

A PAGAN OF THE SOUTH

"Where is he? What is he doing?" she said, at length. "Tell me. I was. I am—his wife."

"Yes, you were—you are—his wife. But better if you had been that woman in the Morgue," he said, without pity. What were this creature's feelings to him? There was his friend and the true-souled Clare.

"I know, I know," she replied. "Go on!"

"He is well. The man that was born when his wife lay before him in the Morgue has found another woman, a good woman who loves him, and—"

"And is married to her?" interrupted Gabrielle, her face taking on again a shining whiteness. But, as though suddenly remembering something, she laughed that strange laugh which might have come from a soul irretrievably lost. "And is married to her?"

Blake Shorland thought of the lust of cruelty, of the wounds, and the acids of torture. "Not yet," he said; "but the marriage is set for the twenty-sixth of this month."

"How I could spoil all that!"

"Yes, you could spoil all that. But you have spoiled enough already. Don't you think that if Luke Freeman does marry, you had better be dead, as you have been this last five years? To have spoiled one life ought to be enough to satisfy even a woman like you."

Her eyes looked through Blake Shorland's eyes and beyond them to something else; and then