

"At Mrs. Martin's, on the hill, a short distance from Mr. Gibson's cottage."

"Who is Mr. Gibson?" replied Markham, with an air of *nonchalance* and apparent indifference.

Amos looked at him with the old grin, and with a forced composure of countenance, as he replied—

"He—listen—he lives a short distance from the station."

This was spoken in his usual slow, timid and hesitating manner.

"Did you make his acquaintance while at Norwich?"

"No, — listen — after we came from the wreck,"—here he paused again,— "listen—the Captain called to see Mr. Gibson."

"And you of course went with him," replied Markham. "The Captain, I suppose, was acquainted with Mr. Gibson?"

"Yes sir, I should — well, I think so," said he, spitting at the same time a great mouthful of tobacco juice, which came near dropping on our friend Langdon's polished boots.

While the conversation was being carried on between Markham and our eccentric acquaintance, Langdon was a silent observer of the young man's manner, and also a thoughtful and attentive listener. This was the first time he had heard of the name of the captain of Markham's vessel mentioned,—and many surmises and conjectures he had formed in his own mind, respecting this man. Was he young and a competent person to command a vessel? Was he trustworthy and honest? Was his character known to Markham? or had he been merely recommended by his business friends?

All these reflections Langdon revolved again and again in his mind, without coming to any solution of the matter upon which his mind could rest. On the contrary, the longer he dwelt upon them, the more interested he became in his friend's affairs, and he determined in his own mind, to become a silent observer of the incidents, which were yet to take place.

He would endeavour, by all honest and undisguised means, to sift the matter thoroughly to the end; and he hoped for the sake of his friend, and his own feelings of charity and respect for others, that by no insincere protestations, or the unprincipled and dishonourable scheming of any one, would he be made the victim of wrong.

Who is this Valdemar? he thought again and again. It is true I have asked Markham his name, but even he seemed disposed to evade my question. Can it be possible that he reproaches himself for taking him into his employ, merely at the recommendation of another? And does he doubt his character and name? Alas! I think so: and this, it seems to me, is the clue to this marked change in his manner, and to that melancholy which has settled like a cloud upon his spirit. I remember the name, but not in this city was it mentioned;—no; in another land—beneath a cloudless sky—and amid scenes and forms of society far different

from this. But he whom memory now calls up from the portals of the past, was a villain of the blackest dye, and —.

Langdon was startled from his reflections by the voice of Markham, who enquired at what time the train would start. Langdon, looking at his watch, remarked that the train would start in a few minutes.

"One moment," said Markham. "I have a few more questions to ask our obliging friend," and turning to Amos, who appeared by his sly look to anticipate what Markham was going to say,—

"Was there any persons accompanying Captain Valdemar this morning on his visit to the wreck?"

"Yes," he replied: "two ladies, who—listen—had I think told him they would like to see the vessel."

This was spoken in a very low tone, and with quite a grave expression on his face.

"Listen," he continued, and drawing near to Markham, a habit of his when he thought he had something wonderful and startling to tell: "listen—I am not certain whether the two ladies spoke to the captain about visiting the wreck or not:—listen—I don't think one of them did, because —."

"And which one was that?" said Markham, cutting him short, for to an intelligent person, it was positively painful and wearisome to *listen* as he remarked, to his slow recital of information, besides being very trying to the patience of his listener.

"Miss Venetia," said he, "would not have asked to go."

"And who is Miss Venetia?" replied Markham coolly, and with a slight attempt to conceal his impatience.

"Mr. Gibson's daughter, and—listen—a very nice looking lady she is, too."

"And how do you know she would not have asked to go?"

"Because it is not her style—listen—to put herself forward; well—listen—she—she is very quiet, and didn't seem to have much to say —."

"Indeed?"

"Listen—while I was there. The other lady was quite different, and would talk as much—listen—in ten minutes as you or I would in an hour!"

Markham could not but laugh as he turned to Langdon, at the reference he made to his own powers of conversation; and in all probability this sleepy individual would have been willing to enlighten him on other topics connected with the wreck; but the bell then rang, and, having secured their tickets, they were soon on board the cars.

Amos came shuffling after them just as the train was starting, and the indispensable word which he employed in his conversational flights was dinned for the last time in their ears.

Markham had now something to reflect upon, to beguile the tedium of his ride.

At once the great thought seemed to strike him with all the force of reality, that all had