

CHAPTER II.

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Before proceeding further it is necessary to inform the reader who Clara and Charles Holstrom were ; and, also, to narrate the varied and complicated circumstances of several years preceding this eventful night.

Charles Holstrom was the youngest son of a London tradesman. He had attended school with Frederick, and was now working in the same shop and at the same business with him. He was possessed of a robust physical appearance, somewhat coarsely featured ;—of a bold, but humorous disposition—at times impertinent, and even repulsive in his manner. Frederick had really never considered him as a confidential friend ; but their long acquaintance with each other, and the many associations of their united course in life had induced him to consider Charles as a respected friend rather than a fellow companion ; and from these circumstances alone the Charlstons had received him as an occasional visitor to their house.

Clara Hazledon was the only daughter of a poor but respectable widow with whom the Charlston family had been long acquainted. Previous to their removal to Fleet street they