

Austin started. "Ah!" he said. "Will you please tell them to send him in?"

In a few more minutes Brown came in, and, sitting down, shook his head reproachfully.

"You have really given your friends a good deal of anxiety, and I was almost afraid I would have to go back without learning what had become of you," he said. "Still, though I know the thing isn't, fortunately, what you thought it was, the first question is, how are you?"

"Recovering," said Austin, with a smile. "I understand that my arm will be all right again very shortly. It was a very usual trouble. As you seem to recognise, I let my imagination run away with me."

"I am very pleased to hear it. Why didn't you cable?"

"I understood that you had left Las Palmas, and Jefferson was on the point of doing so. I could scarcely suppose there was any one else who cared enough about what happened to me to make it necessary."

Brown looked at him with a curious little smile which Austin found disconcerting. "There are Mrs. Hatherly and Muriel. I almost think Jacinta would have liked to know that you and Jefferson were under a misapprehension, too. Still, that is, perhaps, not very important, after all. I suppose Jefferson told you that he expects to get a good deal for the *Cumbria* and her cargo?"

"I was pleased to hear that my share might amount to £7,000."

Brown took off his glasses and held them in one hand, which, as Austin knew, was a trick of his when he had anything on his mind.

"I am going to take a liberty," he said. "Have you decided yet what you will do with it?"

"No. That was one of the points I meant to wait a little before grappling with."