

kept Wicks's wound open that he might sign with his left hand; he who took all their Chile silver and (in the course of the first day) got it converted for them into portable gold. He used his influence in the wardroom to keep the tongues of the young officers in order, so that Carthew's identification was kept out of the papers. And he rendered another service yet more important. He had a friend in San Francisco, a millionaire; to this man he privately presented Carthew as a young gentleman come newly into a huge estate, but troubled with Jew debts which he was trying to settle on the quiet. The millionaire came readily to help; and it was with his money that the wrecker gang was to be fought. What was his name, out of a thousand guesses? It was Douglas Longhurst.

As long as the Currency Lassies could all disappear under fresh names, it did not greatly matter if the brig were bought, or any small discrepancies should be discovered in the wrecking. The identification of one of their number had changed all that. The smallest scandal must now direct attention to the movements of Norris. It would be asked how he, who had sailed in a schooner from Sydney, had turned up so shortly after in a brig out of Hong Kong; and from one question to another all his original shipmates were pretty sure to be involved. Hence arose naturally the idea of preventing danger, profiting by Carthew's new-found wealth, and buying the brig under an alias; and it was put in hand with equal energy and caution. Carthew took lodgings alone under a false name, picked up Bellairs at random, and commissioned him to buy the wreck.

"What figure, if you please?" the lawyer asked.

"I want it bought," replied Carthew. "I don't mind about the price."

"Any price is no price," said Bellairs. "Put a name upon it."

"Call it ten thousand pounds then, if you like!" said Carthew.

In the meanwhile, the captain had to walk the streets, appear in the consulate, be cross-examined by Lloyd's agent, be badgered about his lost accounts, sign papers with his left hand, and repeat his lies to every skipper