

Lawrence. I have made every enquiry respecting her lover; he entirely meets my approbation, and although not as high in life as some of you would wish him to be, yet he is one of your lads, if I mistake not greatly, who are calculated to attain a level with the best and the proudest of us. For the matter of his having paid his addresses to my daughter, without the sanction of mine, or of her temporary guardian's approval, I can easily overlook. 'Tis a "trick of youth," of which any young fellow, under similar circumstances, would have been guilty. I am persuaded that his intentions have been honourable, and that is sufficient palliation in my eyes for his boldness. To the *intended nuptials* then," concluded he; "for I am bent upon their union, and even this night we must give them a surprise."

Return we now to our lovers, Walter Montaigne and Frances Stanley; they have been for some time together, quaffing deeply from the bright and soul-fraught glances of each other, of the intoxicating draught of love, unfevered by a single desire which would have done violence to the purity of an angel. Walter felt as if he could have knelt down and worshipped the beautiful being who was before him, so overcome was he by her confiding reliance on his honour, and due appreciation of professions, of which, from his unobtrusive and sensitive nature, ever the accompaniment of merit and intelligence, he was withal chary to a degree that might have been productive of doubt in mind that could less correctly interpret his real feelings than could that of our own gentle Fanny. But, amid this soul-felt interchange of emotions, comes an interruption in the shape of a violent knocking and stamping at the door. Alarm takes possession, particularly of the maiden's mind, as from the startling circumstance, she anticipates the earlier than expected return of her relations; the heart of the youth the while is throbbing with apprehension at the probability of finding himself in a position particularly awkward and embarrassing. What is to be done? 'Tis useless to think of alternatives; circumstances do not admit of any. Exposure of the maiden's imprudence, and of the temerity of the youth, is inevitable, and their only plan of conduct is to put a bold face upon the matter. The hall door has been opened, and the same party to whom we have already partly introduced the reader, come pouring into the room, headed by that same benevolent looking old gentleman, of whom we have already spoken. Our plot is hastening to its *dénouement*—in the said old gentleman the reader may identify the father of Frances Stanley. "My own dear papa!" exclaims the daughter, rushing into the arms of her father, forgetting, in the unexpected pleasure of seeing him, both her lover and the confusion incident to the embarrassing exposure of her imprudence. "My dear child!" responded the

father, as his beloved daughter is pressed to his heart; the old gentleman's eyes meanwhile suffused with a moisture, which tells of the grateful emotions of pride and pleasure that are working at his heart. In the meantime, Walter Montaigne, unintroduced to the company, greatly confused by the awkwardness of his situation, yet notwithstanding gazing with interested feelings upon the affectionate meeting of that venerable father with his darling child, is standing apart, waiting the result of this unexpected interruption. A significant look from the old gentleman, and Walter is left alone with the father and child. The latter has recovered herself, and with blushing timidity has presented Walter to her father. With an open frankness of demeanour, which greatly assists in restoring the mind of Walter to a composed state, the old gentleman has offered him his hand. "Come, my dear fellow," breaks out the father, interrupting an apologetic address from Walter; "say no more about it, I know all; for various considerations, I forgive all that is past, and I here not only sanction with my full approval your suit to my daughter, but I will bestow on her a dower, which, with the talents and proper habits that I know belong to you, will not fail to secure to you a sufficient competence for the married state."

Astonished at the turn which affairs had taken, Walter could but stammer forth his acknowledgments, amid reiterated professions of an overpowering and respectful passion, which he was desirous of justly impressing on the father's mind, had been the sole incentive of his importunate suit.

It was late on the New Year's eve in question, when Walter Montaigne left that suburban cottage, his brain in a perfect whirl between delight and astonishment. He could scarcely believe he was awake, so like the phantasmagoria of a dream did the whole occurrences of that evening appear to his intoxicated senses—the idol which his heart had formed to itself, on the possession of which seemed to depend the "weal or woe" of his future fate, had suddenly and unexpectedly been placed within his reach, and deep and heartfelt were his cogitations on the subject, as he wended his way to his lodgings in the city; to his mind the entire circumstance appearing as the realization of a romantic dream, over which his imagination had fondly brooded, until, Prometheus like, it seemed to have called it into actual and embodied existence!

It was some nine or ten summers subsequent to the New Year's eve on which took place the circumstances embodied in the foregoing sketch, that the author thereof had occasion, on his way to the metropolis of a neighbouring republic, to tarry for a day or two at a delightful residence, situated at the extremity of a flourishing town in the sister province. It was an elegant cottage of spacious dimensions,