

# THE LIFE BOAT:

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## THE TWO MERCHANTS; OR, A GOOD INVESTMENT.

### Chapter I.

**W**AN you loan me two thousand dollars to establish myself in a small retail business?" inquired a young man not out of his teens, of a middle aged gentleman, who was poring over a pile of ledgers in the counting room of one of the largest wholesale establishments in our city. The person addressed turned round towards the speaker, and regarding him for a moment with a look of surprise, inquired—

"What security can you give me, Mr. Strosser?"

"Nothing but my note," replied the young man promptly.

"Which I fear would be below par in market," replied the merchant smiling.

"Perhaps so," said the young man, "but Mr. Barton, remember that the boy is not the man; the time may come when Hiram Stros-

ser's note will be as readily accepted as that of any other man."

"True, very true," replied Mr. Barton mildly, "but you know business men seldom loan money without adequate security—otherwise they might soon be reduced to penury.

At this remark the young man's countenance became deathly pale, and having observed a silence of several moments, he inquired in a voice whose tones indicated his deep disappointment—

"Then you cannot accommodate me, can you?"

"Call upon me to-morrow, and I will give you a reply," said Mr. Barton, and the young man retired.

Mr. Barton resumed his labors at the desk—but his mind was so much upon the boy and his singular errand, that he could not pursue his task with any correctness; and after having made several blunders, he closed the ledger, took his hat, and went out upon the street. Arriving opposite the store of a wealthy merchant upon Water street, he entered the door.

"Good morning, Mr. Howley," he said, approaching the proprietor of the establishment, who was