

THAT NORWARD BUSINESS ROMANCE

but since you defy me as if I were the villain in this case—”

The two men, fiercely confronting one another, determined to have the matter out to the very bitter end now.

“Do you defy me, young man?”

“Defy you! ay, to the very gates of ruin for both of us!”

“Have you ever heard of a merchant of the name of Baptiste Frazier?”

“Never.”

“Honest Baptiste as he was spoken of in St. Marco?”

“Never heard of man or place.”

But the increasing paleness which spread over Mandeville’s face showed how far the foil of his opponent, despoiled of its button, had struck home, forcing him to retreat behind a lie.

“But you have no objection that I should tell you a story connected with poor Baptiste’s commercial ruin brought about by a certain adventurer.”

“I have every objection to remaining here and being made a fool of.”

“Did you ever hear of a Thomas G.