

vernor I was well acquainted with, and I was by him invited to pass a few days at his house. You may imagine I did not refuse the invitation. I must tell you, that at this time I knew that her cousin, Ned Vernon—a chum of mine—was paying great attention to Agnes; in fact, he made me his confidant. The few days passed delightfully. Agnes was very lively, and so was I, and we had always time to enjoy each other's society. By degrees, I found myself becoming deeply impassioned with Miss Harcourt, and more than once was I tempted to ascertain whether I stood any chance with Ned Vernon; but honour always stopped my mouth. "What!" says old conscience to me, "be his confidant, and steal away her affections? It won't do, Master Walter Pencil—you must be off, to save your credit." "Agreed, good conscience," answered I—(mind you, I was in a ruminating fit)—"I will be off tomorrow to Cheltenham." This resolve I determined to announce to Agnes that night.

I don't know how it was, but I drank a little too deeply that day, and, on my entry into the drawing-room, felt, I must say, rather feverish. There I found Miss Harcourt and several of her friends, one of whom I was shortly after introduced to. Her name, Louisa Burton—rather a largeish style of woman, but showy—sang extremely well, and very conversational. More of her anon. It was after a delicious waltz, that Agnes and I were seated in a window, enjoying a cool evening breeze—not such a north-west breeze as we enjoy here in winter, but a regular poetical breeze—quite the breeze for the moment and place. Now's my time, thought I—so here goes:

"I am sorry to say, Miss Harcourt, that I am compelled to leave your delightful home tomorrow, at day-break."

I watched her countenance narrowly, and, to my half horror, half delight, saw a complete change; she hastily answered:

"Why—so soon, Mr. Pencil, and so suddenly! I trust that you have heard no ill tidings."

"None—but my leave will soon expire, and I must go to Cheltenham; but, Miss Harcourt, I am about to take a great liberty, which I trust you will excuse, as nothing but the interest I feel in your welfare, and that of a friend, whose fate must be decided by your determination, would induce me to address you upon a subject of so delicate a nature." I then spoke in most favourable terms of Edward Vernon, and represented his affections for her, and that, should she listen to his wish, he would be more steady than he had been of late—for Ned was a wild fellow, at best.

Agnes listened with attention, but cut me short by saying:

"Mr. Pencil, I feel grateful for the kind interest you have expressed in my happiness, but I pray of you to induce Edward Vernon to place his affections

elsewhere, as I can never be his wife. I love him as a brother, but circumstances must prevent our ever being more nearly related than we now are."

"Miss Harcourt, will you excuse that my anxiety for a friend should make me so impertinent as to ask what those circumstances may be?"

"Our minds, Mr. Pencil, are not, in the first place, formed alike, and——"

"Your affections are otherwise engaged. Strange, that both Edward and your father are ignorant of such being the case."

Here a thought flashed across my mind, which was confirmed on seeing her in tears. What was afterwards said is of no consequence; but that night I went to bed, engaged to Agnes, and over 'head and ears' in love. I did *not* go to Cheltenham next morning!

To my application for his daughter's hand, Mr. Harcourt answered, that he had no objection to the match, save on account of my age; and that if Agnes and myself continued to be of the same mind, we might be united as soon as I should attain the age of majority. Edward, quite resigned to his fate, became my confidant, and, at the end of a year, I returned, on leave, to Bath. There I walked, and rode, and danced, and sung with Agnes, and our time was delightfully spent—till Fortune chose, in one of her freaks, to kick the beam, and down tumbled my splendid fabric. I had dined with some brother officers, and we had drank most freely—so much so that I was quite intoxicated when I went into the drawing-room, at Mr. Harcourt's. The lights and music, and the waltzers, in no way assisted to restore my steadiness. With some difficulty I found Agnes, who, with her cousin, Miss Daly, was seated at the farther end of the room, and when, with unsteady step and hiccupping address, I asked her to dance, she quietly refused, and rising, quitted her seat, with her cousin, and walked off, leaving my lordship most stupidly stupified. My cursed temper broke out, and, like all drunken men, conceiving myself injured, I became furious, and instantly engaged a lady to dance, who did not perceive my state, from being a stranger to me. I attempted to waltz, but, before I had made three turns, fell down, cut my head against the wainscoting of the room, and was carried off in a state of insensibility. When I revived, I found my arm bandaged, and a surgeon in the act of bleeding me. I thought I saw Agnes, but she vanished, and I lay all night in a dreadful state, with racking pains in my head, and devoutly cursing my folly.

I did not see Agnes the next day, and, on calling at Mr. Harcourt's the following morning, I perceived her at a window; but she left as soon as I came to the door. Guess my astonishment, when the servant denied her being at home.

"Go up to Miss Harcourt, and say that I am here."