

## CHAPTER II

### AN UNEXPECTED LETTER

The letter received by Richard Shandon, eight months before, ran as follows:--

"ABERDEEN,

"August 2nd, 1859.

"To Mr. Richard Shandon,

"Liverpool.

"SIR,--I beg to advise you that the sum of sixteen thousand pounds sterling has been placed in the hands of Messrs. Marcuart and Co., bankers, of Liverpool. I join herewith a series of cheques, signed by me, which will allow you to draw upon the said Messrs. Marcuart for the above-mentioned sum. You do not know me, but that is of no consequence. I know you: that is sufficient. I offer you the place of second on board the brig Forward for a voyage that may be long and perilous. If you agree to my conditions you will receive a salary of 500 pounds, and all through the voyage it will be augmented one-tenth at the end of each year. The Forward is not yet in

existence. You must have it built so as to be ready for sea at the beginning of April, 1860, at the latest. Herewith is a detailed plan and estimate. You will take care that it is scrupulously followed. The ship is to be built by Messrs. Scott and Co., who will settle with you. I particularly recommend you the choice of the Forward's crew; it will be composed of a captain, myself, of a second, you, of a third officer, a boatswain, two engineers, an ice pilot, eight sailors, and two others, eighteen men in all, comprising Dr. Clawbonny, of this town, who will introduce himself to you when necessary. The Forward's crew must be composed of Englishmen without incumbrance; they should be all bachelors and sober--for no spirits, nor even beer, will be allowed on board--ready to undertake anything, and to bear with anything. You will give the preference to men of a sanguine constitution, as they carry a greater amount of animal heat. Offer them five times the usual pay, with an increase of one-tenth for each year of service. At the end of the voyage five hundred pounds will be placed at the disposition of each, and two thousand at yours. These funds will be placed with Messrs. Marcuart and Co. The voyage will be long and difficult, but honourable, so you need not hesitate to accept my conditions. Be good enough to send your answer to K. Z., Poste Restante, Goteborg, Sweden.

"P.S.--On the 15th of February next you will receive a large Danish dog, with hanging lips, and tawny coat with black stripes. You will take it on board and have it fed with oaten bread, mixed with tallow grease. You will acknowledge the reception of the said dog to me under the same initials as above, Poste Restante, Leghorn, Italy.

"The captain of the Forward will introduce himself to you when necessary. When you are ready to start you will receive further instructions.

"THE CAPTAIN OF THE 'FORWARD,'

"K. Z."