

## THE ADVENTURER

"My boy, my boy," he murmured. "I thank God for this—I thank God!"

"We couldn't have stood it much longer, sir."

Westbrook bowed his head in tragic assent.

"We'll leave this horrible place as soon as you are rested," he said at length. "When do you think you will be fit to travel?"

"This minute," cried Kirk. "That is, if Vera——"

"She has borne it surprisingly well. It all turns on you."

"On me?"

"Yes."

"Then lay the ship on her course at once. It would be a shame to waste such a gale as this when it is in our favor."

Westbrook pondered anxiously.

"We mustn't take any risk," he said. "I fancy you wouldn't know yourself in a glass. It has told on you more than you imagine."

Kirk laughed feebly.

"I'm all right," he exclaimed; "and I need no better medicine than to be homeward bound."

Homeward bound, ah, the magic of those words!

"Then I may tell Goltz?"

"The sooner the better, sir."

"Wicks and he are waiting outside for your decision."

"Bless them—though they aren't to carry away any wicks. Tell them to go easy, sir."

"That foolish girl wants a message. Said I wasn't to come back without it."

"Tell her I'm the happiest man in the world—and the tireddest."

"No doubt about either."

"And that—that——"