

finger either to regain her or to avenge myself. A divorce would fully appease me. Who would not feel gay to be rid of a woman whose every heart-throb is a dishonour? What more unendurable than an association rendered an incomparable insult, and the basest lie under heaven, by one's wife's secret abhorrence and her desire for another?

On a sudden he sprang to his feet as though stabbed. 'Cease, for Christ's sake!' he shouted. 'The more truthful your words are, the more they madden me. If I could tear her from me,' clutching at his breast in a wild, tragical way—'if I could cleanse my heart of her as you would purify a vessel of what has lain foul and poisonous in it; if disgust would but fall cool on my resentment and leave me loathing her merely; if—if if! But it is *if* that makes the difference betwixt hell and heaven in this bad world of unexpected things.' He sat afresh, passing the back of his hand over his brow, and sighing heavily. 'There is no *if* for me,' said he. 'I love her passionately yet, and so hate her besides that——' He checked himself with a shake of the head. 'No, no, perhaps not *when it came* to it,' he muttered as though thinking aloud. 'We are wasting time,' he cried, pulling out his watch. 'Charlie, you will accompany me?'

'But you say you start the day after to-morrow?'

'Yes.'

'From Southampton?'

'Yes.'

'And, should you find the "Shark" gone when you arrive at the Cape——'

'Well?'

'Ay,' said I, 'that's just it. We should be like Adam and Eve, with all the world before us where to choose.'

'Charlie, will you come? I counted upon you from the moment of forming my resolution. You have been a sailor. You are the one man of them all that I should turn to in such a time as this. Say you will come. Laura Jennings, my wife's—my—my sister-in-law I mean—will accompany us. Did I tell you this? Yes; I recollect. She is a stout-hearted little woman, as brave as she is beautiful, and so shocked, so shocked!' He clasped his hands upon his brow, lifting his eyes. 'She would pass through a furnace to rescue her sister from this infamy. Come!'

'You give me no time.'

'Time! You have all to-morrow. You may easily be on board by four o'clock in the afternoon on the following day. Time! A sailor knows nothing of time. I must have you by my side, Charlie. We shall meet them, and I shall need a friend. The support and help of your company, too——'

'Will your yacht be ready for sea by the day after to-morrow?'

'She is ready now.'

'Your people will have worked expeditiously,' said I, fencing a little, for he was leaning towards me and devouring me