

prevented him from engaging in any of the active duties of life. No man's hand was ever raised against him: on the contrary, he was well liked by his associates, while his conversational ability and pleasing address gave him, in his early manhood, an *entree* into the best of society. Arriving at last at the hotel, Langdon threw himself into an easy chair, with all the air and languor of one who had been satiated with the world's pleasures and follies.

CHAPTER II.

"How did you enjoy," said Markham, "your trip to the Continent?"

"O, excellently, at times; but, travelling as I did alone, I often felt a strange feeling of satiety and uneasiness, which even the novelty of the scenes I dwelt amidst, and the varied society observed, could not altogether remove. The heart will cling, no matter through what climes we may wander, to the associations and joys of childhood. I have seen all the wonders of Europe, the lakes of England, the curiosities of Ireland, the bold and romantic scenery of Scotland, besides visiting the most noted places hallowed by the footsteps of genius; but after all, my heart thrilled with a stronger pulsation of delight when I beheld again the bold and romantic shores of my own loved home! What a school of experience travel is, to one whose mind has been stored with the wisdom of the past, and who is careful to observe men, manners and things! There is an additional light shed in the upper story of that man's mind who fully appreciates the benefits of travel, and to whom the great truth is manifestly apparent, that there is much in this world to see and to know, which makes the heart charitable and lenient to the faults of others, and truly expands the mind. He cannot but return a wiser and better man, especially if his previous habits and formation of character have been such as to insure him success in life.

"But with all my worldly wisdom, I have erred most egregiously. Passion has found and kept me its veriest slave: but I intend now to make atonement for the sins of my youth. If I can only get a start in any business,—and perhaps you could assist me,—I shall endeavour, by industry, steadiness and application, to regain what I have foolishly squandered, and obtain, I hope, the esteem and confidence of my family."

"I trust you may," replied Markham, "and what little influence I have shall be exerted in your behalf. In the meantime, remain in the city: go not home yet. I think you can be of some service to me in this business connected with my vessel. I believe your family reside in the country?"

"Yes: about forty miles from the city. It is my intention of remaining for some weeks here, as I hear the travelling is very bad."

"In that case," said Markham, "you will have an opportunity of visiting your old friends, and perhaps you will find some employment suited to your talents. Whatever situation you

occupy, I hope you will remain in it, and not allow the seductive influences of society, nor the entreaties of friends, to entice you from your duties. A younger man than you, and probably less experienced—if age gives us experience and foresight—I hope you will pardon me if I talk to you more in the language of a counsellor than of a friend; but I know well how stale and wearisome a close attention to business or professional duties appear to one like you, after spending many years in luxurious ease, travel and enjoyment."

"I am well aware of that, but I hope to conquer all feelings of that nature. In fact work, as a means of existence, has become a stern necessity, for my wealth is nearly spent. I must soon learn to drink from fresher, and, I hope, purer springs."

He leaned back in his chair, and, taking from his pocket a beautiful cigar case, he lit one cigar and gave the other to Markham.

Silence followed, as they relapsed into the smokers' reverie. They obeyed the custom of the East, which demands instant quietness and repose after the pipes are lighted; and for a few minutes they both sat watching the curling clouds of smoke as if regardless of each other's presence.

It was a pleasing sight to notice the contrast between the two:—the manly form of the one, with the large and well-defined features, yet wearing an expression of pensive and anxious thoughtfulness,—to the tall, slight, graceful form of the other, with the handsome, regular features, and a countenance and head that indicated intellectual power, culture and refinement. But in Langdon's face, handsome as it was, there was an expression of scorn and pride, combined with a settled shade of melancholy and sorrow, that gave indication of one who had too early tasted life's bitter cup.

"Apropos," said Langdon, taking the cigar from his mouth, and holding it with admirable grace in his right hand,—“you have not told me of the queens of society, and the many pleasing episodes of gossip and scandal which usually occur in a small city like this.”

"I am sorry to say," replied Markham, "that I am in no mood to divert your mind with conversation of that kind. It is true I go oftener in society now than I did when you resided here, but I pay little attention to any idle story which I hear, and leave immediately that circle who ignore the great end of society and conversation."

"Ah! I understand," replied Langdon,—“your gold is in ingots, and you cannot deal in the small change that passes current in the mart of society. But tell me, who is queen now—at least among the ladies with whom you and I are acquainted? Does Kate Vernon reign yet?—the petulant, impatient beauty, with whom you carried on a game of flirtation, some years ago. What a pity that the love which impels one to that sort of thing should ever wane! And Laura Steadman, too,—”