

"I will swear it! These ladies and I have no secrets. I know all about Monsieur Whitaker and Biddulph."

"And you know," said Biddulph, with a darkling brow, "that this woman came to me and swore falsely—pretended she was her dead twin-sister?"

Once more Monsieur Dobree raised his shoulders and hands to express regret.

"Alas, I know!" he said. "Madame Whitaker was what you call hard up. What could she do! You must pity and forgive her."

"It was a vile deception!" said Biddulph, passionately. "But you are ready now, and she is ready to swear before this gentleman and lady that you both are now speaking the truth."

"I swear it as a gentleman!" cried Monsieur Dobree, grandly.

"And you?" said Biddulph, looking at the woman fixedly.

"I swear it, too. When poor Josephine was shot——"

"Fool!" muttered Monsieur, with tight-drawn lips.

"I mean poor Natalie, of course," continued the woman, with a little conscious laugh and a dusky blush; "but your Highland whiskey is so strong, my brain seems half muddled."

But Nora had caught Biddulph's hand as she again had uttered the word "Josephine."

"She is not speaking the truth, James," she half-whispered in his ear; "I do not believe her. Ask her about the handwriting, I believe this *is* Natalie."

"Did you write the letter to warn Miss Stewart I was a married man?" asked Biddulph, sharply, the next moment.

"Yes—at least——"

"And the one you wrote to her lately, to tell her you had something to communicate to her?"

The woman looked as if afraid to commit herself; she hesitated, she glanced uneasily at Dobree.

"I get puzzled," she said presently; "you ask so many questions."

"I think," said Dobree, with a profound bow, "if this young lady and madame will permit me to suggest, that this interview had better be deferred until another day. Madame, in her agitation, had taken more of the potent spirit of this land than is good for her brain. She is a little muddled, in fact; but if Monsieur Biddulph will come