

PRIDE AND PASSION.

CHAPTER I.

THE MERMAID.

"Whoe'er has traveled life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
His warmest welcome at an inn."

—SIENSTONE.



HE time—late in the evening of a raw April day, many a year, most probably, before you were born, my dear sir or madam. The scene—a long, bleak strip of coast on the Jersey shore, washed by the bright waters of the flowing Hudson.

A low, black, rakish-looking schooner, with a sort of suspicious look about it, strikingly suggestive to nautical individuals skilled in reading the expressive countenances of schooners in general, had just come to anchor out in the river, a short distance from the shore; and a boat, a few minutes after, had put off from her, and landed two persons, who sprang lightly out; while two more, who had rowed them ashore, leaned on their dripping oars, and waited, as if for further directions.

"You can go back now. I don't want you to wait for me. I'll stop at the 'Mermaid' to-night. If I want you, you know the signal; and tell Sharp Bill to