

foolish enough to fall in love ; we say *foolish*, because Walter, although of respectable connexions, and a candidate for a commission in an honourable profession, was greatly inferior in station to the lady of his love, and, moreover, poor in worldly circumstances, although rich in the sterling qualities of mental worth and education ; yet what business has a young man to fall in love with a girl above him in life, when withal he has nor wealth nor home to offer her ? But Walter had not weighed these considerations, when in the full flush of a loveliness, which was peculiarly her own, he met Frances Stanley, at the house of a poor and distant relation. This her first appearance to him, like the golden dawn upon the religious feelings of the eastern devotee, breaking on his mind, in all the throbbing excitement, and with all the irresistible fascination of love at first sight. It was a rare exemplification of human feeling, the love of Walter Montaigne for that fair girl ! the full effect of that passion on a mind sensitive in the extreme, and glowing with all the high and fervid aspirations which belong to youth ; nor was his passion unrequited by its fair object ; the gentle Fanny, full of confidence in the pure and honourable professions of her lover, had confessed that the lowliest lot with him would be preferable to the highest and poudest in the world's eye with another. Fanny was living with a relation in the environs of the city, whose aristocratical notions would not permit him to countenance the addresses of her humble lover, particularly when to his inferior station in life, was added the prudential consideration of his want of worldly means and expectations ; consequently the interviews of the lovers were stolen ones, and the delights of these, as a matter of course, were enhanced a thousand fold by the circumstance of their being such. It was to one of these stolen meetings to which Walter Montaigne was repairing on the New Year's eve in question. Walter had received a note from Fanny in the course of the preceding day, apprising him of the intended absence of her relations upon this evening. With all the impatience which the reader can readily imagine, the young lover was hastening to the residence of his mistress for the *first* time ; for be it remembered, that although we have admitted that they had met frequently, that they had never met *there* before.

Walter has already reached the house, and, leaning over a white wooden railing, which runs parallel with the front of it, he is gazing through a window, from which the curtain has evidently been intentionally withdrawn, where seated at a table, with her soft and glowing cheek resting on her small white hand, he beholds the beloved object of all his passionate solicitude. There she sits altogether alone, her beauty heightened by the light in the room, to such a degree that it can be easily fancied divine. She is apparently waiting *his* coming, at that instant

evidently thinking of *him*. It is the happiest moment of the young lover's life, to him replete with all the happy feelings and bright associations which at times cast over this grovelling world of ours, the very charms of the poet's brightest picturings. But he becomes impatient of this enjoyment, in which he is the sole partaker. He reaches the door ; his hand is already on the knocker, and in a moment he is admitted to her side.

Having thus conducted our lover in safety to the presence of his mistress, turn we for a time to the contemplation of a different scene, which was enacting in another part of the city. Round a table, from which the cloth had just been removed, are seated a party of some six or seven ladies and gentlemen, at which an elderly gentleman, of a peculiarly benignant appearance, is presiding. The old gentleman has risen, and is in the act of giving a toast. His features, on which the glare of a large lamp is reflected, are lighted up with a significant smile, as if inwardly rejoicing at some happy idea, which he was about to give forth. "Come, my children, ere I permit the withdrawal of any of you, I must give—the *intended nuptials*—but before my toast is drank, it will be necessary for me to give some explanation for the information of one of you, who has dropped in since I have made known my intentions on the subject which I am about to broach. Out of five daughters," continued he, "that were left me by their departed mother, while yet the eldest had scarce reached maturity, there remains but one with me, the youngest, and, it must be confessed, the best loved. They have *all* proven to me their dutifulness, in ministering to my happiness, as I have descended the vale of years, revering my injunctions for their welfare, and never at any time seriously offending me by their conduct. I repudiate the notion that indulgent parents spoil their children ; to mine I have ever been indulgent, unwilling to thwart their reasonable wishes in any matter relating to their real happiness, and the result has been what I have mentioned. The upshot of my speech, (for a speech it is going to prove,)" continued the old gentleman ; "is this :—I have determined upon giving my daughter to a worthy young fellow, who of late has been making love to her, and whose addresses she has, imprudently, I must confess, since it was without the sanction of her relations or friends, been of late receiving with an *empressment*, which, taking into consideration her ordinary correct conduct, convinces me that she fondly loves the fellow. Even now, I am informed, by my son in law there, into whose guardianship I have of late entrusted her, and whom she supposes in the dark all the time, that she is *tête à tête* with her lover in his house, while we are here enjoying ourselves over the departing year, the gypsy in the meantime supposing me at my residence up the *St.*