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THE French had bought their victory dear with the death of Alençon Barré, their favourite officer. When they turned their backs upon a quelled insurrection, there was a gap that not even French buoyancy could fill. On the morning of the twenty-fifth they neared Noumea. Shorland thought of all that day meant to Luke and Clare. He was helpless to alter the course of events, to stay a terrible possibility.

"You can never trust a woman of Gabrielle's stamp," he said to himself, as they rode along through valleys of ferns, grenadillas, and limes. "They have no baseline of duty; they either rend themselves or rend others, but rend they must, hearts and not garments. Henri Durien knows, and she knows, and Alençon Barré knew, poor boy! But what Barré knew is buried with him back there under the palms. Luke and Clare are to be married to-morrow—God help them! And I can see them in their home, he standing by the fireplace in his old way—it's winter there—and looking down at Clare; and on the other side of the fireplace sits the sister of the Woman in the Morgue, waiting for the happiest moment in the lives of these two before her. And when it comes, as she did with the portrait, as she did with him before, she will set her foot upon his face and then on Clare's; only neither Luke nor Clare will live again after that crucifixion." Then aloud: "Hello! what's that?—a messenger riding hard to meet us! Smoke in the direction of Noumea and sound of firing! What's that, doctor? Convicts revolted, made a break at the prison and on the way to the quarries at the same moment! Of course—seized