

evening of that day, he felt that life was to be begun again, that all the toils and anxieties, the wearisome suspense and cruel disappointments of a business life, had left him like a frail barque stranded on the shores of want and sorrow. Sympathy from many of his business friends was not denied him, though not generally popular, there were a few persons that mutual reciprocations and good will had endeared to him. The news room was crowded on the evening of which I write, for the continual storms of the preceeding week had done considerable damage to shipping; while many came to hear tidings of the wealth they had committed to the deep, with dismay and fear on their faces. The unsettled state of affairs on the Continent, and the failure of many Banks and business firms, had produced a kind of panic, which the minds of many were little prepared to realize. Persons living in the enjoyment of wealth, and long accustomed to the refined amenities of life, were in a few days reduced to poverty and want, while hundreds of the poorer classes, dependent on the rich, were brought to mingle with that great mass where vice, misery and wretchedness prevail.

This state of things, not without effects in America, had produced a great shock, shaking the great masses of society, like a great stone which one throws in a lake, at first a small circle is made only, and then another, until the water, even the shore, is everywhere disturbed.

Markham was glancing over the paper with the listless air of a person indifferent to the progress of this world's welfare, when a slight touch upon his shoulder instantly made him turn around. At once his hand was grasped by one whom he had long known, but whose familiar face he had not seen for many months.

"Ah! Langdon, how are you? I'm really glad to see you," replied Markham. "This is a pleasure quite unexpected as it is surprising. I will not say you had altogether faded from my recollection,—but to tell the truth, I did not expect you would visit this city for many years to come: I heard you had gone to reside in a Southern climate. Ah! my old friend, there is some attraction that brings you to your old home again!"

The person addressed was tall and good-looking, but somewhat shabbily attired, and bore the unmistakable traces of dissipation on his fine countenance.

"Well Markham," he replied, "I have been wandering a good deal since you last saw me, but I feel glad to get home again. How have you been for this many a day? The wreck of the Janta in the Bay must, I think, be a severe loss to you,—but, I suppose, you had the vessel well insured?"

"I regret to say," "the amount will scarcely cover the cost of the cargo,—but as I have no heavy payments to make for some months, I expect to get safely over this trouble."

"I trust you may," Langdon replied, "for one with your application to business—steadiness

and perseverance—must, surely, in the end succeed. As, for myself, I have long despaired making any figure in the world. I am grown old before my time, and having frittered away the very best part of my life, I look forward to the future with feelings of indifference and apathy. Ah! Markham. Life is like wine,—he who would taste its sweetness must not drain the cup to the dregs."

"Where have you been residing," replied Markham, "since I last saw you?"

"On the death of my father, whom I think you must remember, I became possessed of a considerable amount of money, which, to a young man differently constituted than myself, would be a sufficient sum to start him in the world. But my former mode of life did not teach me the value of money—and not having engaged in any business or profession—and leading a life of idleness,—my old yearnings for travel induced me to wander again. I have just returned from the Continent, having spent the most of my time in England and Germany. But come to my room, I have much to tell you about Paris, London, and New York, and the wild pranks of German students."

The speaker, Charles Langdon, whom I have just introduced to the reader, was the son of a gentleman who possessed a princely estate, the reward of long years of successful labour in the profession of law. He, dying at an advanced age, left a large sum to his only son, Charles. The youth graduated with high honours after leaving college. Soon afterwards he travelled in the States, and became attached to a fascinating and handsome actress, whom he chanced to meet at a celebrated watering place.

The news of this, together with habits of dissipation, which he then formed, partially estranged him from his friends and family, and for many years he led a wild and reckless life in the most depraved circles on the Continent. He did not lose, however, that peculiar charm of manner, or divest himself of those external properties which the world consider as characteristics of a gentleman. Having squandered the princely amount left him by his father, in the vain pursuit of happiness and luxurious pleasure, and having inwardly felt the worthlessness of that enjoyment which cannot satisfy the heart, because immoral and degrading, he had come back to his native home with the promise, let us hope, of becoming a wiser and a better man.

The two walked arm in arm through the storm of wind and snow which had then arose in its fury, and a stranger noticing them at the time as they conversed with earnestness and attention, would doubt that any separation had taken place between them. In former years Markham had been closely acquainted with Langdon, and recognized and appreciated his brilliant attainments and scholarship. His faults were not owing to the absence of those qualities which make the very principle and essence of character; but from a feebleness of purpose and a want of steadiness and application, which