

## CUMNER'S SON

Shorland thought for a moment. She had spoken just now without sneering, without bravado, without hardness. He felt that behind this woman's outward cruelty and varying moods there was something working that perhaps might be trusted, something in Luke's interest. He was certain that this portrait had moved her deeply. Had she come to that period of reaction in evil when there is an agonized desire to turn back toward the good? He gave the portrait to her.

## IV

Sitting in Alençon Barré's room an hour later, Shorland told him in substance the result of his conference with Gabrielle, and begged his consideration for Luke if the worst should happen. Alençon Barre gave his word as a man of honor that the matter should be sacred to him. As they sat there, a messenger came from the commandant to say that the detachment was to start that afternoon for Bompari. Then a note was handed to Shorland from Governor Rapont offering him a horse and a native servant if he chose to go with the troops. This was what Shorland had come for—news and adventure. He did not hesitate, though the shadow of the twenty-fifth was hanging over him. He felt his helplessness in the matter, but determined to try to be back in Noumea on that date. Not that he expected