

CHAPTER II.

AN UNSOUGHT INTERVIEW.

I WAS in the midst of such thoughts and surmises when John Smoot came and told me that his master, Mr. Arthur, wished to see me. John's manner was darkly important, and I guessed that the business which Mr. Arthur wished to have with me would not be of a very soothing nature. Some strain in our relations had appeared long since, and it was increased by his suspicion that I sought Marion for a wife—a suspicion and a dissent that were very far from keeping me from her. Even before that morning I would stop and wonder if in truth I were about to fall in love with her, and then I would cease to study the problem and leave its solution to the future. But I was compelled to admit that she was very fair. There was no girl of the de Lanceys, or the de Peysters, or the Livingstons, or the Philipses, or the Kennedys, or the Coldens, or of all the boasted beauties of our town, who could surpass her.

Moreover, it was a matter of common repute in New York that Mr. Arthur looked for something beyond the colonies for his daughter. His father had been born in