

## The Temple of Bacchus

He jumped up, gasping. I had my finger before my lips.

"Can't you trust them now?" I whispered.

"Spying!" he hissed when he could find his tongue.

"What about you, Captain Ricardo?"

"It was my wife."

"Well, it was my friend and you're his enemy. And his enemy was armed to the teeth," I added, handing him the big stick that he had left leaning against the wall.

"That wasn't for him. This was," muttered Ricardo, lapping the lash round his crop. "I was going to horse-whip him within an inch of his life. And now that you know all about it, too, I've a damned good mind to do it still!"

"There are several reasons why you won't," I assured him.

"You're his bully, are you?" he snarled.

"I'm whatever you choose to make me, Captain Ricardo. Already you've consoled me for doing a thing I never dreamt of doing in my life before."

"But, good God! I never dreamt of listening either. I was prepared for a very different scene. And then—and then I thought perhaps I'd better