

of carriages, anything beyond a walking pace is extremely problematical. The slow order of rotation in which the wheels move nerves however, in place of a conversation for the equestrians who are seen lounging by the side of those wheels which contain anything like a pretty face, or a partie in other respects desirable, discussing the fashionable topics of the day. Numerous were the polite bows of recognition directed to Lady Malcolm by her aristocratic acquaintances on passing her carriage. But the two most portentious affixions to each side of the carriage were Lord Henry Baynton (second son of the Duke of R—) and Sir John Martingale, a young sporting baronet of large fortune, both well known to Lord Malcolm, who being introduced to Blanche and Constance, maintained their position for some time to the exclusion of several others, equally attracted by the beauty of their fair occupants of Lady Malcolm's carriage, and hovering near in the hopes of an introduction.

Lord Henry having exhausted his fund of topics, generally considered so entertaining and interesting to young ladies, about the opera, balls, parties, reunions, receptions, and other gaities, *quocunque nomine gaudet*, and receiving very unsatisfactory replies from Blanche to his various inquiries as to meeting her at the Duchess of C—'s party on the 10th; the Countess of D—'s ball on the 14th; or Lady Mary W—'s grand concert at the Hanover Square Rooms on the 14th, he raised his hat and withdrew, being soon after joined by the baronet, who had likewise expended his stock of ammunition on Constance with little better success.

'Well, Baynton,' inquired Martingale, 'what do you think of the heiress?'
'Nonplussed, my dear fellow—can't make her out; fine, handsome girl, with splendid eyes and beautiful complexion, that is all I know; but for conversation, whether from reserve or shyness, I could not get her to speak a dozen words.'

'She don't fancy you, I suppose, Baynton—not good-looking enough.'

'Well, as to that, Martingale, I flatter myself that is not the reason, unless every mirror I look into is a false reflector. But how did you fare with Miss Beauchamp?'
'Oh, well enough whilst we conversed on country affairs, fox-hunting, riding, &c.; but we came to a dead stop at the very threshold of the Opera House; in short, these two girls are only just fresh up from the country; but we shall soon alter them to town paces and town faces also.'

'Well, Martingale, I'm for the heiress, mind, who with her ten thousand a year would suit my book exactly.'

'Ah, I dare say, Baynton, and make up for that devilish bad book you made on the St. Leger of last year. That was a most untoward event, my dear fellow; and if you go often at that killing pace, ten thousand a year won't hold out with you very long. Moreover, Malcolm, although a capital fellow, is a cannie Scot at bottom, unco' sharp about the siller, and, depend upon it, he will take proper care that his cousin's money is made safe enough to herself before she marries.'

'If I can win the young lady over to my side, Martingale, the odds against Malcolm are fifty to one; so I shall try my luck, at any rate.'

As Lord Henry retired from Lady Malcolm's carriage, Lord Danby, who had been watching for the opportunity, drew up on the same side, and his sudden appearance caused the color to rise on Blanche's cheeks, from the remembrance of their last parting at the Priory. The whole occurrences of that eventful day instantly rising to her mind, caused such a revulsion of feeling that her agitation became perceptible to Lady Malcolm, as she could scarcely at first reply to Lord Danby's salutation; but, soon recovering herself, she answered his several inquiries with such indifference and coolness as to convince him that the sentence she had been forced to pronounce was not likely to be reversed or re-considered. Danby, on

all, and on whose account principally this detestable exhibition is still fostered in a professedly Christian community; for my impression is decidedly that these immodest displays fan the flame of passion of men, and tend to keep alive those unbalanced desires which sensualists only will and do so freely indulge. To such the ballet at the Opera House is the grand attraction; and so long as it is countenanced by those ladies in the higher sphere of life who give the tone to fashion, so long will it continue a reflection on their own characters and a disgrace to a civilized nation. Can it be a matter of surprise that right-thinking Christian ministers inveigh so bitterly against theatrical exhibitions and balls, when their tendency is so palpably to debase and demoralize the minds of young persons of both sexes? Were plays divested of coarse jokes and double entendres, they would be restored to their primitive province, as a medium of instruction and amusement, instead of, as now, the means of corruption to youth; and of balls it may be said, there is nothing objectionable in our country dances or quadrilles; but the foreign introduction of waltzes and polkas, now so universally adopted, tends to great laxity of manners, and of morals also. Human nature is ever prone to evil, and needs no excitement to vice; the difficulty is to check these inclinations. But in the cases alluded to, as if natural passions were not strong enough and hard enough to subdue, additional excitations are added. Modesty is like the fresh bloom on a plum, which, when once rubbed off, never returns.

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The first person to accost Blanche on her entering the room was Lord Danby, who engaged her for the first dance, and begged Lady Malcolm to allow him to introduce his mother, the Duchess of B—, to herself and Miss Douglas, which was, of course, gladly acceded to. Blanche's natural timidity was considerably increased on finding herself among a set of perfect strangers, and it must be confessed she would have gladly preferred being a looker-on instead of being looked at; but having no excuse to refuse Lord Danby, she was obliged, though most reluctantly, to take her place in the dance, and to be stared at and pulled to pieces by the other young ladies who entertained certain views of conquest over her highly favored partner.

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'Oh, indeed! than Danby has turned fortune-hunter, I suppose?'

'I think not,' was the reply. 'His opinion on that point is pretty well known, although he was sitting with her the whole of the opera in Lady Malcolm's box the other night.'

'Well, I am surprised at his want of taste. What can he see to admire in a bashful, country-looking girl, without the semblance of fashion about her?'

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were personally known to Lady Malcolm. 'Who can that be,' inquired the Duchess of B— of Lord Henry Baynton, who had just entered her box, sitting with Lady Malcolm? She appears very young, and very pretty, although evidently new to London life, from her bashful and timid looks.'

'That is Miss Douglas, your grace, Lady Malcolm's niece, who makes her first appearance to-night in the fashionable world.'

'Oh, I remember now the name—the young lady whom Lord Vancourt attempted to run away with.'

'The same,' replied Lord Henry, 'and, by all accounts, Vancourt made a very near thing of it.'

'Pray lend me your glass a moment,' exclaimed Lady Mary, the Duchess's eldest daughter (who had now entered on her fifth London season), 'I really must have a thorough scrutiny of Danby's idol; for no one, in his opinion, can be compared to Miss Douglas—and there, I declare, is that foolish boy just entering their box.'

'Well, Lady Mary, what is your opinion?' asked Lord Henry, 'as I should think you must by this time have scanned her features sufficiently to know her again.'

'Pretty, rather, though country-looking, with a super-abundance of pink.'

'Occasioned, perhaps,' suggested Lord Henry, 'by Danby's appearance; but look again—there is not too much vermilion now, or my vision is defective. She has fine eyes and handsome features, certainly.'

'Oh—so, so,' replied Lady Mary, rather contemptuously, returning the glass to her mother; 'but Danby takes extraordinary fancies into his head about women.'

Being offered a seat, Lord Danby remained some time in Lady Malcolm's box, conversing with the ladies, and occasionally addressing observations on the opera to Blanche, which were rather more courteously received than at their first meeting in the park. In fact, Blanche, reproaching herself, on reflection, for her very distant behavior to him on that occasion, now relaxed into a more friendly mood, seeing her repulsion of him then had been noticed by her aunt, whose looks were the reverse of commendatory.

Ineffectual efforts were made by other loungers, who occasionally looked in, to obtain an introduction to the heiress; but Lord Danby tenaciously holding his position, as a bar to all others approaching her, in whom he still took so deep an interest, remained oblivious of the lapse of time until the last act of the opera. When, apologising for his long intrusion, he reluctantly left the box.

When the curtain fell, Lady Malcolm expressed her intention to remain during the ballet also, and Blanche, remembering Beauchamp's remarks, rose from her seat, and making an excuse that the glare of the lights affected her eyes, Constance changed places with her, and she felt relieved on finding herself near Mrs. Gordon, who, equally displeased with the prospect of the coming exhibition, had vainly endeavored to persuade her sister to leave the house before the ballet commenced.

'You are quite right, my love,' whispered her aunt, 'in withdrawing from that exposed position, although my sister and Charles laugh at our prudish ideas, as they call them, about the danseuses. For the future, I shall order my own carriage to be in waiting after the opera is over; but I did not wish, on our first appearance, to give offence to my sister.'

As Taglioni flitted across the stage, throwing herself into her most graceful though not very modest attitude, Malcolm, delighting to tease his cousin, said, 'There, Blanche, is not that quite perfection?' And now, as with a twirl she stood for a second on her toes, 'Wouldn't you give a good deal to be able to astonish Will Beauchamp with such a feat as that?' or 'Look now, that pirouette—my stars! how Beauchamp would stare to see his darling perform such an evolution!'

'I'm surprised at you, Charles,' said Mrs. Gordon, 'tormenting your cousin in this

all, and on whose account principally this detestable exhibition is still fostered in a professedly Christian community; for my impression is decidedly that these immodest displays fan the flame of passion of men, and tend to keep alive those unbalanced desires which sensualists only will and do so freely indulge. To such the ballet at the Opera House is the grand attraction; and so long as it is countenanced by those ladies in the higher sphere of life who give the tone to fashion, so long will it continue a reflection on their own characters and a disgrace to a civilized nation. Can it be a matter of surprise that right-thinking Christian ministers inveigh so bitterly against theatrical exhibitions and balls, when their tendency is so palpably to debase and demoralize the minds of young persons of both sexes? Were plays divested of coarse jokes and double entendres, they would be restored to their primitive province, as a medium of instruction and amusement, instead of, as now, the means of corruption to youth; and of balls it may be said, there is nothing objectionable in our country dances or quadrilles; but the foreign introduction of waltzes and polkas, now so universally adopted, tends to great laxity of manners, and of morals also. Human nature is ever prone to evil, and needs no excitement to vice; the difficulty is to check these inclinations. But in the cases alluded to, as if natural passions were not strong enough and hard enough to subdue, additional excitations are added. Modesty is like the fresh bloom on a plum, which, when once rubbed off, never returns.

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'Well, I thought so, Malcolm, and all the better, in my opinion, on that account. Will you introduce me?'

'With pleasure, if we can work our way round to where she stands.'

This being effected after some trouble, Malcolm presented Lord Ayrshire to Blanche, and he at once begged the honor of her hand for the next dance. This being granted, he remained standing near her until the quadrille was finished, when his arm was offered and accepted. Great was the dismay of Blanche when a waltz tune struck her ear, and her partner was proceeding to take up his position in the circle now quickly forming.

'I beg your pardon,' she said; 'but, instead of the next dance, I ought to have said the next quadrille, as I do it waltz.'

'Surely you will not decline one or two turns to this enchanting air, Miss Douglas?'

'Yes, my lord,' Blanche replied, firmly, 'indeed I must, and shall be obliged if you will conduct me to my aunt, Lady Malcolm—or, as I see my cousin opposite, I can take his arm.'

'Indeed, Miss Douglas, I will with great pleasure conduct you to Lady Malcolm, whom I have the honor of knowing.'

On finding her aunt, she expressed her surprise at Blanche not joining in the dance, exclaiming, 'Why, my dear, your country notions on this and some other points are rather too particular, and you really must give up these old-fashioned fancies.'

'I hope not, dear aunt,' was the quiet reply, as she sat down by her side.

'I am sorry to differ with your ladyship upon such an important point,' added Lord Ayrshire, good-humoredly; 'but I must applaud Miss Douglas' resolution to act as her own feelings dictate.'

'What! teaching rebellion to my niece, Lord Ayrshire?' replied Lady Malcolm, laughing.

'Not that exactly, I hope; but as I am used to myself the right of acting according to my own opinions, I am liberal enough to concede the same privilege to others; and as Miss Douglas disapproves of the waltz, I must respect her judgment, although pronounced against myself.'

'Then, altho' a decided waltzer yourself, rejoined Lady Malcolm, 'you will not stand up in its defence?'

'Not absolutely, and I am not quite sure that I should select a waltzing young lady for my wife.'

'Very consistent indeed, my lord, inducing young girls to act contrary to what you consider right, and then condemning them for yielding to your own persuasions.'

'Or rather, you should say, Lady Malcolm, yielding to their own inclinations, for they are quite free to say yes or no.'

Lord Ayrshire remained talking with Lady Malcolm and Blanche until the waltzers had ceased their gyrations, when he led her forth to take their places in the quadrille then forming; and from his having expressed opinions so congenial to her own, Blanche feeling more at ease in his company, his restraint and timidity gave way to greater cheerfulness and vivacity. Her partner, with the tact of a man of the world, succeeded without much difficulty in obtaining a tolerable insight into her character and disposition by the answers returned to his various questions, and he was as much charmed with her *naivete* of mind, as he had at first sight been with her beauty and elegance of person. Lord Ayrshire's attentions to Miss Douglas did not fail to be noticed by Lord Henry Baynton, and many others, who drew forth the remarks—

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