

# AN OCEAN TRAGEDY.

## CHAPTER I.

### MY COUSIN.

'SIR WILFRID MONSON, sir,' exclaimed my man.

It was half-past ten o'clock at night, and I was in my lodgings in Bury Street, St. James, slippers on feet, a pipe of tobacco in my hand, seltzer and brandy at my elbow, and on my knees the 'Sun' newspaper, the chief evening sheet of the times.

'Sir Wilfrid Monson, sir.'

My cousin ! thought I, starting, and looking round at my man with a fancy in me for a moment that he had got the wrong name. 'Show him in.'

Sir Wilfrid entered in a sort of swift headlong way, full of nervousness and passion, as was to be seen easily enough ; and then he came to a dead stop with a wild look round the room, as if to make sure that I was alone, and a frowning stare at my servant, who was lingering a moment on the threshold as though suddenly surprised out of his habits of prompt sleek attendance by a fit of astonishment.

He stood about six feet high ; he had a slight stoop, and was something awkward in arms and legs ; yet you were sensible of the indefinable quality of breeding in him the moment your eye took in his form and face, uncommon as both were. He was forty-four years of age at this time, and looked fifty. His hair was long and plentiful, but of an iron grey streaked with soft white. He had a protruding under-lip, and a nose which might have been broken for the irregularity of its outline, with unusually high-cut nostrils. His eyes were large, short-sighted, and grey, luminous and earnest, but with a tremulous lid that seemed to put a quivering into their expression that was a hint in its way of cunning and mental weakness. He had a broad, intellectual forehead, brilliantly white teeth, high cheek bones, a large heavy chin, rounding into a most delicately moulded throat. He was a man, indeed, at