

...with the ladies, after sitting
...at Malcolm's request, to see
...he had lately purchased. From
...they took a stroll through the
...when Lord Malcolm told Beau-
...and passed between himself and
...Mr. Harcourt, and his discovery of Blanche's
...And now, my dear fellow,
...I congratulate you with all my heart; and
...it has made me one of the happiest of men to
...know that Blanche has bestowed her affec-
...on him whom I would have selected
...from all the world to be her husband.

But, my dear Malcolm, Beauchamp
was beginning, when he was cut short by his
friend.
Not another word, Beauchamp. I know
you and Blanche thoroughly, and your deep
strong feelings; you are both alike. There-
fore, I insist on your proposing to her, allow-
ing a little scope for your romantic ideas of
giving her a few months for consideration;
but if at the end of that time you don't
marry her—not supposing an impossibility,
that she will ever change, though you may—
I give you fair notice, old fellow, that I will
cut you out, and shoot you, too, if I can, for
breaking my dear cousin's heart. That is
not a suit of my cogitations on this subject,
Will Beauchamp, since we last parted at
Bampton; and this is my advice, which, for
both our happiness, I trust and believe you
will adopt. Now let us return to the ladies,
or old Harcourt will think we are plotting
some mischief; but had I no other reason
for wishing you to marry her, Blanche Doug-
lass shall never be sold, like a sheep in the
shambles, to the highest bidder, by that
worldly-minded pair, under whose roof she
has the misfortune to be living. Lucky, in-
deed, is it that I happened to arrive just at
this critical moment, when poor Blanche's
happiness might have been wrecked for ever;
wretch, she is but a timid child, and requires
a steady friend and strong arm to protect
her, such as she ought to find in Will Beau-
champ.

That she shall never want, whilst I live,
he replied.
Thank you, Beauchamp; you now speak
like yourself, manly and straightforward;
but no more at present, walls have
ears—and laurels too, as they approached
the house.

A more heterogeneous party never met to-
gether than that selected by the Harcourts
to grace their dinner-table that evening. Sir
Lucius Markham differed on every subject
with Lord Mervyn. Mr. Compton was de-
cidedly an antagonist to him in politics, and
hated by his lordship for showing twice the
number of pheasants, with plenty of foxes
and for being most popular in the
county. Sir Lucius Gwynne and Mr. Ver-
non whose dislike to each other was well
known; and Aunt Gordon, who (from sun-
dry hints given her by Bob Conyers) felt dis-
posed to quarrel with the whole cast's party
at first starting.

The only person who labored assiduously,
though hopelessly, to infuse some little har-
mony into this ill assorted company, was
Selma Markham, who sat next to Lord Mal-
colm. Lord Vancourt was endeavoring to
attract attention by a description of his tra-
vels in Egypt and the Holy Land, and had
been giving an account of the Pyramids,
when Lord Malcolm, turning to Selma, said,
Ah! these Pyramids remind me of the fate
of a travelling companion who was standing
with me on the top of one, when, being seized
with sudden giddiness, he fell, and rolled
from step to step, until he was dashed to
pieces.

How very shocking! exclaimed Selma;
what could you do?

Nothing; he was gone in a moment, be-
fore I missed him from my side; and feeling
myself turning sick and giddy also, as I
looked below, I threw myself down on my
face, to prevent my sharing his untimely and
wretched fate.

Lord Vancourt was silent whilst Malcolm
related this accident, and did not afterwards
deem it expedient to make many more allu-
sions to his own adventures, finding another
had been going over the same ground, who
might probably catch him tripping.

...Mr. Harcourt, perceiving his in-
...to prevent his advances that night,
...prudence gave way, and consoled himself
...with Mrs. Harcourt's society, in whose good
...opinion he had already made rapid progress.
The common topic of conversation was the
annual ball which was to take place at Cher-
rington on the thirty-first of the month, now
quickly approaching.

I shall certainly attend that ball, said
Mrs. Gordon, who had now joined Blanche
and Malcolm, to witness your introduction
to the world, my dear girl; and you will
find me always ready to act as your chaper-
on, as Mrs. Harcourt, I dare say, will be en-
gaged with her numerous friends.

I am so happy to hear you will be there,
dear aunt, said Malcolm, laughing, than if
she were at the Priory; for, rest assured,
your numerous admirers will engage the
dresses for every dance.

She shall not dance more than she likes,
replied Mrs. Gordon; and, when fatigued,
I will find a seat by my side.

By the bye, Blanche, said Malcolm, I
must claim the privilege of trotting out my
fair cousin on this auspicious occasion, by
dancing the first dance with her, as in duty
bound.

Blanche blushed deeply, and not replying,
her cousin said, Then you decline my
handsome offer, eh, Blanche?

Mr. Beauchamp asked me the other day
for the first, but I shall be most happy to
dance with you the second.

Well, dear girl, that will do equally well,
and Constance shall be my first partner, so
that point is settled beforehand, and you
shall be our *vis-à-vis* with Will Beauchamp;
thou art, aunt, that will do nicely, and of course
all eyes will be directed towards the two
handsomest couples in the room. Don't
you think, aunt, I am an uncommonly
smart, good-looking fellow, just as described
in the old ballad?—

He's as tall and as straight as a poplar tree,
And his cheeks are as red as the rose;
And he looks like aquire of high degree,
When dressed in his Sunday's clothes!

My dear Charles, exclaimed Mrs. Gor-
don, how can you quote such trash? you
are a very boy still.

Yes, aunt dear, and I hope to continue
so for some years to come, until arrived at
years of discretion, when I suppose I shall
exclaim

Life's a farce, and all things show it;
I thought so once, but now I know it!

Well, thank goodness, the castle party are
on the wing, and I wish them joy of their
drive home, with that vicious old Mervyn
boxed up with them, who is like a mad dog
when things don't suit him, snapping at
everyone in his way. That girl of his must
lead a happy life with such parents.

Hush, Charles, they are coming towards
us.

To shake hands with Blanche, I suppose,
whispered Malcolm, and try to get her over
to the castle again.

Lady Mervyn, who was leaning on Lord
Vancourt's arm, extended her hand most
graciously to Blanche, who rose as they ap-
proached, and his lordship was about to
make her a similar offer of friendly greeting,
which with a courtesy she declined, and re-
sumed her seat, soon after which all the
other guests took leave.

A frost now set in, which put a stop to
hunting, and Lord Malcolm, as was natural
to suppose, rode over frequently to Bamp-
ton, sometimes taking Blanche with him.
On their return one afternoon, when Blanche
had left the room, Mrs. Harcourt expressed
her disapprobation of her niece accompa-
nying him so often to Bampton.

On what account, Mrs. Harcourt, do you
object to her visiting there? Constance and
Blanche have always been like sisters since
childhood.

They are no longer children; and I wish
my niece to make some higher acquaintances
now, with persons moving in that sphere to
which I hope to see her soon elevated.

...Lord Malcolm might influence his
cousin in favor of Beauchamp, thought the
sooner the thing could be settled the better.

The next day, when Malcolm was out
shooting, Lord Vancourt, under the pretence
of inviting him to a shooting party at the
castle (which he knew very well he would
not accept), called again at Throsoby, and
found the ladies at home; and after sitting
some time, Mrs. Harcourt rose, under the
excuse of having mislaid her handkerchief,
leaving poor Blanche alone with her unwe-
lcome admirer.

Her embarrassment and varying color
having impressed his lordship with the belief
of his having inspired her with an interest
in his favor, he began at first speaking of the
ball, to lead her on, expressing a hope that
she would honor him with her hand in the
first dance.

For that I am engaged, she replied.

The second, then, Miss Douglas? The
same answer, at which my lord bit his lip,
and fire flashed from his dark, piercing eye,
which did not escape Blanche's notice.

May I plead, then, for the next, Miss
Douglas? in which I hope for better suc-
cess.

I do not recollect that I am engaged for
that, and shall be happy to dance with you,
provided it is a quadrille, as I do not waltz.

I must, of course, submit to your own
terms, remarked his lordship; and among
so many advocates for your hand, I consider
myself highly honored by your accepting me
for your partner; and he was proceeding in
a strain of flattery and adulation, every mo-
ment becoming more irksome to poor
Blanche, when Lord Malcolm entered the
room, and she instantly hurried up-stairs.
To account for his lordship's unexpected en-
trance, we must explain, that having gone
out shooting that morning, and posted him-
self on the outside of a small gorse covert on
the hill above the house, his attention was
attracted by a horse galloping on the hard
gravel road, and looking down, he beheld
Lord Vancourt rapidly riding up to
the door. Telling the keeper to go on beat-
ing until his return, he ran down the hill,
and arrived in time to prevent the *clair-
cissement* that Lord Vancourt purposed mak-
ing to his cousin. His annoyance at finding
Blanche had been left alone by Mrs. Har-
court did not tend to improve his ill humor;
and having politely declined Lord Mer-
vyn's invitation, Lord Vancourt rose and left
the room, his horse and groom being at the
door.

The evening of the ball had now arrived,
and about ten o'clock the heiress made her
first appearance in public, leaning on Mrs.
Harcourt's arm, who stalked majestically
into the ball room with the air of the highest
personage in the land. Blanche was dressed
in white, with an elegance and simplicity
which did justice to her beauty as well as her
taste; and with her graceful figure and sweet,
artless expression of countenance, looked the
personification of loveliness. William Beau-
champ, having purposely arrived early, was
waiting with Constance near the door, and
accompanied them, on their entrance, with his
usual frankness of manner; and whilst his
sister was speaking to Mrs. Harcourt, re-en-
gaged Blanche for the first dance.

Mrs. Harcourt, although overhearing her
niece's assent to Beauchamp's request, said
she wished to take a survey of the company
before dancing commenced (for the purpose,
secretly, of parading her charge, and pre-
venting, if possible, her accepting Beau-
champ's arm for the first quadrille); and
with this view kept her talking to some ac-
quaintances at the top of the room until the
sets were formed, notwithstanding Beau-
champ's hints that they must now take their
places, to which Mrs. Harcourt turned a deaf
ear, and persisted in retaining a tight hold
of her niece's arm.

Aunt Harcourt, whispered the poor girl
timidly, I am engaged to Mr. Beau-
champ for the first dance, and he is wait-
ing.

Oh, it does not signify, my dear; you can
dance the second with him, as I wish to in-
troduce you to Lord and Lady Seaton, who,
I see, have just arrived.

How provoking, said Malcolm to Con-
stance, that we cannot have a dance to-
gether with Blanche and Beauchamp; but I
won't be done in this manner, so you must
stand up with me again, Constance, as their
vis-à-vis.

Oh, said Constance, laughing, it is not
etiquette, Charles, to dance two quadrilles in
succession with the same person.

Nonsense about etiquette, Constance! I
will you refuse me for form's sake?

Certainly not, if you particularly wish
it.

That I do, dear girl, and mind we all
four join again in the last dance. Do
you agree to this, Blanche? he inquired.

If Mrs. Harcourt will not be angry at my
dancing twice with William.

You are no longer a child, replied Mal-
colm, to be tied to Mrs. Harcourt's apron
strings, and have a right now to please your-
self; but what say, Aunt Gordon, whose
ideas on such subjects are quite as correct as
Mrs. Harcourt's?

I see no impropriety in such arrange-
ment if Blanche has no other objection.

None whatever, dear aunt; and I shall
be delighted to join Charles and Constance
in the last dance of the evening.

Thank you, dear Blanche, whispered
Beauchamp, and now we must take our
places.

Many scrutinizing and invidious glances
were directed towards the heiress and her
partner as they glided gracefully through the
figure, too much pleased in each other's
company to bestow a thought or care for the
lookers-on. Lord Vancourt remarked to
Vernon—You have underrated him.

Not much, I think, was the reply.

Decidedly, Vernon, he is very gentle-
manly in manners, good-looking, and alto-
gether the sort of man any young girl would
fall desperately in love with; in short, I
must be quick; and even now, from what I
see, my impression is that I am too late in
the field.

You have two to one on your side, my
lord, and Beauchamp has no more chance
than I have.

He has a bold, determined look, replied
Vancourt, just that of a man who will not
stick at trifles when he has a point to gain.

That girl won't run away with any man,
said Vernon, although she may be carried
away. Do you take, my lord? and with the
consent of her guardian, which is the same
thing, supposing the young lady rather coy
to yourself, I should not hesitate one mo-
ment.

That is a very serious affair, Vernon.

Not in your case, my lord. Make your
proposal first to her guardian—if accepted,
you are all right, and I am quit—sure they
will both press your offer upon their ward,
for fear of Beauchamp. This, of course, you
will find out from what Harcourt says in
reply to your proposal; and if she refuses
you can fairly plead their consent, and your
deep, passionate, uncontrollable love for the
young lady, which induced you to have re-
course to a little stratagem. That's all, my
lord, and you will never hear another word
on the subject after the heiress has become
Lady Vancourt. Why, in Scotland, the
thing is settled in five minutes by the black-
smith—bribe him well, and he will get two
other persons to say they heard her say she
would take you for her husband, and of
course you will say you took her for your
wife, and there's an end to the business.
You will then be man and wife, and if she
should run away from you afterwards (which
I don't think likely), her money is safe at
any rate.

Really, Vernon, you are up to a thing or
two, and argue very plausibly; but I must
consider well before I undertake such a pro-
ject, although it appears feasible enough.
Now the quadrille's over, I shall claim her
hand and see what impression I can make
first.

This conversation had been carried on in a
low tone by Lord Vancourt and Vernon, who
were standing apart near a window; and
their attention was so much engrossed by

your promise, you will make me wretched,
as she relinquished his arm, and sat down
by her aunt.

Why, Beauchamp, said Lord Malcolm,
who had been following close behind him,
that hot-headed Irish lord seemed
disposed to pick a quarrel with you, did he
not?

I rather suspected something of the kind
from Vernon's tutoring, as I saw those wor-
thies in deep consultation together whilst we
were dancing, and casting ominous looks to-
wards me; and but for dear Blanche
I would have knocked that insolent lord
across the room for daring to stand in her
way.

Egad, I believe you, Beauchamp, replied
Malcolm; but it won't do to talk of these
things now.

No, no, it is all over and past, and, as I
have promised Mrs. Gordon never to fight a
duel, we must say no more about it.

William, said Mrs. Gordon, you
know your promise, and the penalty of break-
ing it?

Indeed I do, dear aunt, which I will
never incur; and therefore, Malcolm, said
Beauchamp, laughing, I am restricted to a
game of fives or cudgels, with the choice of
which I will favor any man who purposely
insults me.

And I for one, added Malcolm, jocosely,
would not be in the skin of your opponent,
in a ten-foot ring, for a hundred pounds, al-
though we Scots are known to be unco ferd
of the siller.

What does a game of fives mean, Wil-
liam? inquired Blanche.

This, said Beauchamp, good humoredly,
placing his clenched hand in hers, for
fingers and a thumb make a bunch of five or
a fist, which is man's natural weapon of de-
fence; but don't be alarmed, dear Blanche,
he said, lowering his voice. I will pro-
mise not to fight, if you will promise not to
fight with him, or let him make love to you.
That he shall not do, if I can prevent it,
William, rest assured.

Lord Vancourt now advanced, with a very
profound bow, and Blanche rose reluctantly
to take his arm, casting a lingering look be-
hind (as she was led away), implying, 'Don't
you pity me?' Beauchamp felt that appeal,
and instantly followed her, with Bob Con-
yers, who just then came up, and both stood
behind her, whilst she was dancing with
Lord Vancourt; and when disengaged occa-
sionally in the dance, Beauchamp spoke a
few words of encouragement.

Lord Vancourt was nettled at this inter-
ference, and bestowed a full look of mali-
cency on Beauchamp, who returned his glance
with a steady, unflinching gaze, which some-
what disconcerting his lordship, prevented an
effusion of those soft speeches he had pro-
posed for the occasion. To add more to his
discomfort, also, Captain Melville now joined
Conyers, and kept his eye steadily fixed on
his lordship's movements. Of all in that
room Lord Vancourt dreaded Melville, who
was acquainted with his peccadilloes, and
having heard him engage Miss Douglas for
the next dance, feared he would enlighten
her on his real position, so that he felt still
at ease as to prove anything but agreeable to
his fair partner.

The dance being concluded, Vancourt im-
mediately led her to Mrs. Harcourt, where
he thought Beauchamp or Conyers could not
follow; and, being offered a seat by that lady,
he sat down by Blanche, hoping to prevent
her dancing with Melville.

But the captain, guessing his purpose, im-
mediately approached, notwithstanding my
lord's forbidding aspect, and offered his arm,
which, glad to escape from her tormentor,
she readily accepted.

On walking away, Melville asked Blanche
if she had known Lord Vancourt long. No,
was the reply; I was introduced to him a
short time since only, at Lord Mervyn's,
when you dined there.

What do you think of him? he asked,
rather abruptly.

Very agreeable and entertaining, was
the reply.

To be Continued.