

### HIS GREAT MISTAKE

"Have you bad news?" He glanced towards the paper.

Slowly Armour folded the paper up, and then rose unsteadily. "Gordon," he said, "give me a glass of brandy."

He turned towards the cupboard in the room. The trader opened it, took out a bottle, and put it on the table beside Armour, together with a glass and some water. Armour poured out a stiff draught, added a very little water, and drank it. He drew a great sigh, and stood looking at the paper.

"Is there anything I can do for you, Mr. Armour?" urged the trader.

"Nothing, thank you, nothing at all. Just leave the brandy here, will you? I feel knocked about, and I have to go through the rest of these letters."

He ran his fingers through the pile, turning it over hastily, as if searching for something. The trader understood. He was a cool-headed Scotsman ; he knew that there were some things best not inquired into, and that men must have their bad hours alone. He glanced at the brandy debatingly, but presently turned and left the room in silence. In his own mind, however, he wished he might have taken the brandy without being discourteous. Armour had discovered Miss Sherwood's letter. Before he