

stolen it? No doubt the Ambassador, Monsieur de Grissac, would acquaint him with the truth of the affair. Possibly the box may have contained papers of great value—though why one should choose such a place for the concealment of valuable papers he could not imagine. The whole affair seemed shrouded in mystery, and no amount of speculation on his part, apparently, would throw any light upon it. He lay back in his seat, dozing, and thinking of Grace and their interrupted honeymoon.

At Boulogne they transferred to the boat for Folkstone, and after a quiet passage, found themselves on board the train for London. They reached Charing Cross early in the evening, and taking a cab, drove at once to Monsieur de Grissac's residence in Piccadilly, opposite Green Park.

Chapter 2

While Richard Duvall was thus flying toward Boulogne, racking his brains in a futile attempt to discover the reasons for his sudden and unexpected dispatch to London, Grace, his wife, equally mystified, was proceeding in the direction of Brussels.

The reasons for her going to Brussels were no more clear to her than were Richard's, to him. At the conclusion of the wedding breakfast which had followed her simple marriage to Duvall, she had gone to the *pension* at which she had been living, to await her husband's return. She had not then

understood the mysterious message which had summoned him to the Prefect's office, nor, for that matter, had he, but he had assured her that he would return in a short while, and that had been enough for her.

Her patient waiting had been finally terminated by the arrival of the Prefect himself, who had explained with polite brevity that a matter of the gravest importance had made it necessary for him to send Richard at once to London.

The girl's grief and alarm had been great—Monsieur Lefevre had at last, however, succeeded in convincing her that Richard could not under the circumstances have done anything but go. His position as an assistant to Lefevre, and more particularly the friendship which existed between them, made it imperative for him to come to the Prefect's assistance in this crisis.

What the crisis was, Grace did not learn. She

had insisted upon following Richard, upon being near him, upon assisting him, should opportunity offer, and Monsieur Lefevre, seized with a sudden inspiration, had dispatched her to Brussels, with the assurance that she would not only see her husband very soon, but might be able to render both him, and France, a very signal service.

Grace had accepted the mission; her desire to be near Richard was a compelling motive, and as a result she found herself flying toward the Belgian frontier, on an early afternoon express, with no idea whatever of what lay before her, and only a few words, written by Monsieur Lefevre upon a page torn from his notebook, to govern her future actions.

She luckily was able to find a compartment in one of the first-class carriages where she could be alone, and sank back upon the cushioned seat, determined to face whatever dangers the future might hold, for the sake of

her husband.

Her mind traveled, in retrospect, over the events of the past few months—the conspiracy against her, by her step-uncle, Count d'Este, by which he had so nearly deprived her of the fortune left to her by her aunt, and the striking way in which his plans had been upset by Richard Duvall. She had loved him at their very first meeting, and now that they had become husband and wife, she loved him more than ever. It is small wonder that the thought of the way in which he had been suddenly torn from her, on the eve of their wedding journey, brought tears to her eyes.

Presently she regained her composure and looked at the sheet of paper which the Prefect had handed to her. It contained but a few words: "Proceed to the Hotel Metropole, Brussels. Take a room in the name of Grace Ellicott, and wait further instructions." That was all—no hint of how or when she and Richard were to meet,