

"But, dear, surely you—you know about her."

"I know nothing, nor . . ."

"She is dead, Henry."

"Is she, what does it matter?"

"She was found dead in the ruins of Losfontein; the farmhouse was shelled next morning, and she was left there to die. Oh, Henry, don't you care at all?"

"No. Dead or alive, it's the same to me. All is the same to me now."

"Won't you tell me the whole story, dear?"

"If you like. It makes no difference now. Violet, I deceived you from the first; I pretended to love you solely to serve my own ends. I liked you, I was happy with you, but it was not love. All the same, I was determined never to be untrue to you; not from any sense of honour—I never had any—but, again, because it was against my own interests. If I should ever love, which I did not believe, I relied on my brain to crush it down. I was so strong, you see. I, strong!" and he laughed drearily. "Give me some of that, please, I—I am rather out of breath."

He gulped down the draught handed him by Violet, and went on:

"Then I met her, and all my boasted brain went for nothing. It turned against me, rather, and fought for her. Ah, Carados was right indeed in what he said."

"Carados right! Oh, Henry, you say that now, after all . . ."

"Yes, for we are a battleground for emotions to fight on, and where the strongest wins, but . . . it lies with those who have the training of us as children to strengthen the right and suppress the wrong; then when the inevitable struggle comes the vile go under. There was no fight in my case, Violet. I had no weapons. We Kemptons are not like you Ravenscrofts, who are taught truth and honour from your cradles. We learnt other things: the