady was consigned to the guardianship of her own innocence, and the lodgers' loyalty: nor was there any reason why Mrs. Gann should doubt the latter. As for Mr. Fitch, he would have far preferred to be torn to pieces by ten thousand wild horses, rather than to offer to the young woman any unkindness or insult; and how was Mrs. Gann to suppose that her other lodger was a whit less loyal? that he had any partiality for a person of whom he always spoke of as a mean, insignificant, little baby? So, without any misgiving, and in a onehorse fly with Mr. Gann by her side, with a bran new green coat and gilt buttons, Juliana Gann went forth to visit her beloved child, and console her in her married state.

And here, were I allowed to occupy the reader with extraneous matters, I could give a very curious and touching picture of the Swigby ménage. Mrs. S., I am sorry to say, quarrelled with her husband on the third day after their marriage,—and for what, pr'ythee? Why, because, he would smoke, and no gentleman ought to smoke. Swigby, therefore, patiently resigned his pipe, and with it one of the quietest, happiest, kindest companions of his solitude. He was a different man after this; his pipe was as a limb of his body. Having on Tuesday conquered the pipe, Mrs. Swigby, on Thurday, did battle with her husband's rum−and−water,—a drink of an odious smell, as she very properly observed; and the smell was doubly odious, now that the tobacco smoke no longer perfumed the parlourbreeze, and counteracted the odours of the juice of West India sugar−canes. On Thursday, then, Mr. Swigby and rum held out pretty bravely. Mrs. S. attacked the punch with some sharpshooting, and fierce charges of vulgarity; to which S. replied, by opening a battery of oaths (chiefly directed to his own eyes, however), and loud protestations that he would never surrender. In three days more, however, the rum−and−water was gone. Mr. Swigby, defeated and prostrate, had given up that stronghold; his young wife and sister were triumphant; and his poor mother, who occupied her son's house, and had till now taken her place at the head of his table, saw that her empire was for ever lost, and was preparing suddenly to succumb to the imperious claims of the new mistress of the mansion.

All this, I say, I wish I had the liberty to describe at large, as also to narrate the arrival of majestic Mrs. Gann; and a battle−royal which speedily took place between the two worthy mothers−in−law. Noble is the hatred of ladies who stand in this relation to each other; each sees what injury the other is inflicting upon her darling child; each mistrusts, detests, and to her offspring privily abuses the arts and crimes of the other. A house with a wife is often warm enough; a house with her wife and mother is rather warmer than any spot on the known globe; a house with two mother−in−law is so excessively hot, that it can be likened to no place on earth at all, but one must go lower for a simile. Think of a wife who despises her husband, and teaches him manners; of an elegant sister, who joins in rallying him, (this was almost the only point of union between Bella and Linda now,—for since the marriage, Linda hated her sister consumedly.) Think, I say, of two mothers−in−law,—one, large, pompous, and atrociously genteel,—another, coarse and shrill, determined not to have her son put upon,—and you may see what a happy fellow Joe Swigby was, and into what a piece of good luck he had fallen.

What would have become of him without his father−in−law? Indeed one shudders to think; but the consequence of that gentleman's arrival and intervention was speedily this:—About four o'clock, when the dinner was removed, and the quarrelling used commonly to set in, the two gents (we love to call them by that delightful title)— the two gents took their hats, and sallied out; and as one has found when the body is inflamed that the application of a stringent medicine may cause the ill to disappear for a while, only to return elsewhere with

greater force; in like manner, Mrs. Swigby's sudden victory over the pipe and rum−and−water, although it had caused a temporary cessation of the evil of which she complained, was quite unable to stop it altogether; it disappeared from one spot only to rage with more violence elsewhere. In Swigby's parlour, rum and tobaco odours arose no more (except, indeed, when Mrs. Gann would partake of the former as a restorative); but if you could have seen the Half−Moon and Snuffers down the village; if you could have seen the good dry skittle−ground which stretched, at the back of that inn, and the window of the back parlour which superintended that skittle−ground; if the hour at which you beheld these objects was evening, what time the rustics from their toils released, trolled the stout ball amidst the rattling pins (the oaken pins that standing in the sun did cast long shadows on the golden sward); if you had remarked all this, I say, you would have also seen in the back parlour a tallow candle (winking in the shade, and standing on a little greasy table. Upon the greasy table was a pewter porter−pot, and to the left a teaspoon glittering in a glass of gin; close to each of these two delicacies was a pipe of tobacco; and behind the pipes sat Mr. Gann and Mr. Swighy, who now made the Half−Moon and Snuffers their usual place of resort, and forgot their married cares.

In spite of all our promises of brevity, these things have taken some space to describe; and the reader must also know that some short interval elapsed ere they occurred. A month at least passed away before Mr. Swigby had decidedly taken up his position at the little inn: all this time, Gann was staying with his son−in−law, at the latter's most earnest request; and Mrs. Gann remained under the same roof at her own desire. Not the hints of her daughter, not the broad questions of the dowager Mrs. Swigby, could induce honest Mrs. Gann to stir from her quarters. She had had her lodger's money in advance, as was the worthy woman's custom; she knew Margate in April was dreadful dull, and she determined to enjoy the country until the jovial town season arrived. The Canterbury coachman, whom Gann knew, and who passed through the village, used to take her cargo of novels to and fro; and the old lady made herself as happy as circumstances would allow. Should any thing of importance occur during her mamma's absence, Caroline was to make use of the same conveyance, and inform Mrs. Gann in a letter.

Miss Caroline looked at her papa and mamma as the vehicle which was to bear them to the newly married couple moved up the street; but, strange to say, she did not feel that heaviness of heart which she before had experienced when forbidden to share the festivities of her family, but was on this occasion more happy than any one of them,—so happy, that the young woman felt quite ashamed herself; and Becky was fain to remark how her mistress's cheek flushed, and her eye sparkled (and turned perpetually to the door), and her whole little frame was in a flutter.

"I wonder if he will come," said the little heart; and the eyes turned and looked at that well−known sofa−corner, where he had been placed a fortnight before. He looked exactly like Lord Byron, that he did, with his pale brow, and his slim bare neck; only not half so wicked—no, no. She was sure that her—her Mr. Br—her Bran— her George, was as good as he was beautiful. Don't let us be angry with her for calling him George; the girl was bred in an humble sentimental school; she did not know enough of society to be squeamish; she never thought that she could be his really, and gave way in the silence of her fancy to the full extent of her affection for him.

She had not looked at the door above twenty−five times—that is to say, her parents had not quitted the house ten minutes—when, sure enough, the latch did rattle, the door opened, and with a faint blush on his cheek divine George entered. He was going to make some excuse, as on the former occasion; but he looked first into Caroline's face, which was beaming with joy and smiles; and the little thing, in return, regarded him, and—made room for him on the sofa. O, sweet instinct of love! Brandon had no need of excuses, but sat down, and talked away as easily, happily, and confidentially, and neither took any note of time. Andrea Fitch (the sly dog!) witnessed the Gann departure with feelings of exulation, and had laid some deep plans of his own with regard to Miss Caroline. So strong was his confidence in his friend on the first floor, that Andrea actually descended to those apartments, on his way to Mrs. Gann's parlour, in order to consult Mr. Brandon, and make known to him his plan of operations.

It would have made your heart break, or, at the very least, your sides ache, to behold the countenance of poor Mr. Fitch, as he thrust his bearded head in at the door of the parlour. There was Brandon lolling on the sofa, at his ease; Becky in full good humour; and Caroline, always absurdly inclined to blush, blushing at Fitch's appearance more than ever! She could not help looking from him slyly and gently into the face of Mr. Brandon. That

gentleman saw the look, and did not fail to interpret it. It was a confession of love—an appeal for protection. A thrill of delightful vanity shot through Brandon's frame, and made his heart throb, as he noticed this look of poor Caroline. He answered it with one of his own that was cruelly wrong, cruelly triumphant, and sarcastic; and he shouted out to Mr. Fitch, with a loud, disconcerted tone, which only made that young painter feel more awkward than ever he had been. Fitch made some clumsy speech regarding his dinner,—whether that meal was to be held, in the absence of the parents, at the usual hour, and then took his leave.

The poor fellow had been pleasing himself with the notion of taking this daily meal tête−à−tête with Caroline. What progress would he make in her heart during the absence of her parents! Did it not seem as if the first marriage had been arranged on purpose to facilitate his own? He determined thus his plan of campaign. He would make, in the first place, the most beautiful drawing of Caroline that ever was seen. "The conversations I'll 'ave with her during the sittings," says he, "will carry me a pretty long way; the drawing itself will be so beautiful, that she can't resist that. I'll write her verses in her halbum, and make designs hallusive of my passion for her." And so our pictorial Alnaschar dreamed and dreamed. He had, ere long, establised himself in a house in Newman Street, with a footman to open the door. Caroline was up−stairs, his wife, and her picture the crack portrait of the Exhibition. With her by his side, Andrea Fitch felt he could do any thing. Half−a−dozen carriages at his door,—a hundred guineas for a kit−cat portrait. Lady Fitch, Sir Andrew Fitch, the President's chain,—all sorts of bright visions floated before his imagination; and as Caroline was the first precious condition of his preferment, he determined forthwith to begin, and realise that.

But, Oh, disappointment! on coming down to dinner at three o'clock to that charming tête−à−tête, he found no less than four covers laid on the table, Miss Caroline blushing (according to custom) at the head of it; Becky, the maid, grinning at the foot; and Mr. Brandon sitting quietly on one side, as much at home, forsooth, as if he had held that position for a year.

The fact is, that the moment after Fitch retired, Brandon, inspired by jealousy, had made the same request which had been brough forward by the painter; nor must the ladies be too angry with Caroline, if, after some scruples and struggles, she yielded to the proposal. Remember that the girl was the daughter of a boardinghouse, accustomed to continual dealings with her mamma's lodgers, and up to the present moment thinking herself as safe among them as the young person who walked through Ireland with a bright gold wand, in the scene of Mr. Thomas Moore. On the point, however, of Bradon's admission, it must be confessed, for Caroline's honour, that she did hesitate. She felt that she entertained very different feelings towards him to those with which any other lodger or man had inspired her, and made a little movement of resistance at first. But the poor girl's modesty overcame this, as well as her wish. Ought she to avoid him? Ought she not to stifle any preference which she might feel towards him, and act towards him with the same indifference which she would shew to any other person in a like situation? Was not Mr. Fitch to dine at table as usual, and had she refused him? So reasoned she in her heart. Silly, little, cunning heart it knew that all these reasons were lies, and that she should avoid the man; but she was willing to accept of any pretext for meeting, and so made a kind of compromise with her conscience. Dine he should; but Becky should dine too, and be a protector to her. Becky laughed loudly at the idea of this, and took her place with huge delight.

It is needless to say a word about this dinner, as we have already described a former meal; suffice it to say, that the presence of Brandon caused the painter to be excessively sulky and uncomfortable; and so gave his rival, who was gay, triumphant, and at his ease, a decided advantage over him. Nor did Brandon neglect to use this to the utmost. When Fitch retired to his own apartments—not jealous as yet, for the simple fellow believed every word of Brandon's morning conversation with him—but vaguely annoyed and disappointed. Brandon assailed him with all the force of ridicule; at all his manners, words, looks, he joked mercilessly; laughed at his low birth (Miss Gann, he it remembered, had been taught to pique herself upon her own family), and invented a series of stories concerning his past life which made the ladies—for Becky, being in the parlour, must be considered as such—conceive the greatest contempt and pity for the poor painter.

After this, Mr. Brandon would expatiate with much eloquence upon his own superior attractions and qualities. He talked of his cousin, Lord So−and−so with the easiest air imaginable; told Caroline what princesses he had danced with at foreign courts; frighdanced with at foreign courts; frightened her with accounts of dreadful dules he had fought; in a ward, "posed" before her as hero of the most sublime kind. How the poor little thing drank in all his tales; and how she and Becky (for they now occupied the same bedroom) talked over them at night!

Miss Caroline, as Mr. Fitch has already stated, had in her possession, like almost every young lady in England, a little square book called an album, containing prints from annuals; hideous designs of flowers; old pictures of faded fashions, cut out and pasted into the leaves; and small scraps of verses selected from Byron, Landon, or Mrs. Hemans; and written out in the girlish hand of the owner of the book. Brandon looked over this work with a good deal of curiosity—for the contended, always, that a girl's disposition, always, that a girl's disposition might be learned from the character of this museum of hers—and found here several sketches by Mr. Fitch, for which, before that gentleman had declared his passion for her, Caroline had begged. These sketches the sentimental painter had illustrated with poetry, which, I must confess, Caroline thought charming, until now, when Mr. Brandon took occasion to point out how wretchedly poor the verses were (as indeed was the fact), and to parody them all. He was not unskilful at this kind of exercise, and at the drawing of caricatures, and had soon made a dozen of both parodies and drawings, which reflected cruelly upon the person and the talents of the painter.

What now did this wicked Mr. Brandon do? He, in the first place, drew a caricature of Fitch; and, secondly, having gone to a gardener's near the town, and purchased there a bunch of violets, he presented them to Miss Caroline, and wrote Mr. Fitch's own verses before given into her album. He signed them with his own initials, and thus declared open war with the painter.

Chap. VII.
Which brings a great number of people to Margate by the Steamboat.

The events which this history records began in the month of February. Time had now passed, and April had arrived, and with it that festive season so loved by schoolboys, and called the Easter holydays. Not only schoolboys, but men, profit by this period of leisure,— such men, especially, as have just come into enjoyment of their own cups and saucers, and are in daily expectation of their whiskers—college men, I mean,—who are persons more anxious than any others to designate themselves and each other by the manly title.

Among other men, then, my Lord Viscount Cinqbars, of Christ Church, Oxon, received a sum of money to pay his quarter's bill; and having written to his papa that he was busily engaged in reading for the little−go, and must, therefore, decline the delight he had promised himself of passing the vacation at Cinqbars Hall,—and having, the day after his letter was despatched, driven to town tandem with young Tom Tufthunt, of the same university, —and having exhausted the pleasures of the metropolis—the theatres, the Cider−cellars, the Finish, the station−houses, and other places which need by no means be here particularised,— Lord Cinqbars, I say, growing tired of London at the end of ten days, quitted the metropolis somewhat suddenly: nor did he pay his hotel bills at Long's before his departure; but he left that document in possession of the landlord, as a token of his (my Lord Cinqbars') confidence in his host.

Tom Tufthunt went with my lord, of course (although of an aristocratic turn in politics, Tom loved and respected a lord as much as any democrat in England). And whither do you think this worthy pair of young gentlemen were bound? To no less a place than Margate; for Cinqbars was filled with a longing to go and see his old friend Brandon, and determined, to use his own elegant words, "to knock the old buck up."

There was no adventure of consquence on board the steamer which brought Lord Cinqbars and his friend from London to Margate, and very few passengers besides. A wandering Jew or two were set down at Gravesend; the Rev. Mr. Wackerbart, and six unhappy little pupils whom the reverend gentleman had pounced upon in London, and was carrying back to his academy near Herne Bay; some of those inevitable persons of dubious rank who seem to have free tickets, and always eat and drink hugely with the captain; and a lady and her party, formed the whole list of passengers.

The lady—a very fat lady—had evidently just returned from abroad. Her great green travelling chariot was on the deck, and on all her imperials were pasted fresh large bills, with the words Ince's British Hotel, Boulogne−sur−mer; for it is the custom of that worthy gentleman to seize upon and plaster all the luggage of his guests with tickets, on which his name and residence are inscribed,—by which simple means he keeps himself perpetually in their recollection, and brings himself to the notice of all other persons who are in the habit of peering at their fellow−passengers' trunks, to find out their names. I need not say what a large class this is.

Well; this fat lady had a courier, a tall whiskered man, who spoke all languages, looked like a field−marshal, went by the name of Donnerwetter, and rode on the box; a French maid, Mademoiselle Augustine; and a little black page, called Saladin, who rode in the rumble. Saladin's whole business was to attend a wheesy, fat, white poodle, who usually travelled inside with his mistress, and her fair compagnon de voyage, whose name was Miss Runt. She was evidently a person of distinction. This fat lady, during the first part of the voyage, on a windy, sunshiny April−day, paced the deck stoutly, leaning on the arm of poor little Miss Runt; and after they had passed Gravesend, when the vessel began to pitch a good deal, retired to her citadel, the travelling chariot, to and from which the steward, the stewardess, and the whiskered courier were continually running with supplies, of sandwiches first, and afterwards of very hot brandy−and−water: for the truth must be told, it was rather a rough afternoon, and the poodle was sick; Saladin was as bad; the French maid, like all French maids, was outrageously ill; the lady herself was very unwell indeed; and poor, dear, sympathising Runt was qualmish.

"Ah, Runt!" would the fat lady say in the intervals, "what a thing this malady de mare is! O mongjew! O— O!"

"It is, indeed, dear madam," said Runt, and went O—O—in chorus.

"Ask the steward if we are near Margate, Runt." And Runt did, and asked this question every five minutes, as people do on these occasions.

"Issy Monsieur Donnerwetter: ally dimandy ung pew d'o sho poor mwaw."

"Et del'eau de fie afec, n'est−ce−bas," Matame?" said Mr. Donnerwetter.

"Wee, wee, comme vous vouly."

And Donnerwetter knew very well what "comme vous vouly" meant, and brought the liquor exactly in the wished for state.

"Ah, Runt, Runt! there's something even worse than sea−sickness. Heigh−ho!"

"Dear, dear Marianne, don't flutter yourself," cries Runt, squeezing a fat paw of her friend and patroness between her own bony fingers. "Don't agitate your nerves, dear. I know you're miserable; but haven't you got a friend in your faithful Runty?"

"You're a good creater, that you are," said the fat lady, who seemed herself to be a good−humoured old soul; "and I don't know what I should have done without you. Heigh−ho!"

"Cheer up, dear! you'll be happier when you get to Margate: you know you will," cried Runt, very knowingly.

"What do you mean, Elizabeth?"

"You know very well, dear Marianne I mean that there's some one there will make you happy; though he's a nasty wretch, that he is, to have treated my darling, beautiful Marianne so."

"Runt, Runt, don't abuse that best of men. Don't call me beautiful— I'm not, Runt; I have been, but I aint now: and, oh! no woman in the world is assy bong poor lui,"

"But an angel is; and you are, as you always was, an angel,—as good as an angel, as kind as an angel, as beautiful as one."

"Ally dong," said her companion, giving her a push; "you flatter me, Runt, you know you do."

"May I be struck down dead if I don't say the truth; and if he refuses you, as he did at Rome,—that is if, after all his attentions and vows, he's faithless to you, I say he's a wretch, that he is; and I will say he's a wretch, and he is a wretch—a nasty, wicked wretch!"

"Elizabeth, if you say that you'll break my heart, you will! Vous cassere mong pover cure." But Elizabeth swore, on the contrary, that she would die for her Marianne, which consoled the fat lady a little.

A great deal more of this kind of conversation took place during the voyage; but as it occurred inside a carriage, so that to hear it was very difficult, and as possibly it was not of that edifying nature which would induce the reader to relish many chapters of it, we shall give no further account of the ladies' talk: suffice it to say, that about half−past four o'clock the journey ended, by the vessel bringing up at Margate Pier. The passengers poured forth, and hied to their respective homes, or inns. My Lord Cinqbars and his companion (of whom we have said nothing, as they on their sides had scarcely spoken a word the whole way, except "deuce−ace," "quater−tray," "sizes," and so on,— being occupied ceaselessly in drinking bottled stout, and playing backgamon) order their luggage to be conveyed to Wright's Hotel, whither the fat lady and suite followed them. The house was vacant, and the best rooms in it were placed, of course, at the service of the new comers. The fat lady sailed out of her bed−room towards her saloon, just as Lord Cinqbars, eigar in mouth, was swaggering out of his parlour. They met in the passage; when, to the young lord's surprise, the fat lady dropped him a low courtesy, and said,

"Munseer le Veconte de Cinqbars, sharmy de vous voir. Vous−vous rappelaz de mwaw, n'est−ice pas? Je vous ai vew à Rome—shay I'ambassadure vous savy."

Lord Cinqbars stared her in the face, and pushed by her without a word, leaving the fat lady rather disconcerted.

"Well, Runt, I'm sure," said she, "he need not be so proud; I've met him twenty times at Rome, when he was a young chap with his tutor."

"Who the devil can that fat foreigner be?" mused Lord Cinqbars. "Hang her, I've seen her somewhere; but I'm curst if I understand a word of her jabber." And so, dismissing the subject, he walked on to Brandon's.

"Dang it, it's a strange thing!" said the landlord of the hotel; "but both my lord and the fat woman in number nine have asked their way to Mother Gann's lodging,—for so did he dare to call that respectable woman!"

It was true: as soon as number nine had eaten her dinner, she asked the question mentioned by the landlord; and, as this meal occupied a considerable time, the shades of evening had by this time fallen upon the quiet city; the silver moon lighted up the bay, and, supported by a numerous and well−appointed train of gas lamps, illuminated the streets of a town,—of autumn eves so crowded and so gay; of gusty April nights, so desolate. At this still hour (it might be half−past seven), two ladies passed the gates of Wright's Hotel, "in shrouding mantle wrapped, and velvet cap." Up the deserted High Street toiled they, by gaping rows of empty bathing−houses, by

melancholy Jolley's French bazar, by mouldy pastry−cooks, blank reading rooms, by fishmongers who never sold a fish, mercers who vended not a yard of riband—because, as yet, the season was not come,—and Jews and Cockneys still remained in town. At High Street's corner, near to Hawly Square, they passed the house of Mr. Fincham, chemist, who doth not only healthful drugs supply, but likewise sells cigars —the worst cigars that ever mortal man gave threepence for.

Up to this point, I say, I have had a right to accompany the fat lady and Miss Runt; but whether, on arriving at Mr. Fincham's, they turned to the left, in the direction of the Royal Hotal, or to the right, by the beach, the bathing machines, and queer, ricketty old row of houses, called Buenos Ayres, no power on earth shall induce me to say; suffice it, they went to Mrs. Gann's. Why should we set all the world gadding to a particular street, to know where that lady lives? They arrived before that lady's house at about eight o'clock. Every house in the street had bills on it, except hers (bitter mockery, as if any body came down at Easter)! and at Mrs. Gann's house there was a light in the garret, and another in the two−pair front. I believe I have not mentioned before, that all the front windows were bow or bay windows; but so much the reader may know.

The two ladies, who had walked so far, examined wistfully the plate on the door, stood on the steps for a short time, retreated, and conversed with one another.

"Oh, Runty!" said the stouter of the two, "he's here—I know he's here, mong cure le dee—my heart tells me so." And she put a large hand upon a place on her left side, where there once had been a waist.

"Do you think he looks front or back, dear?" asked Runt. "P'raps he's not at home."

"That—that's his croisy," said the stout person: "I know it is;" and she pointed with instinctive justice to the two−pair. "Ecouty!" she added, "he's coming; there's some one at that window. O mong jew, mong jew! c'est André, c'est lui!"

The moon was shining full on the face of the bow−windows of Mrs. Gann;s house; and the two fair spies, who were watching on the other side, were, in consequence, completely in shadow. As the lady said, a dark form was seen in the two−pair front; it paced the room for a while, for no blinds were drawn. It then flung itself on a chair; its head in its hand; it then began to beat its brows wildly, and paced the room again. Ah! how the fat lady's heart throbbed as she looked at all this!

She gave a piercing shriek—almost fainted; and little Runt's knees trembled under her, as with all her might she supported, or rather pushed up, the falling figure of her stout patroness, —who saw at that instant Fitch come to the candle with an immense pistol in his hand, and give a most horrible grin as he looked at it, and clasped it to his breast.

"Unhand me, Runt; he's going to kill himself! It's for me! I know it is —I will go to him! Andrea, my Andrea!" And the fat lady was pushing for the opposite side of the way, when suddenly the second−floor window went clattering up, and Fitch's pale head was thrust out.

He had heard a scream, and had possibly been induced to open the window in consequence; but by the time he had opened it he had forgotten every thing, and put his head vacantly out of the window, and gazed, the moon shining cold on his pale features.

"Pallid horb!" said Fitch, "shall I ever see thy light again? Will another night see me on this hearth, or view me, stark and cold, a lifeless corpse?" He took his pistol up, and slowly aimed it at a chimney−pot opposite. Fancy the fat lady's sensations, as she beheld her lover standing in the moonlight, and exercising this deadly weapon.

"Make ready—present—fire!" shouted Fitch, and did instantaneously, not fire off, but lower his weapon. "The bolt of death is sped!" continued he, clapping his hand on his side. "The poor painter's life is over! Caroline, Caroline, I die for thee!"

"Runt, Runt, I told you so!" shrieked the fat lady. "He is dying for me, and Caroline's my second name."

What the fat lady would have done more, I can't say; for Fitch, disturbed out of his revery by her talking below, looked out, frowning vacantly, and saying, "Ulloh! we've hinterlopers 'ere!" suddenly banged down the window, and pulled down the blinds.

This gave a check to the fat lady's projected rush, and disconcerted her a little. But she was consoled by Miss Runt, promised to return on the morrow, and went home happy in the idea that her Andrea was faithful to her.

Alas, poor fat lady! little did you know the truth. It was Caroline Gann Fitch was raving about; and it was a part of his last letter to her, to be delivered after his death, that he was spouting out of the window.

Was the crazy painter going to fight a duel, or was he going to kill himself? This will be explained in the next

chapter.

Chap. VIII.

Which treats of war and love, and many things that are not to be understood in Chap. VII.

Fitch's verses, inserted in the August number of this Magazine (and of which lines, by the way, the printer managed to make still greater nonsense than the ingenious bard ever designed), had been composed many years before; and it was with no small trouble and thought that the young painter called the greater part of them to memory again, and furbished up a copy for Caroline's album. Unlike the love of most men, Andrea's passion was not characterised by jealousy and watchfulness, otherwise he would not have failed to perceive certain tokens of intelligence passing from time to time between Caroline and Brandon, and the lady's evident coldness to himself. The fact is, the painter was in love with being in love,—entirely absorbed in the consideration of the fact that he, Andrea Fitch, was at last enamoured; and he did not mind his mistress much more than Don Quixote did Dulcinea del Toboso.

Having rubbed up his verses, then, and designed a pretty emblematical outline which was to surround them, representing an arabesque of violets, dewdrops, fairies, and other objects, he came down one morning, drawing in hand; and having informed Caroline, who was sitting very melancholy in the parlour, preoccupied, with a pale face and red eyes, and not earing twopence for the finest drawing in the world,—having informed her that he was going to make in her halbum a humble hoffering of his hart, poor Fitch was just on the point of sticking in the drawing with gum, as painters know very well how to do, when his eye lighted upon a page of the album, in which nestled a few dried violets and—his own verses, signed with the name of George Brandon.

"Miss Caroline—Miss Gann, mam!" shrieked Fitch, in a tone of voice which made the young lady start out of a profound revery, and cry, nervously,— "What, in Heaven, is the matter?"

"These verses, madam—a faded violet—word for word, gracious Eavens! every word!" roared Fitch, advancing with the book.

She looked at him rather vacantly, and, as the violets caught her eye, put out her hand, and took them. "Do you know the hawthor, Miss Gann, of 'The faded Violets?'"

"Author? Oh, yes; they are—they are George's!" She burst into tears as she said that word; and, pulling the little faded flowers to pieces, went sobbing out of the room. Dear, dear little Caroline! she has only been in love two months, and is already beginning to feel the woes of it!

It cannot be from want of experience —for I have felt the noble passion of love many times these forty years, since I was a boy of twelve (by which the reader may form a pretty good guess of my age),—it cannot be, I say, from want of experience that I am unable to describe, step by step, the progress of a love−affair; nay, I am perfectly certain that I could, if I chose, make a most astonishing and heart−rending liber amoris; but, nevertheless, I always feel a vast repugnance to the following out of a subject of this kind, which I attribute to a natural diffidence and sense of shame that prevent me from enlarging on a theme that has in it something sacred—certain arcana which an honest man, although initiated into them, should not divulge.

If such coy scruples and blushing delicacy prevent one from passing the threshold even of an honourable love, and setting down, at so many guineas or shillings per page, the pious emotions and tendernesses of two persons chastely and legally engaged in sighing, ogling, hand−squeezing, kissing, and so forth (for with such outward signs, I believe that the passion of love is expressed), —if a man feel, I say, squeamish about describing an innocent love, he is doubly disinclined to describe a guilty one; and I have always felt a kind of loathing for the skill of such geniuses as Rousseau or Richardson, who could paint with such painful accuracy all the struggles and woes of Eloisa and Clarissa,—all the wicked arts and triumphs of such scoundrels as Lovelace.

We have in this history a scoundrelly Lovelace in the person going by the name of George Brandon, and a dear, tender, innocent, yielding creature on whom he is practising his infernal skill; and whether the public feel any sympathy for her or not, the writer can only say, for his part, that he heartily loves and respects poor little Caroline, and is quite unwilling to enter into any of the slow, painful, wicked details of the courtship which passed between her and her lover.

Not that there was any wickedness on her side, poor girl! or that she did any thing but follow the natural and beautiful impulses of an honest little female heart, that leads it to trust, and love, and worship a being of the other

sex, whom the eager fancy invests with all sorts of attributes of superiority. There was no wild, conceited tale that Brandon told Caroline which she did not believe,—no virtue which she could conceive or had read of in novels with which she did not endow him. Many long talks had they, and many sweet, stolen interviews, during the periods in which Caroline's father and mother were away making merry at the house of their son−in−law; and while she was left under the care of her virtue and of Becky the maid. Indeed, it was a blessing that the latter was left in the joint guardianship. For Becky, who had such an absurd opinion of her young lady's merits as to fancy that she was a fit wife for any gentleman of the land, and that any gentleman might be charmed and fall in love with her, had some instinct, or possibly some experience, as to the passions and errors of youth, and warned Caroline accordingly. "If he's really in love, Miss, and I think he be, he'll marry you; if he won't marry you, he's a rescal; and you're too good for him, and must have nothing to do with him." To which Caroline replied, that she was sure Mr. Brandon was the most angelic, highprincipled of human beings, and that she was sure his intentions were of the most honourable description.

We have before described what Mr. Brandon's character was. He was not a man of honourable intentions at all. But he was a gentleman of so excessively eager a temperament, that if properly resisted by a practised coquette, or by a woman of strong principles, he would sacrifice any thing to obtain his ends,—nay, marry to obtain them; and, considering his disposition, it is only a wonder that he had not been married a great number of times already; for he had been in love perpetually since his seventeenth year. By which the reader may pretty well appreciate the virtue or the prudence of the ladies with whom hitherto our inflammable young gentleman had had to do.

The fruit, then, of all his stolen interviews, of all his prayers, vows, and protestations to Caroline, had been only this,—that she loved him; but loved him as an honest girl should, and was ready to go to the altar with him when he chose. He talked about his family, his peculiar circumstances, his proud father's curse. Little Caroline only sighed, and said her dearest George must wait until he could obtain his parent's consent. When pressed harder, she would burst into tears, and wonder how one so good and affectionate as he could propose to her any thing unworthy of them both. It is clear to see that the young lady had read a vast number of novels, and knew something of the nature of love; and that she had a good principle and honesty of her own, which set her lover's schemes at naught: indeed, she had both these advantages, —her education, such as it was, having given her the one, and her honest nature having endowed her with the other.

On the day when Fitch came down to Caroline with his verses, Brandon had pressed these unworthy propositions upon her. She had torn herself violently away from him, and rushed to the door; but the poor little thing fell before she could reach it, screaming in a fit of hysterics; which brought Becky to her aid, and caused Brandon to leave her, abashed. He went out; she watched him go, and stole up into his room, and laid on his table the first letter she had ever written to him. It was written in pencil, in a trembling, school−girl hand, and contained simply the following words:—

"George,—You have almost broken my heart. Leave me if you will, and if you dare not act like an honest man. If ever you speak to me so again as you did this morning, I declare solemnly, before Heaven, I will take poison—C."

Indeed, the poor thing had read romances to some purpose; without them, it is probable she never would have thought of such a means of escape from a lover's persecutions: and there was something in the girl's character that made Brandon feel sure that she would keep her promise. How the words agitated him! He felt a violent mixture of raging disappointment and admiration, and loved the girl ten thousand times more than ever.

Mr. Brandon had scarcely finished the reading of this document, and was yet agitated by the various passions which the perusal of it created, when the door of his apartment was violently flung open, and some one came in. Brandon started, and turned round, with a kind of dread that Caroline had already executed her threat, and that a messenger was come to inform him of her death. Mr. Andrea Fitch was the intruder. His hat was on—his eyes were glaring; and if the beards of men did stand on end any where but in poems and romances, his, no doubt, would have formed round his countenance a bristling auburn halo. As it was, Fitch only looked astonishingly fierce, as he stalked up to the table, his hands behind his back. When he had arrived at this barrier between himself and Mr. Brandon he stopped, and, speechless, stared that gentleman in the face.

"May I beg, Mr. Fitch, to know what has procured me the honour of this visit?" exclaimed Mr. Brandon, after a

brief pause of wonder.

"Honour!—ha, ha ha!" growled Mr. Fitch, in a most sardonic, discordant way—"honour!"

"Well, sir, honour or no honour, I can tell you, my good man, it certainly is no pleasure!" said Brandon, testily. "In plain English, then, what the devil has brought you here?"

Fitch plumped the album down on the table close to Mr. Brandon's nose, and said, "That has brought me, sir—that halbum, sir; or I ask your pardon, that a—album—ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, I see!" said Mr. Brandon, who could not refrain from a smile. "It was a cruel trick of mine, Fitch, to rob you of your verses; but all's fair in love."

"Fitch, sir! don't Fitch me, sir! I wish to be hintimate honly with men of h−honour, not with forgers, sir; not with 'artless miscreants! Miscreants, sir, I repeat; vipers, sir; b—b—b— blackguards, sir!"

"Blackguards, sir!" roared Mr. Brandon, bouncing up; "blackguards, you dirty Cocknay mountebank! Quit the room, sir, or I'll fling you out of the window!"

"Will you, sir? try sir; I wish you may get it, sir. I'm a hartist, sir, and as good a man as you. Miscreant, forger, traitor, come on!"

And Mr. Brandon would have come on, but for a circumstance that deterred him; and this was, that Mr. Fitch drew from his bosom a long, sharp, shining, waving poniard of the middle ages, that formed a part of his artistical properties, and with which he had armed himself for this encounter.

"Come on, sir!" shrieked Fitch, brandishing this fearful weapon. "Lay a finger on me, and I bury this blade in your treacherous' art. Ha! do you tremble?"

Indeed the aristocratic Mr. Brandon turned somewhat pale.

"Well, well," said he, "what do you want? Do you suppose I am to be bullied by your absurd melodramatic airs? It was, after all, but a joke, sir, and I am sorry that it has offended you. Can I say more?— what shall I do?"

"You shall hapologise; not only to me, sir, but you shall tell Miss Caroline, in my presence, that you stole those verses from me, and used them quite unauthorised by me."

"Look you, Mr. Fitch, I will make you another set of verses quite as good, if you like; but what you ask is impossible."

"I will 'asten myself, then, to Miss Caroline, and acquaint her with your dastardly forgery sir. I will hopen her heyes, sir!"

"You may hopen her heyes, as you call them, if you please: but I tell you fairly, that the young lady will credit me rather than you; and if you swear ever so much that the verses are yours, I must say that—"

"Say what, sir?"

"Say that you lie, sir!" said Mr. Brandon, stamping on the ground. I'll make you other verses, I repeat; but this is all I can do, and now go about your business!"

"Curse your verses, sir! liar and forger yourself! Hare you a coward as well, sir? A coward! yes, I believe you are; or will you meet me to−morrow morning like a man, and give me satisfaction for this hinfamous hinsult?"

"Sir," said Mr. Brandon, with the utmost stateliness and scorn, "if you wish to murder me as you do the king's English, I won't balk you. Although a man of my rank is not called upon to meet a blackguard of your condition, I will, nevertheless, grant you your will. But have a care; by Heavens I wont spare you, and I can hit an ace of hearts at twenty paces!"

"Two can play at that," said Mr. Fitch, calmly; "and if I can't hit a hace of 'arts at twenty paces, I can hit a man at twelve, and to−morrow I'll try;" with which, giving Mr. Brandon a look of the highest contempt, the young painter left the room.

What were Mr. Brandon's thoughts, as his antagonist left him? Strange to say, rather agreeable. He had much too great a contempt for Fitch to suppose that so low a fellow should ever think seriously of fighting him, and reasoned with himself thus:—

"This Fitch, I know, will go off to Caroline, tell her the whole transaction, frighten her with a tale of a duel, and then she and I shall have a scene. I will tell her the truth about those infernal verses, menace death, blood, and danger, and then—"

Here he fell back into a charming revery; the wily fellow knew what power such a circumstance would give him over a poor weak girl, who would do any thing rather than that her beloved should risk his life. And with this dastardly speculation as to the price he should ask for refraining from meeting Fitch, he was entertaining himself;

when, much to his annoyance, that gentleman again came into the room.

"Mr. Brandon," said he, "you have insulted me in the grossest and cruellest way."

"Well, sir, are you come to apologise?" said Brandon, sneeringly.

"No, I'm not come to apologise, Mr. Aristocrat: it's past that. I'm come to say this sir, that I take you for a coward; and that, unless you will give me your solemn word of honour not to mention a word of this quarrel to Miss Gann, which might prevent our meeting, I will never leave you till we do fight!"

"This is outrageous, sir! Leave the room, or by Heavens I'll not meet you at all!"

"Heasy, sir; easy, I beg your pardon, I can force you to that!"

"And how, pray sir?"

"Why, in the first place, here's a stick, and I'll 'orsewhip you; and here are a pair of pistols, and we can fight now!"

"Well, sir, I give you my honour," said Mr. Brandon, in a diabolical rage; and added, "I'll meet you to−morrow, not now; and you need not be afraid that I'll miss you!"

"Hadew, sir," said the chivalrous little Fitch; "bon giorno, sir, as we used to say at Rome." And so, for the second time, he left Mr. Brandon, who did not like very well the extraordinary courage he had displayed.

"What the deuce has exasperated the fellow so?" thought Brandon. Why, in the first place, he had crossed Fitch in love; and, in the second, he had sneered at his pronunciation and his gentility, and Fitch's little soul was in a fury which nothing but blood would allay: he was determined, for the sake of his hart and his lady, to bring this proud champion down.

So Brandon was at last left to his cogitations; when, confusion! about five o'clock came another knock at his door.

"Come in!" growled the owner of the lodgings.

A sallow, blear−eyed, ricketty, undersized creature, tottering upon a pair of high−heeled lacquered boots, and supporting himself upon an immense gold−knobbed cane, entered the room with his hat on one side and a jaunty air. It was a white hat with a broad brim, and under it fell a great deal of greasy lank hair, that shrouded the cheek−bones of the wearer. The little man had no beard to his chin, appeared about twenty years of age, and might weigh, stick and all, some seven stone. If you wish to know how this exquisite was dressed, I have the pleasure to inform you that he wore a great sky−blue embroidered satin stock, in the which figured a carbuncle that looked like a lambent gooseberry. He had a shawl−waistcoat of many colours; a pair of loose, blue trowsers, neatly strapped to show his little feet; a brown cut−away coat with brass buttons, that fitted tight round a spider waist; and over all a white or drab surtout, with a sable collar and cuffs, from which latter on each hand peeped five little fingers covered with lemon−coloured kid gloves. One of these hands he held constantly to his little chest; and, with a hoarse, thin voice, he piped out,

"George, my buck! how goes it?" We have been thus particular in our description of the costume of this individual (whose inward man strongly corresponded with his manly and agreeably exterior) because he was the person whom Mr. Brandon most respected in the world.

"Cinqbars!" exclaimed our hero; "why, what the deuce has brought you to Margate?"

"Fwendship, my old cock!" said the Honourable Augustus Frederick Ringwood, commonly called Viscount Cinqbars, for indeed it was he; "fwendship and the City of Canterbuwy steamer!" and herewith his lordship held out his right−hand fore−finger to Brandon, who inclosed it most cordially in all his. "Wathn't it good of me, now, George, to come down and conthole you in thith curthed, thtupid plathe—hay, now?" said my lord, after these salutations.

Brandon swore he was very glad to see him, which was very true, for he had no sooner set eyes upon his lordship, than he had determined to borrow as much money from him as ever he could induce the young nobleman to part with.

"I'll tell you how it wath, my boy; you thee I wath thopping at Longth, when I found, by Jove, that the governor wath come to town! Cuth me if I didn't meet the infarnal old family dwag, with my mother, thithterth, and all, ath I wath dwiving a hack−cab with Polly Tomkinth in the Pawk! Tho when I got home, 'Hang it!' thayth I to Tufthunt. 'Tom, my boy,' thaith I, 'I've just theen the governor, and must be off!' 'What, back to Ockthford?' thaith Tom. 'No,' thaith I, 'that won't do. Abroad—to Jewicho—any where. Egad, I have it! I'll go down to Margate and thee old George, that I will.' And tho off I came the very nexth day; and here I am, and thereth dinner

waiting for uth at the hotel, and thix bottleth of champaign in ithe, and thum thalmon: tho you mutht come."

To this proposition Mr. Brandon readily agreed, being glad enough of the prospect of a good dinner and some jovial society, for he was low and disturbed in spirits, and so promised to dine with his friend at the Sun.

The two gentlemen conversed for some time longer. Mr. Brandon was a shrewd fellow, and knew perfectly well a fact, of which, no doubt, the reader has a notion—namely, that Lord Cinqbars was a ninny; but, nevertheless, Brandon esteemed him highly as a lord. We pardon stupidity in lords; nature or instinct, however sarcastic a man may be among ordinary persons, renders him towards men of quality benevolently blind: a divinity hedges not only the king, but the whole peerage.

"That's the girl, I suppose," said my lord, knowingly winking at Brandon; "that little pale girl, who let me in, I mean. A nice little filly, upon my honour, Georgy, my buck!"

"Oh—that—yes—I wrote, I think, something about her," said Brandon, blushing slightly; for, indeed, he now begun to wish that his friend should make no comments upon a young lady with whom he was so much in love.

"I suppose it's all up now?" continued my lord, looking still more knowing. "All over with her, hay? I saw it was by her looks, in a minute."

"Indeed you do me a great deal too much honour. Miss—ah—Miss Gann is a very respectable young person, and I would not for the world have you to suppose that I would do any thing that should the least injure her character."

At this speech, Lord Cinqbars was at first much puzzled; but, in considering it, was fully convinced that Brandon was a deeper dog than ever. Boiling with impatience to know the particulars of this delicate intrigue, this cunning diplomatist determined he would pump the whole story out of Brandon by degrees; and so, in the course of half an hour's conversation that the young men had together, Cinqbars did not make less than forty allusions to the subject that interested him. At last Brandon cut him short rather haughtily, by begging that he would make no further allusions to the subject, as it was one that was excessively disagreeable to him.

In fact, there was no mistake about it now. George Brandon was in love with Caroline. He felt that he was while he blushed at his friend's alluding to her, while he grew indignant at the young lord's coarse banter about her.

Turning the conversation to another point, he asked Cinqbars about his voyage, and whether he had brought any companion with him to Margate; whereupon my lord related all his feats in London, how he had been to the watchhouse, how many bottles of champaign he had drunk, how he had "milled" a policeman, &c. &c.; and he concluded by saying that he had come down with Tom Tufthunt, who was at the inn at that very moment smoking a cigar.

This did not increase Brandon's good−humour; and when Cinqbars mentioned his friend's name, Brandon saluted it mentally with a hearty curse. These two gentlemen hated each other of old. Tufthunt was a small college man of no family, with a foundation fellowship; and it used to be considered that a sporting fellow of a small college was a sad, raffish, disreputable character. Tufthunt, then, was a vulgar fellow, and Brandon a gentleman, so they hated each other. They were both toadies of the same nobleman, so they hated each other. They had had some quarrel at college about a disputed bet, which Brandon knew he owed, and so they hated each other; and in their words about it Brandon had threatened to horsewhip Tufthunt, and called him a "sneaking, swindling, small−college snob;" and so little Tufthunt, who had not resented the words, hated Brandon far more than Brandon hated him. The latter only had a contempt for his rival, and voted him a profound bore and vulgarian.

So, although Mr. Tufthunt did not choose to frequent Mr. Brandon's rooms, he was very anxious that his friend, the young lord, should not fall into his old bear−leader's hands again, and came down to Margate to counteract any influence which the arts of Brandon might acquire.

"Curse the fellow!" thought Tufthunt in his heart (there was a fine reciprocity of curses between the two men); "he has drawn Cinqbars already for fifty pounds this year, and will have some half of his last remittance, if I don't keep a look−out, the swindling thief!"

And so frightened was Tufthunt at the notion of Brandon's return to power and dishonest use of it, that he was at the time on the point of writing to Lord Ringwood to tell him of his son's doings, only he wanted some money deucedly himself. Of Mr. Tufthunt's physique and history it is necessary merely to say, that he was the son of a country attorney who was agent to a lord; he had been sent to a foundation−school, where he distinguished himself for ten years, by fighting and being flogged more than any boy of the five hundred. From the

foundation−school he went to college with an exhibition, which was succeeded by a fellowship, which was to end in a living. In his person Mr. Tufthunt was short and bow−legged; he wore a sort of clerico−sporting costume, consisting of a black straight−cut coat, and light drab breeches, with a vast number of buttons at the ancles; a sort of dress much affectioned by sporting gentlemen of the university in the author's time.

Well, Brandon said he had some letters to write and promised to follow his friend, which he did; but, if the truth must be told, so infatuated was the young man become with his passion, with the resistance he had met with, and so nervous from the various occurrences of the morning, that he passed the half hour during which he was free from Cinqbar's society in kneeling, imploring, weeping at Caroline's little garret−door, which had remained piteously closed to him. He was wild with disappointment, mortification —mad, longing to see her. The cleverest coquette in Europe could not have so inflarned him. His first act on entering the dinner−room was to drink off a large tumbler of champaign; and when Cinqbars, in his elegant way, began to rally him upon his wildness, Mr. Brandon only growled and cursed with frightful vehemency, and applied again to the bottle. His face, which had been quite white, grew a bright red; his tongue, which had been tied, began to chatter vehemently; before the fish was off the table, Mr. Brandon shewed strong symptoms of intoxication; before the dessert appeared, Mr. Tufthunt, winking knowingly to Lord Cinqbars, had began to draw him out; and Brandon, with a number of shrieks and oaths, was narrating the history of his attachment.

"Look you, Tufthunt," said he, wildly; "hang you, I hate you, but I must talk! I've been, for two months now, in this cursed hole; in a ricketty lodging, with a vulgar family; as vulgar, by Jove, as you are yourself!"

Mr. Tufthunt did not like this style of address half so much as Lord Cinqbars, who was laughing immoderately, and to whom Tufthunt whispered rather sheepishly, "Pooh, pooh, he's drunk!"

"Drunk! no, sir," yelled out Brandon; "I'm mad, though, with the prudery of a little devil of fifteen, who has cost me more trouble than it would take me to seduce every one of your sisters—ha, ha! every one of the Miss Tufthunts, by Jove! Miss Suky Tufthunt, Miss Dolly Tufthunt, Miss Anna−Maria Tufthunt, and the whole bunch! Come, sir, don't sit scowling at me, or I'll brain you with the decanter." (Tufthunt was down again on the sofa.) "I've borne with the girl's mother, and her father, and her sisters, and a cook in the house, and a scoundrel of a painter, that I'm going to fight about her; and for what?—why, for a letter, which says, 'George, I'll kill myself! George, I'll kill myself!—ha, ha! a little devil like that killing herself—ha, ha! and I —I who—who adore her, who am mad for—"

"Mad, I believe he is," said Tufthunt; and at this moment Mr. Brandon was giving the most unequivocal signs of madness; he had plunged his head into the corner of the sofa, and was kicking his feet violently into the cushions.

"You don't understand him, Tufty, my boy," said Lord Cinqbars, with a very superior air. "You ain't up to these things, I tell you; and I suspect, by Jove, that you never were in love in your life. I know what it is, sir. And as for Brandon, Heaven bless you! I've often seen him in that way when we were abroad. When he has an intrigue, he's mad about it. Let me see, there was the Countess Fritzch, at Baden−Baden; there was the woman at Pau; and that girl—at Paris, was it?— no, at Vienna. He went on just so about them all; but I'll tell you what, when we do the thing, we do it easier, my boy, hay?"

And so saying, my lord cocked up his little, sallow, beardless face, into a grin, and then fell to eyeing a glass of execrable claret across a candle. An intrigue, as he called it, was the little creature's delight; and, until the time should arrive when he could have one himself, he loved to talk of those of his friends.

As for Tufthunt, we may fancy how that gentleman's previous affection for Brandon was increased by the latter's brutal addresses to him. Brandon continued to drink and to talk, though not always in the sentimental way in which he had spoken about his loves and injuries. Growing presently madly jocose as he had before been madly melancholy, he narrated to the two gentlemen the particulars of his quarrel with Fitch, mimicking the little painter's manner in an excessively comic way, and giving the most ludicrous account of his person, kept his companions in a roar of laughter. Cinqbars swore that he would see the fun in the morning, and agreed that if the painter wanted a second, either he or Tufthunt would act for him.

Now my Lord Cinqbars had an excessively clever servant, a merry rogue, whom he had discovered in the humble capacity of scout's assistant at Christchurch, and raised to be his valet. The chief duties of the valet were to black his lord's beautiful boots, that we have admired so much, and to put his lordship to bed when overtaken with liquor. He heard every word of the young men's talk (it being his habit, much encouraged by his master, to

join occasionally in the conversation); and, in the course of the night, when at supper with Monsieur Donnerwetter and Mdlle. Augustine, he related every word of the talk above−stairs, mimicking Brandon quite as cleverly as the latter had mimicked Fitch. When, then, after making his company laugh by describing Brandon's love−agonies, Mr. Tom informed them how that gentleman had a rival, with whom he was going to fight a duel the next morning—an artistfellow with an immense beard, whose name was Fitch, to his surprise Mdlle. Augustine burst into a scream of laughter, and exclaimed, "Feesh, Feesh! c'est notre homme!—it is our man, sare! Saladin, remember you Mr. Fish?"

Saladin said gravely, "Missa Fis, Missa Fis! know um quite well, Missa Fis! Painter−man, big beard, gib Saladin bit injy−rubby, Missis lub Missa Fis!"

It was too true, the fat lady was the famous Mrs. Carrickfergus, and she had come all the way from Rome in pursuit of her adored painter.

Chapter IX.
Which threatens death, but contains a great deal of marrying.

As the morrow was to be an eventful day in the lives of all the heroes and heroines of this history, it will be as well to state how they passed the night previous. Brandon, like the English before the battle of Hastings, spent the evening in feasting and carousing; and Lord Cinqbars, at twelve o'clock, his usual time after his usual quantity of drink, was carried up to bed by the servant kept by his lordship for that purpose. Mr. Tufthunt took this as a hint to wish Brandon good night, at the same time promising that he and Cinqbars would not fail him in the morning about the duel.

Shall we confess that Mr. Brandon, whose excitement now began to wear off, and who had a dreadful headach, did not at all relish the idea of the morrow's combat?

"If," said he, "I shoot this crackbrained painter, all the world will cry out, 'Muder!' If he shoot me, all the world will laugh at me! And yet, confound him! he seems so bent upon blood, that there is no escaping a meeting."

At any rate, Brandon thought, there will be no harm in a letter to Caroline. So, on arriving at home, he sat down and wrote a very pathetic one; saying, that he fought in her cause, and if he died, his last breath should be for her. So having written, he jumped into bed, and did not sleep one single wink all night.

As Brandon passed his night like the English, Fitch went through his like the Normans, in fasting, and mortification, and meditation. The poor fellow likewise indited a letter to Caroline; a very long and strong one, interspersed with pieces of poetry, and containing the words we have just heard him utter out of the window. Then he thought about making his will; but he recollected, and, indeed, it was a bitter thought to the young man, that there was not one single soul in the wide world who cared for him—except, indeed, thought he, after a pause, that poor Mrs. Carrickfergus at Rome, who did like me, and was the only person who ever bought my drawings. So he made over all his sketches to her, regulated his little property, found that he had enough money to pay his washerwoman; and so, having disposed of his worldly concerns, Mr. Fitch also jumped into bed, and speedily fell into a deep sleep. Brandon could hear him snoring all night, and did not feel a bit the more comfortable because his antagonist took matters so unconcernedly.

Indeed, our poor painter had no guilty thoughts in his breast, nor no particular revenge against Brandon, now that the first pangs of mortified vanity were over. But, with all his vagaries, he was a man of spirit; and after what had passed in the morning, the treason that had been done him, and the insults heaped upon him, he felt that the duel was irrevocable. He had a misty notion, imbibed somewhere, that it was the part of a gentleman's duty to fight duels, and had long been seeking for an opportunity. "Suppose I do die," said he, "what's the odds? Caroline doesn't care for me. Dr. Wackerbart's boys wont have their drawing−lesson next Wednesday; and no more will be said of poor Andrea."

And now for the garret. Caroline was wrapped up in her own woes, poor little soul! and in the arms of the faithful Becky cried herself to sleep. But the slow hours passed on; and the tide, which had been out, now came in; and the lamps waxed fainter and fainter; and the watchman cried six o'clock; and the sun arose and gilded the minarets of Margate; and Becky got up and scoured the steps, and the kitchen, and made ready the lodgers' breakfasts; and at half−past eight there came a thundering rap at the door, and two gentlemen, one with a mahogany case under his arm, asked for Mr. Brandon, and were shewn up to his room by the astonished Becky, who was bidden by Mr. Brandon to get breakfast for three.

The thundering rap awakened Mr. Fitch, who rose and dressed himself in his best clothes, gave a twist of the curling−tongs to his beard, and conducted himself throughout with perfect coolness. Nine o'clock struck, and he wrapped his cloak round him, and put under his cloak that pair of foils which we have said he possessed, and did not know in the least how to use. However, he had heard his camarades d'atelier, at Paris and Rome, say that they were the best weapons for duelling; and so forth he issued.

Becky was in the passage as he passed down; she was always scrubbing there. "Becky," said Fitch, in a hollow voice, "here is a letter; if I should not return in half an hour, give it to Miss Gann, and promise on your honour that she shall not have it sooner." Becky promised. She thought the painter was at some of his mad tricks. He went out of the door, saluting her gravely.

But he went only a few steps and came back again: "Becky," said he, "you—you've always been a good girl to me, and here's something for you; per'aps we shan't—we shan't see each other for some time." The tears were in his eyes as he spoke, and he handed her over seven shillings and fourpence halfpenny, being every farthing he possessed in the world.

"Well, I'm sure!" said Becky; and

that was all she said, for she pocketed the money, and fell to serubbing again.

Presently the three gentlemen up stairs came clattering down. "Lock bless you, don't be in such a 'urry!" exclaimed Becky; "it's full herly yet, and the water's not biling."

"We'll come back to breakfast, my dear," said one, a little gentleman in high−heeled boots; "and, I thay, mind and have thum thoda−water;" and he walked out, twirling his cane. His friend with the case followed him. Mr. Brandon came last.

He too turned back after he had gone a few paces. "Becky," said he, in a grave voice, "if I am not back in half−an−hour, give that to Miss Gann."

Becky was fairly flustered by this; and after turning the letters round and round, and peeping into the sides, and looking at the seals very hard, she like a fool determined she would not wait half−an−hour, but carry them up to Miss Caroline; and so up she mounted, finding pretty Caroline in the act of lacing her stays.

And the consequence of Becky's conduct was that little Carry left off lacing her stays (a sweet little figure the poor thing looked in them; but that is neither here nor there), took the letters, looked at one, which she threw down directly; at the other, which she eagerly opened, and having read a line or two, gave a loud scream, and fell down dead in a fainting fit!

Waft us, O Muse, to Mr. Wright's hotel, and quick narrate what chances there befel. Very early in the morning Mdlle. Augustine made her appearance in the apartment of Miss Runt, and with great glee informed that lady of the event which was about to take place. "Figurez vous, mademoiselle, que nôtre homme va se battre—oh, but it will be droll to see him sword in hand!"

"Don't plague me with your ojous servants' quarrels, Augustine; that horrid courier is always quarrelling and tipsy.

"Mon Dieu, qu'elle est bête!" exclaimed Augustine: "but I tell you it is not the courier; it is he, l'objet, le peintre dont madame s'est amourachée, Monsieur Feesh."

"Mr. Fitch!" cried Runt, jumping up in bed, "Mr. Fitch going to fight! Augustine, my stockings—quick, my robe−de−chambre—tell me when, how, where!"

And so Augustine told her that the combat was to take place at nine that morning behind the Windmill, and that the gentleman with whom Mr. Fitch was to go out had been dining at the hotel the night previous, in company with the little milor, who was to be his second.

Quick as lightning flew Runt to the chamber of her patroness. That lady was in a profound sleep; and I leave you to imagine what were her sensations on awaking and hearing this dreadful tale.

Such is the force of love, that although for many years Mrs. Carrickfergus had never left her bed before noon, although in all her wild wanderings after the painter she, nevertheless, would have her tea and cutlet in bed, and her doze likewise, before she set forth on a journey, she now started up in an instant, forgetting her nap, muttonchops, every thing, and began dressing with a promptitude which can only be equalled by Harlequin when disguising himself in a pantomime. She would have had an attack of nerves, only she knew there was no time for it; and I do believe that twenty minutes were scarcely over her head, as the saying is, when her bonnet and cloak were on, and with her whole suite, and an innwaiter or two whom she pressed into her service, she was on full trot to the field of action. For twenty years before, and from that day to this, Marianne Carrickfergus never had or has walked so quickly.

"Hullo, here'th a go!" exclaimed Lord Viscount Cinqbars, as they arrived on the ground behind the windmills; "cuth me, there'th only one man!"

This was indeed the case: Mr. Fitch, in his great cloak, was pacing slowly up and down the grass, his shadow stretching far in the sunshine. Mr. Fitch was alone too; for the fact is he had never thought about a second. This he admitted frankly, bowing with much majesty to the company as they came up. "But that, gents," said he, "will

make no difference, I hope, nor prevent fair play from being done." And flinging off his cloak, he produced the foils, from which the buttons had been taken off. He went up to Brandon, and was for offering him one of the weapons, just as they do at the theatre. Brandon stepped back, rather abashed; Cinqbars looked posed; Tufthunt, delighted: "Ecod," said he, "I hope the bearded fellow will give it him."

"Excuse me, sir," said Mr. Brandon; "as the challenged party, I demand pistols."

Mr. Fitch, with great presence of mind and gracefulness, stuck the swords into the grass.

"Oh, pithtolth of courth," lisped my lord; and presently called aside Tufthunt, to whom he whispered something in great glee; to which Tufthunt objected at first, saying, "No, d—him, let him fight." "And your fellowship and living, Tufty, my boy," interposed my lord; and then they walked on. After a couple of minutes, during which Mr. Fitch was employed in examining Mr. Brandon from the toe upwards to the crown of his head, or hat, just as Mr. Widdicombe does Mr. Cartlich, before those two gentlemen proceed to join in combat on the boards of Astley's Amphitheatre (indeed, poor Fitch had no other standard of chivalry)—when Fitch had concluded this examination, of which Brandon did not know what the deuce to make, Lord Cinqbars came back to the painter, and gave him a nod.

"Sir," said he, "as you have come unprovided with a second, I, with your leave, will act as one. My name is Cinqbars—Lord Cinqbars; and though I had come to the ground to act as the friend of my friend here, Mr. Tufthunt will take that duty upon him; and as it appears to me that there can be no other end to this unhappy affair, we will proceed at once."

It is a marvel how Lord Cinqbars ever made such a gentlemanly speech. When Fitch heard that he was to have a lord for a second, he laid his hand on his chest, and vowed it was the greatest h−honor of his life; and was turning round to walk towards his ground, when my lord, gracefully thrusting his tongue into his cheek, and bringing his thumb up to his nose, twiddled about his fingers for a moment, and said to Brandon, "Gammon."

Mr. Brandon smiled, and heaved a great, deep, refreshing sigh. The truth was a load was taken off his mind, of which he was very glad to be rid; for there was something in the coolness of that crazy painter that our fashionable gentleman did not at all approve of.

"I think, Mr. Tufthunt," said Lord Cinqbars, very loud, that considering the gravity of the case—threatening horse whipping, you know, lie on both sides, and lady in the case—I think we must have the barrier−duel."

"What's that?" said Fitch.

"The simplest thing in the world; and," in a whisper, "let me add, the best for you. Look here. We shall put you at twenty paces, and a hat between you. You walk forward and fire when you like. When you fire you stop; and you both have the liberty of walking up to the hat. Nothing can be more fair than that."

"Very well," said Fitch; and, with a great deal of preparation, the pistols were loaded.

"I'll tell you what," whispered Cinqbars to Fitch, "if I hadn't chosen this way you were a dead man. If he fires, he hits you dead. You must not let him fire, but have him down first."

"I'll try," said Fitch, who was a little pale, and thanked his noble friend for his counsel. The hat was placed, and the men took their places.

"Are you all ready?"

"Ready," said Brandon.

"Advance when I drop my handkerchief." And presently down it fell, Lord Cinqbars crying, "Now!"

The combatants both advanced, each covering his man. When he had gone about six paces, Fitch stopped, fired, and—missed. He grasped his pistol tightly, for he was very near dropping it; and then stood biting his lips, and looking at Brandon, who grinned savagely, and walked up to the hat.

"Will you retract what you said of me yesterday, you villain?" said Brandon.

"I can't."

"Will you beg for life?"

"No."

"Then take a minute and make your peace with God, for you are a dead man."

Fitch dropped his pistol to the ground, shut his eyes for a moment. and flinging up his chest, and clenching his fists, said, "Now I'm ready."

Brandon fired—and, strange to say, Andrea Fitch, as he gasped and staggered backwards, saw, or thought he saw, Mr. Brandon's pistol flying up in the air, where it went off, and heard that gentleman yell out an immense

oath in a very audible voice. When he came to himself, a thick stick was lying at Brandon's feet, Mr. Brandon was capering about the ground, and cursing and shaking a maimed elbow, and a whole posse of people were rushing upon them. The first was the great German courier, who rushed upon Brandon, and shook that gentleman, and shouting, "Schelm! spitzbube! blagard! goward!" in his ear. "If I had not drown my stick and brogen his damt arm, he wod have murdered dat boor young man."

The German's speech contained two unfounded assertions; in the first place, Brandon would not have murdered Fitch; and, secondly, his arm was not broken—he had merely received a blow on that part which anatomists call the funny−bone; a severe blow, which sent the pistol spinning into the air, and caused the gentleman to scream with pain. Two waiters seized upon the murderer too: a baker, who had been brought from his rounds; a bellman; several boys,—were yelling round him, and shouting out, "Pole−e−eace!"

Next to these came, panting and blowing, some women. Could Fitch believe his eyes?—that fat woman in red satin!—yes—no—yes—he was, he was in the arms of Mrs. Carrick fergus!

The particulars of this meeting are too delicate to relate. Suffice it to say that somehow matters were explained, Mr. Brandon was let loose, and a fly was presently seen to drive up, into which Mr. Fitch consented to enter with his new−found friend.

Brandon had some good movements in him. As Fitch was getting into the carriage, he walked up to him and held out his left hand: "I can't offer you my right hand, Mr. Fitch, for that cursed courier's stick has maimed it; but I hope you will allow me to apologise for my shameful conduct to you, and to say that I never in my life met a more gallant fellow than yourself."

"That he is, by Jove!" said my Lord Cinqbars.

Fitch blushed as red as a peony, and trembled very much. "And yet," said he, "you would have murdered me just now, Mr. Brandon. I can't take your 'and, sir."

"Why, you great flat," said my lord, wisely, "he couldn't have hurt you, nor you him. There wath no ballth in the pithtolth." "What," said Fitch, starting back, "do you gents call that a joke? Oh, my lord, my lord!" And here poor Fitch actually burst into tears on the red satin bosom of Mrs. Carrickfergus: she and Miss Runt were crying as hard as they could. And so, amidst much shouting and huzzaing, the fly drove away.

"What a blubbering, abthurd donkey!" said Cinqbars, with his usual judgment; "aint he, Tufthunt?"

Tufthunt, of course, said yes; but Brandon was in a virtuous mood. "By Heavens! I think his tears do the man honour. When I came out with him this morning, I intended to act fairly by him. And as for Mr. Tufthunt, who calls a man a coward because he cries—Mr. Tufthunt knows well what a pistol is, and that some men don't care to face it, brave as they are."

Mr. Tufthunt understood the hint, and bit his lips and walked on. and as for that worthy moralist, Mr. Brandon, I am happy to say that there was some good fortune in store for him, which, though similar in kind to that bestowed lately upon Mr. Fitch, was superior in degree.

It was no other than this, that forgetting all maidenly decency and decorum, before Lord Viscount Cinqbars and his friend, that silly little creature, Caroline Gann, rushed out from the parlour into the passage—she had been at the window ever since she was rid of her fainting−fit; and, ah! what agonies of fear had that little panting heart endured during the half−hour of her lover's absence!—Caroline Gann, I say, rushed into the passage, and leaped upon the neck of Brandon, and kissed him, and called him her dear, dear, dear, darling George, and sobbed, and laughed, until George, taking her round the waist gently, carried her into the little dingy parlour, and closed the door behind him.

"Egad," cried Cinqbars, "this is quite a thene! Hullo, Becky, Polly, what's your name?—bring uth up the breakfatht; and I hope you've remembered the thoda−water. Come along up thtairth, Tufty, my boy."

When Brandon came up stairs and joined them, which he did in a minute or two, consigning Caroline to Becky's care, his eyes were full of tears; and when Cinqbars began to rally him in his usual delicate way, Brandon said, gravely, "No laughing, sir, if you please; for I swear that that lady before long shall be my wife."

"Your wife!—and what will your father say, and what will your duns say, and what will Miss Goldmore say, with her hundred thousand pounds?" cried Cinqbars.

"Miss Goldmore be hanged," said Brandon, "and the duns too; and my father may reconcile it to himself as he

can." And here Brandon fell into a revery.

"It's no use thinking," he cried, after the pause. "You see what a girl it is, Cinqbars. I love her—by Heavens, I'm mad with love for her! She shall be mine, let what will come of it. And, besides," he added, in a lower tone of voice, "why need, why need my father know any thing about it?"

"O flames and furies, what a lover it is!" exclaimed his friend. "But, by Jove, I like your spirit; and hang all governors say I. Stop—a bright thought! If you must marry, why, here's Tom Tufthunt, the very man to do your business." Little Lord Cinqbars was delighted with the excitement of the affair, and thought to himself, "By Jove, this is an intrigue!"

"What, is Tufthunt in orders?" said Brandon.

"Yes," replied that reverend gentleman: "don't you see my coat? I took orders six weeks ago, on my fellowship. Cinqbars' governor has promised me a living."

"And you shall marry George here, so you shall."

"What, without a license?"

"Hang the license!—we won't peach, will we, George?"

"Her family must know nothing of it," said George, "or they would."

"Why should they? Why shouldn't Tom marry you in this very room, without any church or stuff at all?"

Tom said: "You'll hold me out, my lord, if any thing comes of it; and, if Brandon likes, why, I will. He's done for if he does," muttered Tufthunt, "and I have had my revenge on him, the bullying, supercilious blackleg!"

And so on that very day, in Brandon's room, without a license, and by that worthy clergyman the Rev. Thomas Tufthunt, with my Lord Cinqbars for the sole witness, poor Caroline Gann, who knew no better, who never heard of licenses, and did not know what bans meant, was married in a manner to the person calling himself George Brandon; George Brandon not being his real name.

No writings at all were made, and the ceremony merely read through. Becky, Caroline's sole guardian, when the poor girl kissed her, and, blushing, shewed her gold ring, thought all was in order; and the happy couple set off for Dover that day, with fifty pounds which Cinqbars lent the bridegroom.

Becky received a little letter from Caroline, which she promised to carry to her mamma at Swigby's; and it was agreed that she was to give warning, and come and live with her young lady. Next morning Lord Cinqbars and Tufthunt took the boat for London; the latter uneasy in mind, the former vowing that "he'd never spent such an exciting day in his life, and loved an intrigue of all things."

Next morning, too, the great travelling chariot of Mrs. Carrickfergus rolled away with a bearded gentleman inside. Poor Fitch had been back to his lodgings to try one more chance with Caroline, and he arrived in time—to see her get into a post−chaise alone with Brandon.

Six weeks afterwards Galignani's Messenger contained the following announcement:—

"Married, at the British embassy, by Bishop Luscombe, Andrew Fitch, Esq. to Marianne Caroline Matilda, widow of the late Antony Carrickfergus, of Lombard Street and Gloucester Place, Esquire. The happy pair, after a magnificent déjeúné, set off for the south in their splendid carriage−and−four. Miss Runt officiated as bride's−maid. And we remarked among the company Earl and Countess Crabs, General Sir Rice Curry, K.C.B., Colonel Wapshot, Sir Charles Swang, the Hon. Algernon Perey Deuceace and his lady, Count Punter, and others of the élite of the fashionables now in Paris. The bridegroom was attended by his friend, Michael Angelo Titmarsh, Esquire; and the lady was given away by the Right Hon. the Earl of Crabs. On the departure of the bride and bridegroom the festivities were resumed, and many a sparkling bumper of Meurice's champagne was quaffed to the health of the hospitable and interesting couple."

And with one more marriage this chapter shall conclude. About this time the British Auxiliary Legion came home from Spain; and Lieut.−General Swabber, a knight of San Fernando, of the order of Isabella the Catholic, of the Tower and Sword, &c., who, as plain Lieutenant Swabber, had loved Miss Isabella Macarty, as a general now actually married her. I leave you to suppose how glorious Mrs. Gann was, and how Gann got tipsy at the Bag of Nails; but as her daughters each insisted upon their 30l. a−year income, and Mrs. Gann had so only 60l. left, she was obliged still to continue the lodging−house at Margate, in which have occurred the most interesting passages

of this SHABBY GENTEEL STORY.

Becky never went to her young mistress, who was not heard of after she wrote the letter to her parents, saying that she was married to Mr. Brandon; but, for particular reasons, her dear husband wished to keep his marriage secret, and for the present her beloved parents must be content to know she was happy. Gann missed his little Carry at first a good deal, but spent more and more of his time at the alehouse, as his house with only Mrs. Gann in it was too hot for him. Mrs. Gann talked unceasingly of her daughter the squire's lady, and her daughter the general's wife; but never once mentioned Caroline after the first burst of wonder and wrath at her departure.

God bless thee, poor Caroline! Thou art happy now, for some short space at least; and here, therefore, let us leave thee.

Author's Note

When the republication of these Miscellanies was announced, it was my intention to complete the little story, of which only the first part is here written. Perhaps novel−readers will understand, even from the above chapters, what was to ensue. Caroline was to be disowned and deserted by her wicked husband: that abandoned man was to marry somebody else: hence, bitter trials and grief, patience and virtue, for poor little Caroline, and a melancholy ending—as how should it have been gay? The tale was interrupted at a sad period of the writer's own life. The colours are long since dry; the artist's hand is changed. It is best to leave the sketch, as it was when first designed seventeen years ago. The memory of the past is renewed as he looks at it—

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die Bilder froher Tage,
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Und manche liebe Schatten steigen auf.

W. M. T.

London, April 10th, 1857.