

"Yes, you would be entirely satisfactory if you had only had some better companion in misfortune."

"Who—Giffen?"

"Yes. He seems so hopelessly common-place," sighed the gentle connoisseur of castaways.

"He was certainly not more than an average fellow-being," said Fenton, preparing to escape. "But he was equal to his bad luck."

When he and Helen were alone, he was a long time silent.

"What is the matter, Robert?" she asked tenderly at last.

"Oh, nothing," he said. "But whenever it comes to that point, I'm afraid that Giffen *knew* I wanted to leave him to die alone there!"

"You *didn't* want to!" she protested for him.

"Ah, don't put it that way!" he cried. "The best you can say for me is that I didn't do it."

She could only tell him that she loved him more dearly for the temptation he confessed than if there had been no breach in his armour. He had a simplicity in dealing with all the incidents of his experience which seemed to her half divine. When she hotly invoked justice upon the wretches who had stolen the boat and abandoned him and Giffen on the island, he said, "Oh, what could atone for a thing like that? The only way was for them to escape altogether." He would not even let her denounce them as cowards; he contended that they had shown as much mere courage in remaining to rifle the ship as he had in anything. Giffen, he said, was the only one to be admired, for Giffen was afraid all the time, and yet remained to share his fate. But Helen contended that this was nothing wonderful, and again she wished to praise him for what he had suffered.

"Ah, don't!" he said, with tragic seriousness. "There's nothing in all that. It might all have happened to a worse man, and it has happened to many a better one. It hurts