

which the former interview gave birth to; it looked the same as though he had seen it but yesterday. Yet how changed was he! The noble owner was slightly altered—time had not stood still—six summers had left their impress. Motioning his visitor to take a chair, he awaited in silence his communication, with an expression of face which seemed to imply expectation of claim for relief, or charitable donation.

"My lord! you do not recognize me!" said Charles, without accepting the proffered seat.

The peer, rather impatiently intimating ignorance of his person:

Poverty and suffering had no doubt done their work—as Stanwood confessed—yet he was the same party who had complained to his lordship, six years since, of the loss of a diamond necklace.

The peer said he remembered the circumstance well—the person of the jeweler was indeed changed. If he came to express contrition, he, for his part, could afford to pardon the slander, especially as the crime had brought its own punishment.

"I have come, my lord," said Charles sternly, "to save the real criminal from punishment."

"How, sir—what mean you?" exclaimed the peer.

Stanwood related exactly how the necklace had fallen again into his possession. The nobleman changed color—stammered—begged to have the article in his possession five minutes, that he might take it up stairs, and resolve the horrid doubts which his story had raised.

Stanwood declared it should not go out of his possession, save into the hands of a magistrate.

"Wait awhile," cried the nobleman hurriedly, as he rushed from the room.

In a quarter of an hour he returned pale in face, and with disturbed eye, and seating himself near Stanwood, said he understood him to say that he had not testified recognition of the necklace in presence of his employer or any one else—the secret was still in his own breast.

Charles replied, that what he had stated was the fact—he had acted more tenderly than he had been acted by.

"At what amount of money," said the peer, tapping the elbow of the chair, as though his fingers were striking the keys of a piano, "do you estimate the loss of your character—station—time?"

Stanwood burst into tears. He had lost everything, he said—what money could never replace or restore—the friends of his youth—the idolized being to whom he was betrothed—and if he thought of less important objects, a business which, in a few years, would have realized a fortune.

The nobleman dashed aside a tear as he turned to his writing-desk. He wrote an order on his banker for ten thousand pounds and handed it to Charles. There were not, he said, at present, sufficient assets—but if he presented the order two days hence it would be duly honoured. If he deemed that sum sufficient, all he required in return was, that he should complete the task for his city employer, and bury the secret forever. His restoration to competence might be easily ascribed.