

evidently go now, but I will come back to see what Jacinta says to-morrow."

He went out, and that night Austin got Jacinta's answer.

"Come!" was all it said, but Austin was well content, and, though he was not a very sentimental man, went to sleep with the message beneath his pillow.

It was, however, rather more than three weeks later when, as a yellow-funnelled mailboat slid into Las Palmas harbour, Austin, leaning down from her rail, saw Jacinta and Mrs. Hatherly in one of the crowding boats below. The little lady discreetly remained where she was, and when Jacinta came up the ladder Austin met her at the head of it. She flashed a swift glance into his face, and then for a moment turned hers aside.

"Ah!" she said, "you have forgotten what I said to you, and you are really well again?"

Austin laughed, a quiet, exultant laugh. "I was never particularly ill, but you know all that, and we have ever so much more pleasant things to talk about," he said. "In the meanwhile, I fancy we are blocking up the gang-way."

Holding the hand she had given him, he drew her behind the deck-house masterfully, and looked down on her with a little smile.

"I almost think you are pleased to see me back," he said.

"Ah!" said Jacinta, "if you only knew what the past few weeks have cost me."

Austin, laying both hands on her shoulders, stooped and kissed her twice. "That was worth going to Africa for, and if Jefferson had only bought the *Cumbria* sooner I would have ventured to do as much ever so long ago."

There was apparently nobody else on that side of the deck-house, and Jacinta, who did not shake his grasp off, looked up at him with shining eyes.