

not gone well. He knew this as far as the wreck was concerned, if the Captain's statement could be relied upon; but he felt now as though he was about to receive some ill-fated blow, which would destroy his happiness for ever. The intelligence he received concerning Venetia, and her visit with Valdemar to the wreck, gave him considerable perplexity and anxiety of mind, and pained him like the thrust of a dagger to the heart.

#### CHAPTER IV.

Langdon sat quietly reading a newspaper, now and again stopping to scrutinize the countenance of his friend, who sat, with arms folded, absorbed in his own reflections.

After a ride of half an hour the cars reached Norwich, when the two proceeded to the house of Mr. Gibson. The walk was a long one, but the change of scene, and the fresh morning air and sunshine, gave a keen sense of enjoyment and buoyant hope to the hour, that even Markham forgot his gloom and sadness.

In a short time they arrived at the house and were ushered into the library, where sat Mr. Gibson amid a pile of books and papers. He was a white-haired venerable looking gentleman, and, notwithstanding his advanced age, hale and hearty.

"This is my favorite retreat," he said, (taking Markham by the hand and shaking it warmly,) "but sometimes they will not allow me even here to rest in peace."

"Mr. Langdon," said Markham, introducing his friend.

"I beg your pardon," said the old gentleman, "for not noticing you before, but my sight is fast failing. Markham," he said, turning to the latter, "Mr. Langdon and myself are not strangers, I assure you. I remember him well in his youth; but after young people pass a certain age, and go away for some time from the home of their childhood, they soon fade from the recollection of persons whose days are drawing near to the tomb."

"Have you been long away from the city?" enquired the old gentleman of Langdon.

"Some ten years," the latter replied. "I have come home," he continued, "to profit by my experience of travel, and to put what philosophy I have learned into practice."

The conversation went *swimmingly* on for some minutes, Langdon giving a graphic and descriptive account of the many various scenes and sights he had witnessed abroad.

The old gentleman was in excellent spirits, and, having passed over many of the scenes described, he conversed with that frankness of manner and warmth of intimacy which is rare as it is valuable. Ah! there is nothing which tends so much to cement friendship as conversation with one who has travelled over the same scenes we have been a witness of, or read the same books with us.

"I regret very much indeed, John," said the old gentleman, addressing him by his christian name, and with a tone of touching tenderness

in his voice, "the loss you sustain by the wreck of your vessel. It was with reference to this unfortunate occurrence that I addressed you a note which I presume you received. For the sake of your father, who was a good and true friend to me, and the recollection of our early and long acquaintance, I shall be most happy to assist you in any way you desire, either by counsel or the advancement to you of a portion of my wealth."

"I am very grateful for your kind and considerate offer, and shall avail myself of it should occasion require; but at present I think I can see my way pretty clearly to the end. I received intelligence," continued Markham, "this morning, that the Captain had been here:—perhaps you could inform me if he has had any persons employed to save any of the materials of the wreck?"

"I do not know for certainty. When the intelligence reached me, George—whom you will recollect was quite young when you were last here—went to see the wreck with Venetia. There they met the Captain, who seems to be a perfect gentleman by education and address. They had quite a long conversation, stating of course they knew you, and, after remaining a long time, George invited him to call when on his way to the city. He has been here since the unlucky event took place, and this morning started for Westport beach, with Venetia and two ladies, to look after some materials that had drifted ashore."

A slight flush rose in Markham's countenance as these words were uttered, which Langdon instantly perceived. He knew then that a pang of sickening jealousy, distrust and suspicion had smote him to the heart, and that the still deeper trial of love had yet to be borne.

"It is my intention to go immediately there, as I wish to see Capt. Valdemar on some important business," said Markham calmly, and with a slight attempt to conceal his emotion. "Mr. Langdon has kindly consented to accompany me. Is the drive a long one?"

"I think it is nearly five miles from here; but had you not better stay and take dinner with us before you start?"

"Thank you; I am sorry I can not avail myself of your hospitality and kindness: at present my time is limited, as I return to the city to-night. But, as Langdon informs me, he intends to remain in Norwich for the purpose of seeing some of his old friends, and as we have since his return home, become very much attached to each other, it is my purpose to visit Norwich again as soon as opportunity will permit."

The old gentleman looked towards Langdon and smiled.

"Ah! I see," said he, addressing the latter—"there is then some attraction for you, my young gentleman, in the shape of a fair face, and sparkling eyes. Well, I wish you success in that delicate business; and, Markham, I hope you will call again, and not make yourself so great a stranger as you have hitherto been."

In reply he thanked the old gentleman for