

in the wildest part of it, what he could not find here. In the end I persuaded him to go."

She was silent for a moment. Carne, who had heard a score of stories about her generosity, told himself that doubtless she had furnished the money for this campaign into the wilderness. Yvonne continued drearily :

"He did find—a beautiful girl. He wrote to me, raving about her. He sent me a little sketch, and he swore that his chance had come. Perhaps, when you saw Yannik, Monsieur, you thought your chance had come?"

"Yes," said Carne decisively.

"There are opportunities and opportunities, Monsieur. Some an honest man and woman must pass by. This girl was not a model, and my friend knew it; but his ambition tempted him to take her, to use her, to—to abuse her. Well, I can tell you two more things. His ambition killed her——"

"Killed her?"

"I can answer no questions, Monsieur. You must take my word for this—it killed her, and then it killed him."

She closed her lips with almost violence.

"You have told me this," said the Californian—not unmoved either by the story or the teller's emotion—"for Yannik's sake?"

"Yes; and for your own."

Carne eyed her keenly: it was impossible to doubt her sincerity.

"Yannik," he said, with an effort to speak lightly, "is an opportunity which I shall pass by. In self-defence, I must add that you have alarmed yourself unnecessarily about her"—Yvonne set her chin at an obstinate angle—"but I can understand your feeling, and I sympathise with it."

He held out his hand, which Yvonne took, as they both rose. In the moment of parting Carne fired a haphazard shot:

"You are not the only one who has asked me to leave little Yannik alone."

"Eh?"