

THE
BRITISH COLONIAL MAGAZINE.

Conducted by W. H. SMITH, Author of the "Canadian Gazetteer," &c. &c.

NUMBER XIX.

PRICE 3d.; or 12s. 6d. per Annum.

THE SQUIRE'S DAUGHTER.

Selina Stanfield was one of the prettiest girls in the scattered village of Woodfield; and with her father, a decayed squire of ancient descent, occupied the last remaining ruinous fragment of the old turreted hall at the end of the lane leading to Blackmere Common—as desolate a spot as a traveller may meet with in the course of a ride of thirty miles over the bleak plains that lie on the western extremity of Norfolk. Selina, who had had the misfortune of losing her mother in her childhood, had picked up a sort of desultory education from her father, and an old maiden gentlewoman, of very slender attainments, her aunt; under whose united auspices she learned to read, write, cast accounts, and to play a few tunes on an old cracked harpsichord which had belonged to her grandmother. She could also embroider filigree, and work gentlemen's ruffles; which last accomplishment, all things considered, was rather a super-numerary acquirement for a heroine of the nineteenth century; but Aunt Bridget, who had been celebrated for her performances in this way, assured her pupil that no young lady would be regarded as a well-educated person unless she were capable of executing such handiworks.

At the age of fifteen, Selina was very pretty, and highly sentimental; had read all the old romances in her aunt's closet by stealth; and it was the ardent wish of her heart to experience a few distresses and marvellous adventures; it was, moreover, her secret desire to become the wife of a bandit chief.

Notwithstanding his fine names, no creature could be less like one of those lawless but far-famed desperadoes, than Albert Orlando Fisher, the ruddy, good-

tempered son of a deceased naval lieutenant. Albert, with his poor mother, and eight juvenile brethren, occupied a thatched cottage in the centre of an old monastic enclosure called the Priory; and, for an hour every day, put on his best clothes, for the purpose of shining peerless in the eyes of his fair neighbour, when he walked past her father's gate at noon, or called to bring him a weekly newspaper (a week old) which he had borrowed of the village apothecary for the squire's reading.

Selina was far from being insensible that those attentions were designed for her; and she graciously permitted Albert Orlando to walk by her side to and from church, when papa was confined to his chamber with the gout, and Aunt Bridget staid at home to take care of him. She also condescended to avail herself of his services in smuggling into the house, unknown to papa and aunt, the contraband article of new novels from the circulating-library at the nearest market-town, which was six miles distant from Woodfield. She accepted the daily offering of flowers which he privily made to her, with the rustic but not unpleasing gallantry in which love instructs his most untaught votaries; and she read with assumed dignity, but secret rapture, the "amatory doggerel rhymes, of Cupid's own inditing," which he addressed to her at certain interesting times and seasons, such as birthdays, new years, and Valentine's anniversaries.

She all of a sudden grew vastly intimate with his mother, who, good woman, felt herself greatly honoured by the calls of Miss Selina. She became fond of lonely rambles on Blackmere Common; a similar taste existed on the part of Albert Orlando Fisher; and by some secret