

# CASINO



by George Norworthy

LAMOTTE, the chief reception clerk, tall, pale, his dark hair perfectly greased and brushed until it resembled polished ebony, his striped trousers sharply creased, and his tie knotted meticulously, knocked upon the door which was marked "Direction." A smooth, pleasant voice, mellowed by many years of ingratiating conversation with the hotel's distinguished clientele, gave him permission to enter.

"You rang, Monsieur Martini?"

"Yes, Lamotte," replied the manager, who was caressing his short, black beard. "Whom are we expecting tomorrow?"

Monsieur Martini, famous as one of the most



successful hotel managers in Europe, was a smiling, plump little man.

"Sir John Cornish, the British Cabinet Minister; Lady Swayne, Mrs. Franklin Bunges, Mr. James Lancelot Maddock and William Paynton, of Scotland Yard, are arriving by the Blue Train. Princess Andrew of Balkania has booked for a fortnight and will be arriving by car from Cap Ferrat some time during the morning. Mr. and Mrs. Henry Sherman are coming over from Nice after lunch."

"Let me see your list, Lamotte." M. Martini studied the names for some moments and continued to stroke his beard. "Where are you putting Sir John?"

"Ninety-six."

"What did he ask for?"

"Just a room. He doesn't wish to pay more than £2 a day, full pension."

"Isn't there a little salon next to 96?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"Unoccupied?"

"Yes."

"Let him have that too, at his own price. Sir John is worth a little largesse, especially with the hotel barely half full. Lady Swayne—what are you doing with her?"

"Eighty-three, four and five. She said she could not afford her usual suite."

"Tch! She is supposed to be the richest woman who comes to Monte Carlo; those emeralds are insured for 3,000,000 francs. Give her the Grand Duke Alexis' suite, he won't be coming here this winter. Things have, indeed, come to a bad state when the English aristocracy and American millionaires think economically. Now, who else is there?" Monsieur Martini sat upright and looked at the list. "Mrs. Franklin Bunges; where are you putting her?"

"Hundred and seventy-eight and nine."

"How much is she paying?"

"Two hundred a day for herself and seventy-five for the maid."

"H'm! She ought to pay more, Lamotte."

"She entertains a great deal, monsieur."

"Yes, yes, I suppose she does. Very well. Mr. James Lancelot Maddock. Who is he?"

"A new client. He wrote ten days ago from the Savoy Hotel, in London, and asked what we charged for our best rooms. I quoted him 300 a day, full pension."

"Princess Andrew, and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Sherman. Where are you putting them?"

"They are of no great importance," replied Lamotte with the assurance of one who has learned to estimate the exact value of hotel guests. "They cannot afford the best rooms and they do not entertain."

"But the Princess? She is a sister-in-law of Prince George of Balkania, and is related to the Queen of Magyaria."

Lamotte shrugged his square shoulders.

"By marriage, yes, but she has no great position since her husband died. She is English by birth, the daughter of a sous-officer, so it is said. However, both she and the Shermans will have quite nice rooms, and there is no need to make any concessions."

"Very well, Lamotte. I shall, of course, receive Sir John Cornish myself."

The manager handed back the notebook and Lamotte glided silently from the room.

**T**WO men sat together in the restaurant-car of the Blue Train. One, William Paynton, a tall, lean man with red, wiry hair and mustache, belonged to that department of Scotland Yard which watches over the movements of other public men who might be subject to attentions of Anarchists and Communists. The other was a short, obese Frenchman, M. Armand Bernard, of the Surete, who spent most of his time at the various fashionable resorts and traveling on the de luxe trains in the hope of laying his hands upon individuals whose activities were not considered to be for the benefit of the community. Mr. Paynton's eyes shifted backward and forward between his cup of soup and the smart young woman who had just sat down.

"You find her attractive, mon ami?" asked M. Bernard, with a little laugh.

At last Paynton removed his eyes from her and deigned to reply.

"Yes, she is beautiful, remarkably beautiful, in fact," he admitted, "and she is also interesting." Then lowering his voice, "I advise you to watch her."

"Ah! You know her?" Bernard became alert.

"Of her?"

"She is in your files?"

"No," Paynton leaned toward his companion and again lowered his voice. "You have heard of Carl Hentz?"

"Certainly! He was on the Cote d'Azur last winter, and I think I would put a nice little feather in my hat, as you English say, but he is clever, that Hentz. I watch him, for I thought he play some dark game, but he did nothing for which I could touch him."

"Yes, he is clever all right, damned clever," returned Paynton. "Burgess is keeping an eye on

him, and he tells me that our fair friend, over there, Mrs. Spurrell, is probably his petite amie."

"And the young man; he is her husband?"

"Yes, but he probably knows nothing about Carl Hentz. Gordon Spurrell is, I believe, the son of a colonel. Of the lady's history I know nothing, but she passes everywhere for a well-bred woman. They have no money."

"But—"

"They are not the only people without money who travel by the Blue Train," Paynton interrupted.

"Yes, yes, but it makes them more interesting."

Armand Bernard nodded his head and smiled with satisfaction. "I think perhaps we have some fun. You know where they stay; Cannes, Monte Carlo, Mentone?"

"I couldn't say, but we can soon find out."

"Yes, yes, that would be easy. You see, Major Marsh returns to the South. Do you know who the tired-looking little man is, sitting at the same table?" Paynton glanced across the car.

"Don't know him," he replied. "Looks like a clerk who has just won a pile in a sweepstake and is going to make a big splash."

Armand Bernard grunted, and began to dissect a grilled whiting.

**MAJOR MARSH** and the tired-looking little man were sitting at the next table to the Spurrells. The major was a neat, gray-faced man with small, alert eyes, close-cropped hair and a genial expression. The latter, who was in the early thirties, wore a gold-rimmed pince-nez, and his clothes, which were obviously new, were not distinguished for their cut. He was good-looking, but his features lacked character, and he appeared to be ill at ease. He looked about with the wondering eyes of a child who suddenly finds itself in strange surroundings. His name was James Lancelot Maddock. Ever since he sat down and unfolded his napkin, tucking it methodically beneath his knees, he had been trying to pluck up sufficient courage to address the major. Presently the need for courage was removed.

"Not many people traveling," Marsh observed.

Jimmy glanced round the car.

"There are only two or three vacant seats," he replied.

"Shouldn't be any at this time of the year. I'm afraid the Riviera's in for another bad season. You are going to Monte Carlo?"

"Yes."

"No place like it, what?"

Jimmy felt embarrassed, and his pale cheeks became slightly flushed. He imagined that all these people around him were old travelers, while he had left England that morning for the first time in his life.

"I have never been there," he admitted.

"That so? Let me give you a tip; steer clear of the roulette tables."

"What, go to Monte Carlo without having a little —er—flutter?" Jimmy said, with a nervous laugh.

"Flutter as much as you like, but don't play seriously unless you have so much money that you don't care a damn whether you win or lose."

"I say, you're a bit of a pessimist, aren't you? Some people win big fortunes."

"Precious few. For every one that's lucky there are a thousand who aren't. Staying long?"

"Two or three months, perhaps longer," replied Jimmy, carelessly. From this remark, and his general manner, Major Marsh gained the impression that his companion had recently acquired wealth, and was going to spend the remainder of his life enjoying himself. As a rule, the Major cultivated such people if they were what he called "socially possible," and Jimmy, in his estimation, was quite possible.

"I happened to notice your labels on the boat," he said, after a short silence, "and saw that we are bound for the same hotel. You'll have to let me show you round a bit until you get your bearings. Monte's a queer place if you don't know it."

"I say, that's awfully good of you. I—" Jimmy was cut short by the appearance of two elderly women who paused as they passed down the car.

"How are you, Major Marsh? I thought I caught sight of you at Calais," said the first woman. She was Lady Swayne, a familiar figure in Monte Carlo society. She had recently celebrated her 70th birthday, but did not look a day more than 55. Her companion, Mrs. Franklin Bunges, also a social light, was faded, and made no attempt to stay the hand of time. She was American. Major Marsh jumped up and shook hands.

They both smiled and passed on, and the Major sat down again.

"That's Lady Swayne," he remarked. "Does a lot of entertaining at Monte Carlo."

"Is that so," said Jimmy, wondering why the pretty, fair woman at the next table turned around and stared at the Major's back.

Half an hour later the first comers began to drift back to their compartments. As soon as Major Marsh and Jimmy had gone, Violet Spurrell leaned across the table and spoke in a low voice to her husband.

"You saw that man sitting with his back to me?"

"Yes."

"Talk to him if you get a chance."

Gordon raised his eyebrows languidly, as if the action required more effort than his physical strength would permit.

"What on earth d'you want to know him for?"

"I don't, but I want to know those two women who spoke to him. It's easy for one man to get into conversation with another on a journey. After that you can leave the rest to me."

Spurrell turned round and looked across the car.

"Who are they and what's the attraction?"

"The one with the golden hair is Lady Swayne. She knows every one at Monte Carlo and I'm going there to have a good time."

"Oh."

Gordon Spurrell was going to Monte Carlo because his wife was taking him there. If Lady Swayne and her companion were to become their friends, he imagined that he was in for a pretty dull time. He yawned and offered his wife a cigarette.

**JIMMY MADDOCK** prepared leisurely for bed in his compartment of the Blue Train. In twelve hours' time he would be at Monte Carlo, the place of his dreams during the last seven years. At last he was embarked upon his great adventure; the holiday for which he had saved, denying himself many of the ordinary amenities of life which his modest earnings as a clerk and his small inheritance would have provided. The more he saved the more complete would be the realization of his great ambition to spend a season at Monte Carlo, not viewing the smart restaurants and places of amusement from the outside, but as a man of wealth who has no need to consider the cost of anything.

Jimmy's father, who had been a poor, hard-working country parson, and had only been able to afford a secondary education for his son, had died when Jimmy was 18 and had just entered an estate agent's office as a junior clerk. Jimmy had ambition. He had no intention of spending his life in a small country town, if he could possibly do otherwise, and at the first opportunity he removed to London, where he became similarly employed by a firm whose offices were in Oxford Street. It was not until he had been working in London for nearly four years that the big idea came to him.

One evening, on the Underground, he chanced to pick up a newspaper which some one had left on the seat. A whole page was devoted to thrilling articles describing the gayeties of Monte Carlo, Nice and Cannes.

Jimmy was thrilled. Why shouldn't he go to Monte Carlo, Nice or Cannes? It was entirely a question of money, and Jimmy believed that if you wanted a thing sufficiently, and concentrated upon getting it, it would be yours in due time.

He estimated that he would have to save for at least seven years. He knew exactly what sacrifices he would have to make. Undoubtedly it would be worth while.

His economy was a hard struggle, one which was only made possible by an unwavering determination to achieve his object; and that was not accomplished without considerable cost to his dignity. His colleagues at the office sneered at his economies, even when he invented the story that he was saving in order to visit an aged uncle in California (he kept his real purpose a strict secret).

And during those seven years Jimmy had no annual holiday, for he told his "boss" the story of the uncle in California and asked if he might save up his holidays until three or four months were owing to him.

He took a course in French conversation. Whenever an opportunity occurred he walked down Bond Street and along Piccadilly and took a mental note of the clothes which were being worn by men of fashion. After a while he began to make a collection of clothing which ranged from pale blue sock suspenders to an opera hat.

Now, as the Blue Train thundered southward, Jimmy Maddock felt that his many self-imposed privations would not be in vain. At last he was experiencing the joy of being a man of wealth and leisure. For a young man with his uneventful background the prospect was a thrilling one.

**IN ANOTHER** compartment of the Blue Train Gordon and Violet Spurrell were also preparing for bed.

Gordon Spurrell, who was 27, had been sent to Winchester and Balliol by his father, an army officer on the retired list. After leaving the university he took the first job offered to him, a clerkship in an insurance office.

Nothing better turned up except Violet Denniston, who jumped at an opportunity to give up an inconspicuous and dreary existence in the depths of the country with an invalid mother, and an elder half sister, with whom she never agreed.

Violet had inherited most of her late father's characteristics. She hated the country, rebelled against poverty and preferred society of any kind to no society at all. She was strikingly beautiful, having hair which was naturally very fair, and eyes which were of a greenish-gray color; and this, combined with an assured naivete, helped her augment



"The one with the golden hair is Lady Swayne. She knows every one at Monte Carlo"

her husband's earnings by appeals to her father-in-law. The sudden death of Colonel Spurrell brought Violet face to face with difficulties which she had not foreseen.

Life in a small, two-roomed flat, with little or nothing to spend on dress, and less upon amusements, was not a lively prospect for any one, especially for a girl of Violet's volatile temperament. Encouraged by the sums of money which she had succeeded in wheedling out of her father-in-law until his death had stopped that source of supply, she had become appalling extravagant and had got into a set of young people who appeared to have plenty of money to throw about. Then Gordon went down with rheumatic fever and he was ordered to give up all work and lead the life of an invalid for at least a year. Faced with an accumulation of debts and the necessity of providing for herself and Gordon, Violet confided her difficulties to a person named Carl Hentz, whom she met at a house party while Gordon was in a hospital.

**MR. HENTZ** was short, thick-set and aged about 40. He posed as being an important figure on the Continental Bourses and talked, in his quiet, unassuming and convincing way, of his offices in the various capitals. He had all the appearances of being a man of wealth; there was a good deal of charm in his manner and, as a rule, he appealed to women.

Mr. Hentz listened to Violet's unhappy story, and while she talked he took mental stock of her physical attractions and temperamental characteristics. The type was not new to him. He knew something of these young women whose tastes outdistanced their means, and decided that he could make use of her. Violet Spurrell very soon fell in love with him.

At the moment Mr. Hentz was not in need of Violet's services, but it was necessary for him to deal with her financial difficulties. He loaned her a few pounds with which she could speculate under his guidance, saying that he would pass the "deals" through his broker. Of course there were no "deals." After deciding upon a speculation Hentz put his hand in his pocket and went to Violet with what he called her "profit." In this way Violet was able to give a satisfactory explanation to Gordon for the change in their fortunes.

In the course of a few weeks Carl Hentz found an opportunity for employing Violet. When he explained that she was to assist him to gain possession of a valuable pearl necklace, she began by refusing to have anything to do with the affair. Violet was unable to hold out against his picture of what her position would become, with an invalid husband and no money, if she continued to refuse.

Violet did her work well, and having once cast

her conscience aside, had little hesitation in doing so a second time. Hentz rewarded her generously, and she found herself in a position of affluence which was far beyond her most cherished dreams.

During the next few months she assisted Carl Hentz on several occasions and proved herself to be so efficient that he planned something on a much larger scale; a job which she was to tackle alone. By this time Hentz had reasons for supposing that Scotland Yard was taking a mild interest in him, so he decided that it would be safer if he remained in the background.

This new job concerned the famous emeralds which the late Sir William Swayne had given to his wife just before he died.

Gordon Spurrell had already been fed upon the story of his wife's successful speculations, and the announcement that she had brought off an extra lucky deal was sufficient to allay his suspicions when he was told that they were going to Monte Carlo for the Winter. Violet told him about a wonderful system at the tables which would enable her to make all their expenses and a bit more besides.

All this explains why Violet Spurrell became alert when she heard Lady Swayne's name mentioned in the restaurant car, and why she asked her husband to work up an acquaintance with the major.

The next morning, as he ate his petit dejeuner, Marsh was a little surprised when Gordon Spurrell sat down at the same table, although there were several unoccupied tables in the car.

"Somewhat warmer down here," he remarked, after a while.

"Yes, we are in Provence now," replied the major, affably.

"I happened to hear you mentioning Monte Carlo at dinner last night," Gordon said. "I wonder if you could tell me anything about the golf there? I was just wondering what I was going to find to do. I imagine there's not much in the way of amusements if you don't gamble."

"And you don't?" The major made a practice of discovering all he could about his casual acquaintances. One never knew when a little knowledge might come in useful.

"I'm afraid I haven't any money to lose," Gordon replied.

The major's eyebrows went up. The young man did not give the impression of being hard up, neither did his companion, his wife, presumably, who joined them at that moment.

**JIMMY MADDOCK** scratched his head and gazed with wonder at the furnishings of his hotel room. He had never seen anything quite like it before except, perhaps, on the stage, when the setting was

supposed to represent an apartment in a royal palace. Being of a simple disposition, he was not sure that he approved of French ideas of interior decoration.

Jimmy washed his face and hands, brushed his thick, black hair with much care, and then went downstairs.

In the lounge he was joined by Major Marsh.

"By the way, I told you my name, didn't I? What's yours?"

"Maddock."

"Any relation to Sir Lancelot Maddock, by any chance?"

The coincidence of the Christian name was more than Jimmy could resist.

"Rather, he's my cousin," he replied, boldly.

"No, really? Well, I'm damned! Lancelot is an old friend of mine. He'll be coming out here after Christmas."

"I don't know a soul here, except yourself," Jimmy said rather pathetically.

"Look here," the major said, "d'you want to know people?—because you'll find it pretty dull here if you don't."

"Of course, I'd like to."

"Well, I can introduce you to crowds. I know every one who is worth knowing, but I warn you that social success at Monte Carlo depends entirely upon the number of dinner and luncheon parties you are prepared to throw, if you don't run to a title."

"I \* \* \* I really don't see why I shouldn't entertain," Jimmy said, unable to conceal his emotion. "I can afford to and—"

"Very well, if you will allow me I will set you going. They are opening the new Sporting Club on Christmas Eve and there will be a pretty good crowd there for the gala. If you like I will see if I can rope in a few smart people. I can probably get those two women I spoke to last night, during dinner, Lady Swayne and Mrs. Franklin Bunges; then there is Lord Nestle, I saw him just now, I might ask him, and—"

"Lord Nestle!"

"Major Marsh! How are you? Just arrived?"

Jimmy looked up and saw a tall, handsome woman coming up. The major jumped up.

"My dear Princess, I'm delighted to see you again," he said, raising her fingers to his lips.

Jimmy's eyes opened wide and his jaw fell, as he watched the ceremonious greeting.

"Charming woman, perfectly charming," Marsh said, as he returned to his chair.

"Who is she?" Jimmy asked, excitedly.

"Princess Andrew of Balkania. You heard me invite her to your party? I thought it best if I appeared as the host since you don't know any one yet. I take it there's no need to economize?"

"How d'you mean?"

"That we need to bother about limiting the number of people we ask. The more the merrier, of course, but I don't want to run you in for more expense than you really wish to incur."

"Oh, no, go ahead and ask as many as you like," Jimmy replied. "Who \* \* \* er \* \* \* is Princess Andrew?"

"A widow. Her husband was a brother of Prince George of Balkania, who will be King if ever there is a return to the monarchy."

The major got up.

"Well, I think I'll go and unpack my kit and then have a little siesta. Shall we meet at 6 in the bar and then stroll over to the Salle Privee after we've had a spot of something?"

Jimmy had not the slightest idea what the Salle Privee was, but he agreed and followed the Major's example by retiring to his room, where he slept soundly for two hours.

THE usual oppressive calm of the Casino rooms was suddenly shattered by a babel of hysterical voices. The major and Jimmy came on the scene when an argument over a bet was at its height.

"There's no need to go to an asylum to see mad people," the major remarked, as they passed on. "Most of these are mad, or they wouldn't come here day after day. Look at them. The most amazing assortment of human beings on earth. Down-and-outs trying to redeem their lost fortunes; imbeciles who imagine that, because they lost yesterday, they will be certain to win today; men of keen intelligence, mathematicians and scientists, perhaps, testing their latest system which hasn't the ghost of a chance of succeeding here, however good it may be."

"But why can't a system succeed here?" asked Jimmy.

"Because if you play a successful system in this place and begin to win heavily, the croupiers will speed up the play, or find some means of disturbing your calculations. The only sane people here are the money-lenders, who get their interest at the rate of 365 per cent per annum."

"Don't you ever play?"

"Not now. I can't afford it. The odds against the gambler are too heavy. They have to be, otherwise the S.B.M. would go phut."

"The S.B.M.?"

"Societe des Bains de Mer, the commercial name for the company that rules Monte; runs the Casino which is responsible for something like 200 suicides a year; maintains the public services and pays the reigning Prince his salary. It is the bone of contention which periodically rocks the principality and causes mild disturbances which the newspapers describe as revolutions. Ah! Here is Evelyn Thacker. Evelyn, let me introduce Mr. Maddock to you. You know his cousin, Sir Lancelot, don't you?"

Jimmy shook hands with Miss Thacker, a tall, handsome girl who might have been any age between 27 and 35. She would have been more attractive if she had not always appeared anxious. Her pale eyes were never at rest.

"Having any luck?" the major asked.

Miss Thacker frowned.

"Rotten," she replied, as they passed into the Salle Privee, which, as usual during the two hours before dinner, was crowded. "But I feel that I'm going to win this evening."

"Are you doing anything on Saturday night?"

"Saturday? Oh, that's Christmas Eve. I suppose I shall go and have a look at the new Sporting. Why?"

"I was wondering if you would join a little party I'm giving. Princess Andrew, Lady Swayne and Lord Nestle are coming."

"I should love to. I was expecting to have a deadly dull Christmas. I'm economizing furiously." Then, over her shoulder as she moved away, "Wish me luck."

"One of the nicest girls in Monte," the major remarked as he took Jimmy's arm and led him across to one of the roulette tables, "but she'll come a frightful mucker if she's not jolly careful. An unlucky gambler. I wonder she's hung on so long."

"Why doesn't she chuck it?"

"She's like every one else who comes here; hopes that she'll get back what she's lost. Now you'd better go and change a mille or two and have a fling."

"You are advising me to play after all you've said?"

"You'll play sooner or later, whatever I advise, so you might just as well make a start and discover for yourself that it's a fool's game."

JIMMY turned away and changed a mille note at one of the desks. Marsh continued to watch the play.

Violet Spurrell, sleek in emerald green and black, and Gordon came up and she was introduced to Marsh. She sat down and gave her attentions to the major. She told him that her husband had been terribly ill and that she had brought him to Monte Carlo in the hope that he would "pick up."

"He was asking me about the golf this morning,"

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said Marsh, glancing at Violet's small white hands. "That's where he ought to be, up there all day, on Mont Agel. The air's like champagne."

The appearance of Jimmy Maddock broke up the conversation, and after a few minutes Violet, more than satisfied with her short talk with the major, got up and said she must go and unpack her things before dinner. Gordon went with her.

"Attractive girl, what?" said Marsh, looking after the slim figure. "I like him, too. Nice lad. Well, Maddock, what have you been doing with yourself; losing all your money?" Jimmy shyly produced a fistful of mille notes from his pocket. "You haven't won all that?" Jimmy nodded. "How much?"

"I \* \* \* haven't worked it out in sterling but there are about a hundred of these."

"Well, I'm damned; and it's the first time you've been inside a Casino."

THE next afternoon Major Marsh was holding a cocktail reception in the foyer from which the restaurant of the new Sporting Club is reached by a short flight of steps. The party, for which the major was getting the credit, without the inconvenience of having to pay for it, had assumed large proportions. Having started with Princess Andrew of Balkania and Evelyn Thacker, it now included Lord Nestle, Lady Swayne, whose emeralds clustered round her neck; Mrs. Bunges and several others.

Presently the party moved down the steps in a solemn procession and sat at a table in the center of the room. Jimmy Maddock found himself next Evelyn Thacker. He liked her looks; she had a wonderful complexion, and he admired the way in which her dark brown hair waved about her temples.

"Don't you think this is just wonderful?" Mrs. Bunges asked, indicating the gold and silver magnificence of the restaurant.

"I suppose it is," he replied, bored. "I \* \* \* er \* \* \* I wonder if you could tell me something about the lady on my left?" he asked.

"Sure, that's Miss Thacker. Charming girl, but a terrible gambler. Her father's a Colonial Governor, or something of the kind. She's going to find herself in trouble if she isn't very careful."

Miss Thacker, overhearing, smiled at Jimmy. He thought she looked exceedingly attractive.

"You mustn't believe a single word Mrs. Bunges says," she told him. "Every one declares that she'll be turned out of the principality one of these days. Of course I gamble; every one does in this place."

"Why do you play?"

"In the hope of getting back all I've lost. Is this your first visit to Monte Carlo?"

"Yes."

At this point the orchestra, which had been playing operatic selections, made way for a jazz band, and a glance from the major told Jimmy that he was expected to dance. Jimmy had little faith in his powers as a dancer, but he manfully issued an invitation to Evelyn Thacker.

She ended by telling him the biggest lie of her life, namely, that he was the best dancer she knew.

"ISN'T this a wonderful place, Major Marsh?"

The major, Lady Swayne and Lord Nestle were standing round the table where the new game, Hazard de Monte Carlo, was being played when Violet Spurrell joined them. Marsh's eyebrows shot up as he turned and saw who had spoken. Violet's loveliness held him speechless for a moment. She was wearing a pale green frock which revealed every line of her splendid figure.

"Yes, they've made a pretty good job of it." He was wondering why he had not invited the Spurrells to Jimmy's party. "Do you know Lady Swayne, Mrs. Spurrell; Lord Nestle?"

Lady Swayne had been a beauty herself many, many years ago, and beautiful women had a great fascination for her now. She shook hands with Violet and talked affably for several minutes, then suggested that they should continue their conversation on one of the settees by the fluted columns. Violet quietly appraised the famous emeralds.

AT THE hazard table the major and Lord Nestle had been joined by Evelyn Thacker and Jimmy.

"Come along, Maddock, and let us see you break the bank," said Marsh. "It's a new game for Monte. Why not try a hundred on the three sixes?"

"What does that mean?"

"If he turns up three sixes on the dice he'll have to pay you a hundred and eighty times your stake; roughly, a couple of hundred pounds."

"Sounds all right, but how often do three of anything come up?"

"Couldn't say what the odds are."

"A million to one against," muttered Lord Nestle, who never gambled.

Jimmy took a hundred-franc note from his pocket and dropped it on to the three fours.

"Make your bets," cried the croupier as he shook the dice box with both hands.

"Whatever made you do that?" asked Evelyn, excitedly. Her cheeks were flushed and she was twisting her handkerchief into knots.

"I don't know, unless it was because I was born on the fourth of the fourth month," replied Jimmy.

"The four wins," announced the croupier.

Several gasps of astonishment were heard round the table.

"You've won, Mr. Maddock!" cried Evelyn.

Jimmy was the only person at the table who remained perfectly calm. While every one else talked excitedly he leaned forward and collected his pile of chips.

"Next time I shall follow you," said Evelyn.

"I wasn't going to play again."

"You must," she commanded, shortly, "I don't believe you can lose. Please stake again."

Lamb-like he obeyed, and threw a 500-franc chip on to the five of the semicircle. Evelyn drew from her bag a note for the same amount and put it on the same number. Directly she had laid it down she had a feeling that she would lose it. Why had she done it? She could not afford to lose that much money.

Evelyn held her breath as the croupier lifted the dice box from the table.

"You've lost!" said the major.

Evelyn muttered something beneath her breath and, without looking at any one, turned and walked across the room.

"I say, I believe she thinks it was my fault," said Jimmy, looking after her. She was standing by one of the chemmie tables.

"Rot! She's been losing the devil of a lot lately and she's about broke," said the major. "Take her into the bar and give her a drink. She's a damned good sort."

"But I hardly know her."

"What's that got to do with it, man? Go along."

Jimmy approached nervously and expressed his regrets for her loss. Evelyn tried to smile and told him it didn't matter, and then he invited her to have a drink. They took the only vacant seats in the bar, two deep armchairs which had been skillfully designed so as to detain their occupants in supreme comfort for as long as possible.

"You mustn't take any notice of what I say tonight," Evelyn added. "I'm hopelessly out of gear."

This was Evelyn's second Winter at Monte Carlo. Two years ago she had come from India with her grandmother, and according to their original plans they were to spend four months at Monte Carlo and then go to England. It was the grandmother's intention to marry her granddaughter to some rich and socially suitable person as soon as circumstances permitted, but, unfortunately for this praiseworthy scheme, the grandmother plunged deep into an affair with a retired colonel soon after their arrival at Monte Carlo, married him at the British Consulate at Nice, and took him off to England, leaving Evelyn to fend for herself.

By this time Evelyn had contracted the gambling fever.

For a while Evelyn succeeded in keeping more or less solvent, thanks to a run of good luck at the Casino; but during the last few months she had been a persistent loser and, at the moment, her account at the bank was considerably overdrawn, she was unable to repay £100 which she had borrowed from Princess Andrew, and two weeks' bills were still owing at the hotel.

Two years ago Jimmy Maddock would not have interested Evelyn in the least; but now he interested her a good deal. Having been told by Major Marsh that he was wealthy and unattached, she regarded him as a possible source of assistance. As a mere man she liked him as well as any others whom she knew, as far as she could judge upon so short an acquaintance; but no thought of marriage entered her head. Evelyn had a horror of curtailing her liberty in any way.

"It's nearly 1," Evelyn spoke up. "What d'you say

to going down to the Night Club? I believe it's rather attractive."

Jimmy paid for the drinks and they descended to the first floor, where they were received by an obsequious *maitre d'hotel*, who gave them a quick glance, estimated Jimmy's means, and then led them to a table next to the dance floor. Without saying a word he handed Jimmy a wine list which consisted of four or five brands of champagne.

"Do you like champagne?"

Evelyn did, and said so.

In due time the wine arrived and Evelyn brightened perceptibly after she had swallowed half a glass of it; but poor Jimmy continued to lack conversational inspiration.

"Perhaps you might like to dance," he said at length.

"I'd much sooner sit here and talk. I want you to tell me something about yourself."

Jimmy was flattered. He was so unused to flattery.

"That's awfully nice of you, but \* \* \* you know \* \* \* there's really nothing to tell. I've lived such a terribly uneventful life."

"I simply can't believe that. Major Marsh told me that you were a great financier."

"Of course I have considerable interests in the City," Jimmy admitted, feeling that it was rather foolish of him not to make the most of the opportunity, "but all the same, my life has been what you would probably call very humdrum; just buying and selling properties—you know, reinvesting the money, dropping a bit, buying something else; and so on."

"But how thrilling that must be!" cried Evelyn. "Oh, how I wish I were a man! I'm so fed up with doing nothing except playing at these Casinos. I envy you men who can pit your keen brains against others. It must be simply wonderful to find yourself succeeding not through some silly stroke of luck but by your own ability." She paused and gave a deep sigh. "I could be so happy in this beautiful place if only I had some absorbing work. It is that Casino that spoils everything for me."

"But why do you stay here?"

"I must. The place has got me like that." Evelyn clenched her hands as if she were gripping something fiercely. "It fascinates me; and, of course, I always imagine that my luck will turn sooner or later. Besides, I couldn't possibly get away now, even if I wanted to"—another pause, and a catch in her voice when she went on—"I owe too much money; I \* \* \* I was a fool this evening; I couldn't afford to lose even 500 francs."

Jimmy's sympathy was now fairly roused. What a terrible position for a girl to be in. Couldn't he help her in some way? For several moments he remained silent. He was summoning his courage.

"I say, I wonder if you would allow me to lend you something; just to tide you over for a bit?"

A light came into Evelyn's tired eyes.

"Oh, but I couldn't let you do that," she murmured, pathetically.

Emboldened by her tone, Jimmy leaned across the table and touched her hand.

"But why not?"

"I couldn't," she sighed. She was doing it very well.

"Please. It would give me great pleasure to lend you a trifle; just two or three thousand francs. You can repay me any time. In twelve months, if you like."

He felt her hand trembling.

"I have never borrowed from any one," she lied.

Jimmy fumbled in his pocket, disengaged three mille notes from the wad which he had won and, under cover of the table, slipped them into Evelyn's hand.

"There, please take them."

She needed no further pressing. Her fingers closed round the notes and she gave him a wan smile.

"You are very, very kind," she said, in a whisper. "Directly my allowance comes from—sh! Here's the major with Mrs. Spurrell."

"Hulloa! Going to join us?"

Marsh saw no reason why he should not take advantage of Jimmy's invitation, so he accepted. More champagne was ordered and they talked and drank for an hour; then some one suggested that it was time for bed. When they got back to the hotel and Marsh was saying good night to Jimmy—he handed him a slip of paper.

"That's what I spent tonight," he said. "You can let me have the money any old time."

ONE morning a few days later M. Martini was closeted in his private office with Armand Bernard.

"I cannot believe it is possible," the manager was saying.

"My dear Martini, it is against the impossible that we must guard," returned the detective. "I have already told you what my colleague, M. Paynton, said when he first arrived here: and this morning I receive a confidential telegram from London. It does not prove that my suspicions are well founded, but

it increases my conviction that an attempt will be made to steal the emeralds of Madame Swayne."

"Lady Swayne," corrected the manager.

"Lady Swayne, it makes no difference. I am told that those charming people, M. and Mme. Spurrell, had scarcely a sou a year ago. Monsieur falls ill and goes into a hospital where he nearly dies. Madame she stays at a big country house where she meets Carl Hentz, a gentleman of whom you never hear, perhaps, but I know him, so do my colleagues in London and Paris. He occupies a prominent place in their records, and although he has never come into their hands that must surely be only a matter of time. Madame Spurrell becomes the *petite amie* of Carl Hentz, and she has plenty of money. She and her husband come here, they take shelter under your roof, they live as if they are rich, and almost immediately we find Madame making friendship with the owner of those emeralds.

"I will telephone to Paris for my colleague, Henri Devigne. He is not known here. He will arrive tomorrow as an ordinary visitor; you give him a room near Madame Swayne's apartment, and you have no more anxiety."

"Very well," said the manager, stroking his beard meditatively. "Have you any information of another of our guests, Monsieur James Lancelot Maddock?"

"Nothing except that he is being watched at the Casino. He won 100,000 francs the other night in the *Salle Privee*, and 18,000 in the Sporting Club a few days later. It is feared that he may win too much, so the Surveillance watches. Why you ask?"

M. Martini pressed a bell-push and almost immediately Lamotte entered the office.

"Close the door, Lamotte. Have you any news from the bank about Monsieur Maddock?"

"They can tell me very little," replied the chief reception clerk. "The day after monsieur arrive he opens an account with 100,000 francs, paid in notes and—"

"Ah, his winnings!" exclaimed Bernard.

"I will talk to Paynton about him," said Bernard, making a note of the name. "If necessary he can make inquiries from Scotland Yard. You have no suspicions otherwise?"

"No, but that, in itself, is a little unusual, no?"

Bernard shrugged and left.

"One moment, Lamotte. Has Mademoiselle Thacker settled her account yet?"

"Not yet, monsieur."

Later in the day M. Martini invited Evelyn Thacker to come into his office, and in his smiling, tactful way he reminded her that all accounts should be settled every week.

Evelyn swept out of the manager's office and for some while she sat in the lounge. She had been expecting M. Martini to speak to her, and had fully intended paying her bill with the money which Jimmy had lent her. Unfortunately she had taken his mille notes into the Casino and had come out without them. Now her total assets amounted to two or three hundred francs.

Her thoughts turned to Jimmy Maddock. She would have to work upon his sympathies again. After all, why shouldn't she? Here, at Monte Carlo, appearances must be kept up at all costs. Jimmie seemed to have plenty of money to throw about and, apparently, had no one to think of except himself. He had arranged to take her for a long run in his car one day next week. She would take it up then.

JIMMY was walking along the lower terrace, where a great many people assemble every morning in the hope of having their photographs taken and seeing them later in the pages of the weeklies. He paused and said a few words to Lord Nestle, and then sauntered along to the far end where he no-

ticed Sir John Cornish sitting on a seat. The Cabinet Minister was absorbed with a cross-word puzzle.

Why shouldn't he go and sit down beside Sir John and try to make friends with him? He looked an affable old buffer. It would be a feather in his, Jimmy's, cap if he could make a distinguished friendship on his own account, without the assistance of the major.

Presently Jimmy walked back to the seat and sat down. Sir John was far too engrossed even to notice Jimmy's arrival until he chanced to let his pencil fall. It rolled between Jimmy's feet and Jimmy restored it.

"Oh! Thank you, thank you," said Sir John, in a quiet, nervous voice, and for the next ten minutes he chewed the unpointed end of his pencil and frowned at his puzzle. Then the pencil fell again and once more Jimmy picked it up. Sir John bowed apologetically.

"I'm afraid I'm giving you a great deal of trouble," he said, with a melancholy smile.

"Not at all, sir, not at all." Jimmy wondered how he might take advantage of the fortunate incident. The way was made easy for him, however.

"Are you interested in cross-word puzzles?" Sir John asked with a geniality which was most encouraging.

"Very."

"You see, it is this one," he said, indicating the clue, "Repository for obsolete statesmen." Now, you will observe that it has to be three words containing a total of twelve letters. I have the first, which is H; the sixth and seventh, which are O and F, respectively, and the eighth which is L. Possibly I am very dense, but it has defeated me for the last twenty minutes. Can you think of the answer?"

Jimmy felt himself blushing and his brow becoming moist. The answer had come to him in a flash; but how could he reveal it to Sir John, one of the veterans of the Ministry?

"Please do not be afraid of hurting my feelings by showing me that I have been very obtuse," said Sir John.

"Could it possibly be—?" No, no, he couldn't be so cruel.

"What is it? I beg of you not to keep me in suspense any longer."

"Could \* \* \* could it be—?"

"Yes, what?"

"Could it be the 'House of Lords'?"

Sir John's mouth opened, his eyes became slits, and leaning back on the seat he chuckled until the tears rolled down his cheeks and fell with a plop upon the puzzle.

"Of course, of course," he said, when his mirth had subsided. "I knew it must be something perfectly simple. Dear me! To think that such a clue should have defeated me." He filled the twelve blank squares with the twelve letters. "Now, you see, I can finish it. That word there, six across, must be 'quinine,' and three down is undoubtedly 'pedicure.' There! Thanks to your acumen it is finished. Now I must wait patiently until today's copy of the paper arrives tomorrow morning."

"You do them every day, Sir John?"

"Ah, you know who I am! But that is natural. I have seen you at the hotel, have I not? Yes, I do them every day—in fact, I have not missed a single puzzle since they were started in the Times. I find them most stimulating—in fact, I don't know what I should do without them. They are the greatest comfort to me, especially during a long and tedious ministerial speech in the House."

Sir John's easy and friendly manner had completely dispelled Jimmy's former nervousness, and he was experiencing a feeling of self-confidence which he had never known before.

"I am giving a little party at the Ambassadeurs next week," he said. "I have invited Lady Swayne, Princess Andrew of Balkania and Lord Nestle. I wonder if you would care to join us?"

The statesman's eyes lit up.

"My dear Mr. Maddock, nothing would give me greater pleasure," he replied, eagerly. "It is really extremely kind of you to take compassion upon an old man like myself, but are you sure that I shall not act as a—what shall I say—a damper upon your party?"

"Of course not, Sir John, I shall be honored. I am afraid these galas begin rather late, no one goes much before 10 o'clock."

"Dear me, it is nearly 1 o'clock. I suppose we ought to be thinking about luncheon."

AT A reception given by a chance acquaintance, Mr. Rubinger, of Chicago, his host greeted Jimmy with a gruff but genial "pleased to see you," and then, with a wave of his arm—"let me introduce you to Princess Edouard de Faramé, Mr. Maddock. And that's the mother, Mrs. Burghelmer."

After his pleasant encounter with Sir John Cornish, Jimmy was feeling a little superior, and less nervous than he had expected. Being now on the fringe of Cabinet circles he regarded himself as a person of some importance. He shook hands with Princess Edouard, a handsome young woman with a stiff manner and an American intonation, and then

he turned to "the mother," whose middle-aged plainness was in striking contrast to her daughter's beauty.

Prince Marino, an austere man with a stiff, formal manner, was making his way across the room.

"Glad you could come, Prince," said Mr. Rubinger. "You know Princess Edouard de Parame, don't you? Let me introduce you to my friend, Mr. Maddock, one of the big financiers of London."

This remark was heard throughout the room and caused a mild sensation. The Prince was busy kissing the Princess' hand and murmuring in French that he was enchanted to see her again.

Jimmy encountered the major and said, "Pretty ripe crop of titles, isn't it?"

The major laughed.

"You must get some of them to come to your Ambassadeurs party," he said. "Princess Edouard and Prince Marino. I must go and pay my respects to the Princess. See you later."

Marsh went across the room, pausing here and there to kiss some woman's hand or make a remark to a man. He eventually reached the Princess, for whom he had a great admiration, as he had for all beautiful women.

"I was beginning to fear that you had forsaken Monte Carlo," he said, drawing up a chair.

"We spent Christmas in Rome. Mother wants to have an apartment there."

"Have you met my friend, Mr. Maddock?" he asked.

"Mr. Maddock! Who is he?"

"He's in the other room talking to our hostess."

"I guess he was presented," said the Princess, "but I never remember names."

"Charming fellow; a cousin of Sir Lancelot Maddock. You ought to get to know him. He's giving a party next week at the Ambassadeurs."

"That so?"

"I think you must come," said Marsh, who had already decided that Princess Edouard and her mother were to be invited.

"I haven't been asked."

"That can easily be arranged."

"Tell him I should like to talk to him."

The major went into the other room and delivered the Princess' message. "She and her mother would like to be asked to your party," he added. "I told them I was sure you'd be delighted."

"All right," Jim said, "I'll come over presently," then, when the major had gone back to the Princess he turned to Ian Northey, the journalist. "Who is she?" he asked.

"Princess Edouard de Parame."

"Yes, I know, but where does she come from?"

"Where do any of these comic people come from? They just drop out of the blue, complete with titles. However, you'll like her. Damned pretty woman. Between ourselves, Maddock, I suspect half these titles of being faked."

By this time the rooms had become crowded. The cocktails had been followed by foamy iced concoctions, and there was such a buzz of voices, an astonishing mixture of accents, that conversation in ordinary tones became extremely difficult. Ian Northey strolled away and a moment later the major returned.

"I say, do come and talk to the Princess. You will invite her and her mother, won't you? I've practically said you would."

Jimmy was on the point of telling Marsh to give his own party if he wanted the two women to be entertained, but he restrained the impulse and allowed himself to be led across the room. "I'm damned if I'll invite her," he said to himself, as he sat down, but ten minutes later she was accepting his invitation.

"You didn't mind, did you?" said Marsh, as he and Jimmy were leaving the Merveille Palace.

"Mind what?"

"Inviting the Princess and her mother."

"Well, as a matter of fact, it's rather thrown my arrangements out of gear. I had already made up my list."

Marsh looked surprised.

"Already! Whom have you asked?"

"Yourself, the Spurrells, Lady Swayne, Princess Andrew, Evelyn Thacker and Sir John Cornish."

"Sir John Cornish!"

Jimmy was enjoying himself immensely.

"Why not?" he asked, trying to suppress a smile.

"Have you any objection?"

"No, no, of course not, but I didn't know you knew him."

"Oh, rather. He doesn't seem to know any one here, so I asked him."

They walked on in silence.

"HAPPY event expected any day. Primrose."

Mr. Carl Hentz read the announcement on the back page of the Continental Daily Mail with satisfaction. He was spending a few days at the Hotel Crillon, in Paris, and when he went along to the newspaper office with the text of a reply to Violet Spurrell's message, he went to a good deal of trouble to insure that he was not being followed. Later in the day, however, when he booked a place on the Blue Train for the following evening, he took no such precautions. He had no objection to the Surete

knowing that he was going to Cannes, although he preferred that that organization should remain in ignorance of his communications.

Two days later Violet Spurrell unfolded the previous day's copy of the Daily Mail when it was brought to her with her petit déjeuner. Having regard for her husband, who was chewing a particularly hard piece of roll in the next bed, she made a pretense of glancing at the headlines on the front page, then she turned to the petites annonces. Yes, there was a message for her.

Dearest, you are never out of my thoughts, and although I cannot be with you, I am always near in case of need. Beware of undue haste, Perrier.

"Any news?" Gordon asked. Violet tossed the paper over to him.

"Nothing much."

"Never is," muttered her husband.

VIOLET went on with her breakfast and her hand trembled slightly as she raised her coffee cup to her lips. Hentz's message seemed to bring the climax of this adventure measurably nearer. Her rapidly developing friendship with Lady Swayne had induced her to announce that the "happy event" was imminent, but she now felt that she had been a little precipitate and was glad that Hentz had warned her against undue haste.

Although Lady Swayne had been free with many personal confidences, Violet did not yet know where the emeralds were kept when they were not being worn, except that they were never deposited with M. Martini. If possible Violet wished to avoid making a search of Lady Swayne's rooms. This would not be easy, for she had Louise, the maid, to reckon with.

During the early days of her association with Carl Hentz, Violet had been taught to pick locks, open doors and drawers silently, and to work with gloved hands. When the present affair was being arranged Carl Hentz had made various suggestions but had told Violet that she would have to act according to circumstances and use her own judgment. He had, however, planned to the smallest detail all that she was to do as soon as she had obtained possession of the emeralds. Under the pretext of visiting a friend, or relative, at Grasse she was to hire a car, or better still get a friend to take her along the road through Cagnes and Roquefort. About a mile beyond the latter village she would see a deserted cottage with a large PERRIER advertisement painted on its end wall. At this point she would make an excuse for stopping the car and getting out for a few minutes. She would walk up the low bank on the right side of the road and then, hidden by a clump of bushes, make her way round to the rear of the cottage, where she would find a concrete reservoir containing a few inches of water. The emeralds, inclosed in a cigarette tin, would be dropped into the water.

Having deposited the emeralds in the reservoir, she was to ring up the Carlton Hotel at Cannes, from Nice, and ask the concierge to tell Mr. Hentz that Mrs. Spurrell would come over to lunch the next day. That would be her signal to him that he could go to the reservoir and fish out the emeralds.

While Violet Spurrell was reading Carl Hentz's message Armand Bernard was holding a consultation with Paynton and Devigne in the bedroom of a small hotel in the Condamine. In deference to Paynton, whose knowledge of French was very imperfect, they spoke English.

"Now, my friends, I will take your reports," Bernard was saying. "What news have you, Paynton?"

"It is that fellow, Maddock, who puzzles me," the Englishman replied. "He is either a foolish adventurer or he is playing some deep game."

"His business affairs, they are in order?"

"He hasn't run off with money which doesn't belong to him, if that's what you mean," replied Paynton. "That's what beats me. I can't see what he's playing at. He comes here, poses as a rich man, a financier, he makes friends with all the smart people, and now he's got hold of Sir John Cornish. I don't like it."

"Yes, yes, it is strange," said Bernard, rubbing his scrubby chin. "There is nothing to show that he has anything to do with Carl Hentz?"

"Nothing whatever. You know that Hentz has left London?"

"He is being watched?" Paynton asked.

"He will be more clever than I think if he escapes the keen eye of Emile Roux. I tell you, mes amis, we soon catch this fellow, Hentz. Then we can ignore Maddock as far as the emeralds are concerned?"

"As far as I know."

"Bon! Now, Devigne, what news have you?"

Henri Devigne, a young man, elegantly dressed according to the fashion of his country, balanced his chair on two legs and rested his feet on the edge of Bernard's desk.

"I have enough to stimulate your curiosity, but insufficient to give you much satisfaction. I make friends with Monsieur Spurrell, and I tell you he is as innocent as one of Raphael's cherubs. From him I learn that his bad health loses him his work, and he and madame find themselves with little money and many debts. Fortunately, madame has good friends who advise her and she makes speculations on the Bourse. She is successful. She make money

and, thinking that monsieur will die if he remain in the fogs and colds of England, she bring him to the Cote d'Azur for the Winter. He say he is already better."

"And madame, you learn anything from her?"

"She is a dear friend of Lady Swayne."

"But if she is so intimate with Lady Swayne she probably visits madame's apartment and may get those emeralds at any moment," cried Bernard.

"Probably, but she will not get far with them. She takes no step outside the hotel without she is followed by Fontana or Desage; and if she gets into an auto Jules Yves is always just behind her. No, mon cher Bernard, you need not excite yourself; if madame succeeds in getting the emeralds we shall catch her before she is able to dispose of them."

"Mon Dieu!" Bernard stood up and flung his arms wide. The sudden movement caused one of the buttons of his tight waistcoat to become detached. It fell upon the tiled floor and rolled under the table. "But are you a child, Devigne? Have you forgotten the Englishman, Maddock?"

"Then you want me to watch Maddock, also?"

"But yes. You shall have two more men, three, four, as many as you wish. We will run no risks. To catch this Hentz will be the triumph of my career. I have swear to myself that I catch him and \* \* \* —a knock at the door—"entrez." It was the hotel concierge.

"Monsieur Bernard, the telephone."

"From Paris?"

"Oui, Monsieur."

Bernard hurried out of the room.

Presently he burst into the room again.

"He has left Paris!" he cried, excitedly.

"Who?"

"Hentz."

"When?"

"This evening, by the Blue Train, for Cannes."

"Well?" from Devigne.

Bernard paced up and down the room, rubbing his hands together and nodding his head.

"This time I catch him," he repeated several times.

"WHEN can you let me have the hundred pounds I lent you?"

Princess Andrew's voice was hard. She looked coldly at Evelyn as she spoke.

"I'm afraid—"

"You promised to repay me before Christmas."

"I've had such appalling luck lately."

"I'm sorry, Evelyn, but I'm afraid I've got to insist. I have been counting on your promise."

Evelyn clenched her hands. A hundred pounds! She had nothing but the mille and 300 or 400 franc notes which she carried in her bag. She had already cabled to her father asking him if she could have the next installment of her allowance in advance, but Sir Carlton had replied that there would be no more remittances, that she was to make arrangements to return to India at once, and that her passage money had been paid to the P. and O. office at Marseilles.

"I'll see what I can do," Evelyn said. "Perhaps I could let you have something on account on Wednesday."

"It's useless for you to think that you can get hold of any money by Wednesday," she said, "so don't try. I'll give you a week in which to repay the lot. Your father is a rich man and you'll have to get the money from him. Good night."

For half an hour Evelyn walked backward and forward in her room.

She went over to the dressing table and took a small phial from a drawer. Should she take one? It would mean sleep, but too much sleep. She had promised to be ready by 10 o'clock to motor to Castellan with Jimmy. She returned the phial to its drawer and got into bed. It was 5 o'clock before she began to doze, and after 10 when she woke. At that moment Jimmy and Violet Spurrell were talking in the lounge.

"It will do her good," Violet was saying. "She never gets away from this place and it's getting on her nerves."

"Mademoiselle Thacker wishes to speak to monsieur on the telephone."

"Evelyn speaking. I'm frightfully sorry, Jimmy, but I'm only just awake. Don't be too angry with me. I'll be as quick as ever I can. Will half an hour do?"

"All right, there's no terrific hurry."

"You are a dear."

On the far side of the lounge Henri Devigne, more or less concealed behind a newspaper, watched Jimmy return to Violet, and a little later he saw Evelyn Thacker come downstairs and join them. Getting up, he went out on to the hotel steps and made a sign to a young man, in a light gray suit, who was sitting at the wheel of a small car on the other side of the road. This was all very silly and unnecessary, Devigne told himself. He was certain that it was waste of time and good gasoline to follow Maddock, but Bernard had ordered it and Bernard had to be obeyed. Presently Evelyn and Jimmy came through the revolving door.

"You go for a little promenade?" Devigne asked.

"Mr. Maddock is taking me to Castellan."

"I envy you, mademoiselle. It will be beautiful in the mountains."

It was nearly 1 o'clock when they entered Grasse, and they decided to stop for lunch.

"Are you enjoying this or are you terribly bored?" Evelyn asked, suddenly, when they had been served with the hors d'oeuvre. Jimmy looked at her and smiled.

"Oh course I'm not bored. Are you?"

"I'm frightfully happy. It's just heavenly to get away from all those people for once; to be able to feel that everything you say and do is free from criticism."

"Why shouldn't we often come out like this?" Jimmy asked. He thought that Evelyn was looking more attractive than usual. She smiled and laid her hand upon his for a second.

"What a crowd there is here! Let's hurry over our lunch and get away."

"You're not enjoying it?"

"Yes, I am, but I hate crowds. I'd sooner go somewhere where we can talk—and be alone."

"All right," he said, "we'll tell them to get a move on."

The road to Castelanne rises steeply out of the town of Grasse.

When Evelyn suggested that they stop and rest, they left the car by the side of the road and climbed a steep slope until they came to a secluded copse.

"Oh, how glorious!" cried Evelyn as she threw herself down and lay full length upon the turf. She closed her eyes. "Why don't you lie back too? It's so restful."

Ten minutes passed and neither of them spoke. Thinking that Evelyn had fallen asleep, Jimmy sat up and looked at her.

"You're crying!"

"No, I'm not."

"But you are. What's the matter?" Her hand moved in search of his and found it.

"You mustn't take any notice of my foolishness," she said, without looking at him.

"Please tell me what is troubling you?"

"It's always the same thing."

"Money?"

She nodded, avoiding his eyes.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I have no right to worry you with my silly affairs."

"Of course you should. I want to help you."

"I'm such a useless creature. I seem to be incapable of living sensibly." A tear rolled down her cheek and splashed upon his hand.

"Are you still in debt?"

"You know I am. I haven't repaid you that three mille yet."

"Apart from me?"

She nodded.

"How much?"

"Within a week I simply must repay a hundred pounds I borrowed from some one."

JIMMY was overcome with compassion. She looked so utterly miserable. Shifting his position a little, he slipped his arm beneath her and drew her closer to him. She sighed and looked at him for the first time since they had been lying there. Her arm went slowly round his neck and she drew his head down until their lips touched.

"Jimmy, do you care for me, a little?"

"You know I do."

She sighed again.

Hitherto Jimmy's love affairs had been few in number and of a primitive order. This was something entirely new to him. He could not speak. Did he love Evelyn or— "Jimmy, I'm so terribly happy."

"So am I." His words sounded ridiculous and inadequate in his own ears, and yet he was in earnest.

"Evelyn, if I give you the money will you promise me something?"

"What, dearest?"

"That you will never gamble again."

"But I couldn't take money from you like that."

"Why not?"

"I don't know, but I couldn't."

"Not if I begged you to?"

She saw a temporary respite from her difficulties. No, she did not love him, but she thought that she was nearer being in love than she had ever been before. However much she may have roused him, she knew his willingness to help her was something quite apart from that.

"It seems so dreadful."

"What does?"

"Taking money from you, taking so much."

"But you took it from—whoever it was."



"Ah! Here is Evelyn Thacker. Evelyn, let me introduce Mr. Maddock to you"

"A woman."

"Does that make any difference?"

"I don't know. Perhaps not if you don't think so."

"All I ask in return is that you promise never to gamble again."

A moment's hesitation. She knew that she would never be able to keep that promise; but how could she refuse to give it?

"Very well, I promise."

She gave him her lips and then pressed him gently from her.

"Let us go on to Castelanne now," she said.

A LONG line of cars and hotel busses stood outside the station at Cannes awaiting the arrival of the Blue Train. One of the cars belonged to the Ministry of the Interior, and its driver, a young man named Garsin, was sitting at the wheel, asleep. Presently the shrill whistle of an engine awakened him and he glanced at the station clock.

"A l'heure!" he muttered to himself and started the engine.

As the express came in sight round the bend of the line, Armand Bernard stood back a little and mixed with a group of people who, presumably, had come to meet their friends. They were French, and Bernard entered into conversation with them, hoping thereby to make his presence less noticeable. The train came to a standstill and the detective ran his eye quickly along the coaches as the passengers began to alight. After a moment he saw the man whom he sought, and at once pretended to be looking for some one else. He turned his back upon the short, thick-set figure of Hentz who was coming along the platform, followed by a blue-bloused porter carrying two large suitcases. When he knew that Carl Hentz was within hearing distance Bernard asked a conducteur if he had an old, white-haired lady traveling alone. The question reached the ears of Mr. Hentz, who smiled and at once approached the detective.

"Pardon, vous etes Monsieur Olivier?"

Bernard swung round and, for the first time, observed the other at close quarters.

"I'm sorry, but you are mistaken."

Mr. Hentz raised his hat, smiled and bowed.

"Milles pardons," he said. "I remark that you look for some one. I had arranged to meet a business

associate whom I have never seen." He looked at the detective closely. He noticed a chipped front tooth, the angle at which the ears were set, and a small mole on the side of the neck; invaluable aids for penetrating a disguise at some future time. He then glanced up and down the platform. "I do not see him," he remarked, as if to himself. "No doubt I shall find him waiting for me at the Carlton." He raised his hat again, smiled pleasantly and went after the porter with the two suitcases.

"He has the cheek of the devil," Bernard muttered to himself as he followed Hentz down the subway and up the other side to the station entrance, where he indicated the quarry to Garsin with a nod of his head.

Some hours later Armand Bernard had a visitor at his hotel at Monaco.

"Well, Jules."

"M. Devigne told me to report to you, M. Bernard. This morning I follow the Englishman, M. Maddock, and a lady. They go in monsieur's car."

"Well?"

"I follow them through Cagnes to Grasse, where they take dejeuner at the Pomme d'Or. Afterward they go by the Digne road until they come nearly to Castelanne. There they descend and walk a little way. I follow; I see them enter a small wood, I march on my hands and knees until I am close; monsieur he makes love to madame."

"You hear what he talk about?"

"He talks about money and then about love."

"Yes, yes, not so much above love, Jules. What happened next?"

"Madame says they will go to Castelanne."

"And they went?"

"Mais oui, monsieur."

They take tea at the Hotel Levant and then they return to Monte Carlo.

"They meet no one, going or coming?"

"No one, monsieur, except the waiters at the restaurant at Grasse."

"I WOULDN'T mind betting that the King is the topic of conversation over there," Marsh said across the luncheon table.

"Where, and which King?" asked Jimmy without much interest. Royal personages did not stand so high in his estimation as they had done before he came to Monte Carlo.

"His Majesty of Tyrolonia," replied the major. "He has arrived at Cap d'Ail; he comes every year and hobnobs with every one. I was referring to the hen party, over by the window. I imagine that they are trying to arrange the order in which they will dish out their invitations. There's usually a scramble to get in first."

"Well, I don't see the harm if it amuses them," replied Jimmy.

Sir John Cornish, who had just entered the restaurant, paused at Jimmy's side.

"If you have a few moments to spare after lunch I should like to consult you about a most interesting problem which I have here," he said, indicating the cross-word section of his paper.

"You see, Mr. Maddock, the clue is—'card players can always be sure of poker by this.' Now it's a word of nine letters. I have the second which is I, and I have the last three, which are A, C, E, and those must be correct. At first I thought of poker-face, but that hardly makes sense; besides, it doesn't fit in."

"And it can't be 'grimace.'"

"No, I thought of that."

"You are quite sure that the I is correct?" Jimmy asked.

"Well, if it isn't then the whole of that corner must be wrong," Sir John replied, uneasily.

"Well, Mr. Maddock, I am afraid I shall have to leave, but I will not admit that we are beaten; at least not yet. Perhaps one of us will guess the answer during the day. I wonder if you would care to join me at the Alcazar. I have asked Princess Edouard de Parame and her mother to take tea with

me. I found her a most delightful and intelligent woman."

"Mrs. Burghheimer?"

"No, no. Princess Edouard."

"Oh, yes, very intelligent. I should like to come."

"About 4 o'clock?"

"Very well."

Sir John bowed.

"Then I will say good-by for the present."

Jimmy went over to the lounge, wondering how he would occupy his time until 4 o'clock. He had intended asking Evelyn to go over to Cannes with him, but she had been avoiding him.

He tried to analyze his feelings toward Evelyn. Sometimes he imagined that he was in love with her, but he always ended his self-analysis with the knowledge that he wasn't. She had appealed to his senses and there the attraction ended.

Jimmy looked at his watch. It was 3 o'clock. He would go for a walk along the lower road as far as the Beach and return by the Boulevard d'Italie in time for Sir John's tea party. The road by the sea was almost deserted, except for a few men who leaned over the wall with their bamboo fishing rods. As he turned the corner by the Summer Casino he came face to face with Mr. Richard Dobbs, the only surviving partner of Richard Dobbs, Spindleway & Dobbs, Estate Agents, of Oxford Street, London. Jimmy stood still in the middle of the pavement and stared foolishly at his employer as if he had seen an unpleasant apparition. Mr. Dobbs stared back as if he had suddenly come upon his trusted clerk rifling the office safe.

"So we meet, but not in California," said Mr. Dobbs, cuttingly. He was a dapper little man, with waxed mustaches, veined cheeks and a number of gold teeth. He wore white spats, a pearl pin decorated his tie, and he carried a pair of spotless white gloves in one hand and a gold-topped malacca cane in the other. Six weeks ago Jimmy would have shriveled up under that flint-like stare and voice; but the Jimmy of early February was very different from the Jimmy of mid-December. Mr. Dobbs' aggressive attitude annoyed him. What right had he to come here and interfere with his holiday?

"But not so very far distant," Jimmy replied, pertly.

Mr. Dobbs stiffened himself. This was a new Maddock whom he was meeting.

"What the devil are you talking about?" he demanded, a gold front tooth glistening resplendently in the afternoon sunshine. Jimmy smiled.

"Perhaps you are not aware," he said, "that the western end of Nice is known as California."

"California be damned!" cried Mr. Dobbs, puffing out his baggy cheeks. "You need not try to put that stuff across me, Maddock, because I'm not having any. What's your game?"

"Game! I don't understand."

"Then what d'you think you are doing here?"

"Taking seven annual holidays in one."

"Oh, then perhaps you can explain why Scotland Yard detectives have been making inquiries about you at the office and at Guildford Street?"

"Detectives! What do you mean?"

"They came to me with a fine story; said that you were down here posing as a millionaire and the cousin of a titled man, and that you had been pretending that your London address was the Savoy Hotel. Naturally, they wanted to know if everything was in order at the office."

"Everything in order?"

Mr. Dobbs rapped the pavement with his cane.

"For heaven's sake don't keep on repeating everything I say as if you were a parrot. The police suspected you of having absconded with the firm's money."

The idea of being regarded as a criminal appealed to Jimmy's rapidly developing sense of humor and he went off into roars of laughter, much to the annoyance of Mr. Dobbs, who had never seen a joke in his life.

"There's nothing to laugh at, Maddock, as you will perhaps realize when I tell you that your place has been permanently filled by Mr. Bennett."

Jimmy ceased laughing, to Mr. Dobbs' great satisfaction.

"But you can't do that sort of thing without giving me due notice," he said, a little shakily.

"Can't I? We'll see. When you've finished amusing yourself here you can come back to London and sue me, if you think you've got a case. I warn you, you won't get much sympathy out of an English jury. You understand, it will be quite useless for you to show your face at the office in the hope of being taken back, because Richard Dobbs, Spindleway & Dobbs have finished with you, for good."

With a dramatic crescendo, and a flourish of his stick, Mr. Dobbs walked on, leaving Jimmy looking after him with an expression of complete amazement.

IF JIMMY had known that Sir John Cornish was going to monopolize Princess Edouard so completely he would have made some excuse for refusing the invitation. As it turned out he was compelled to entertain Mrs. Burghheimer.

It was obvious that Sir John had spent the best

part of the afternoon in attending to his personal appearance. He was wearing a new suit, his bow was tied with precision, a white silk handkerchief protruded correctly from his breast pocket, and his straggling mustache had been neatly trimmed.

Mrs. Burghheimer was invited to pour out the tea, and Sir John began telling the Princess about the cross-word which had occupied his and Jimmy's attention after lunch. The Princess looked intensely bored, but she listened bravely. On the other side of the table Jimmy was striving to divide his brain into two portions, one for listening to Mrs. Burghheimer, and the other for considering his new position as created by his dismissal from the firm of Richard Dobbs, Spindleway & Dobbs.

"Mr. Maddock, the Princess has thought of that answer; it is 'fireplace.'"

"Fireplace!"

"Yes, you may have forgotten the clue; 'card players can always be sure of poker by this.' Quite a clever one."

After that Sir John invited the Princess to dance with him, and without waiting for an invitation from Jimmy, Mrs. Burghheimer stood up. There was no escape. Jimmy put his arm round her ample waist and took the floor. She was a dead weight and made no attempt to keep in step, but she seemed to be perfectly happy and quite oblivious to her partner's pained expression. After a couple of turns Jimmy persuaded her to sit down, pointing out that the floor had become very crowded.

Jimmy's thoughts drifted to Evelyn. He wondered what she was doing at the moment. He imagined that he would find her in the Salle Privee if he went there. As soon as he could get away he would stroll down to the Casino and see if his suspicions were justified.

Sir John and the Princess continued to dance, and it was nearly 7 o'clock before the party broke up. Sir John announced his intention of escorting the ladies back to their flat in the Boulevard de l'Observatoire. Jimmy excused himself by saying that he must write an important business letter before dinner and he turned down the gardens.

"TUULOA, Maddock! Here's your cousin."

Jimmy felt suddenly weak. What the devil was going to happen now? He had been dreading this moment ever since he made his claim to be related to Sir Lancelot. What a bloody fool he had been! He looked at Marsh and then at the tall, red-haired man who had a smiling, rubicund countenance.

"Well, my kinsman," said Sir Lancelot. "I had given up all hope of finding you. Never so surprised in my life as when Everard said you were here. What have you been doing with yourself in Canada?"

Jimmy blinked and examined his injured hand.

"Canada? I've never been there."

"Really, but where—?"

"I've been in London for the last ten years."

"And why the deuce didn't you tell me you'd never met your cousin?" asked the major. "I always imagined—"

"What about a drink?" said Jimmy, quickly. The other two readily agreed and they all went across to the Cafe de Paris. The Baronet laughed.

"A little sensitive about the silly old feud, perhaps," he said. "What, James?"

Jimmy was perspiring uncomfortably. He led them to a table and called a waiter. What on earth did all this mean? Did Sir Lancelot really imagine that they were cousins? Apparently he did. Really, it was a most embarrassing situation.

"You mustn't mind my saying so, James, but that old father of yours was a bit pig-headed. There wasn't the slightest justification for cutting himself off from the rest of the family, as he did. The fact that he was a parson should have made him all the more tolerant."

Parson! How did Sir Lancelot know that his father had been a parson? He couldn't have got that from Marsh. For a moment Jimmy's attention was diverted by the Duchesse de Bourbon-Lancy, who was bowing and smiling at him effusively. Jimmy returned the compliment with a formal bow and then turned to his companions.

"Of course, Father had his own way of doing everything," he said, fervently hoping that some explanation would soon be forthcoming. He felt that he would not be able to continue this ridiculous deception much longer.

"Just so," replied the Baronet, "but I call it damned silly to keep up a lifelong quarrel over a girl, especially since you, his son, were in the running for the baronetcy."

The perspiration began to trickle down Jimmy's nose.

"Lo—look—here," he began, and then paused to wipe his forehead. "I—I—I'm not your cousin!"

Sir Lancelot and the major looked at each other and then at Jimmy.

"But you are the son of old William Maddock, aren't you?"

"Yes—o—of—course I am."

"Then what are you talking about? You are my cousin, and you'll be the next Baronet unless I have any kids, which is a million to one chance against."

"Well, I'm—" Jimmy could get no further. He, Jimmy Maddock, recently sacked estate agent's clerk, a future Baronet?

"What's the trouble?" asked the major. "You always said you were Lancelot's cousin."

"Yes, I know, but I was never quite sure about it," said Jimmy, grabbing at the first excuse he could think of, "and then when Sir Lancelot talked about my being in Canada, and being the next Baronet, I thought there must be some mistake."

The two men laughed.

"There's no mistake, James. I suppose you are familiar with the facts relating to the bust-up?"

"Well—er—more or less."

"You mean to say that Uncle William never told you?"

"Yes, but not very much. He was always rather reticent," said Jimmy, who knew nothing at all about his father's past history.

"Well, I'm not surprised," said Sir Lancelot. "From all accounts your father wasn't the sort to open out. You see, when he and my father were at Oxford they fell in love with the same girl; my father won, and the girl became my mother. Now, instead of taking his defeat like a sportsman, your father shied off, nearly bust himself with fury, and not only would he never speak to his brother again but he cut himself completely off and turned down any advances which my father made. Of course, I have always known that there was another branch of the family, but I never knew the full facts until I succeeded to the title about five years ago. I was serving in India at the time and instructed the lawyers to try and get into touch with you. They reported that your father was dead and that you were supposed to be in Canada."

"Yes, I had thought of going there but changed my plans. For the last ten years I've been working in an—" Jimmy managed to check himself, "in the city."

"And doing pretty well, from all accounts?" said Sir Lancelot.

"Not too badly," replied Jimmy, who saw no need to confess to everything.

"Queer that we should both have been christened Lancelot; after our great-grandfather, the admiral, of course."

"Well," said the major, getting up, "you've got something to tell Evelyn."

"What d'you mean?" snapped Jimmy. His nerves were a bit on edge after so much perspiring.

"She'll be interested to hear that she may be Lady Maddock some day."

"Here, steady on, Everard," cried Sir Lancelot. "I'm not dead yet."

"I haven't the slightest intention of marrying Evelyn Thacker, or any other woman," Jimmy informed them with solemn dignity. The major patted him on the shoulder and laughed.

"Perhaps not, old man, but I have an idea that she's going to marry you."

HE SEEMS to have got hold of some classy pals," Mr. Dobbs remarked to his wife, an imposing woman in black.

"Yes, I wonder who they are. My! This is a fine room, isn't it, Richard?"

Mr. Dobbs did not hear his wife's remark. His attention was fixed upon Mrs. Franklin Bunges' table, at which Jimmy Maddock was carrying on a lively conversation with Lady de Greux. The Casino cafe was crowded; the waiters worked at top speed and the directeur was still receiving a few late-comers in the foyer and conducting them to their tables.

"I'd like to get hold of that little manager fellow and ask him who all those people are at Maddock's table," Mr. Dobbs said.

"Well, I dare say he will be round this way presently."

"If you are both agreeable, I suggest that we make a little excursion up to Beuil, where they have the Winter sports," Sir John Cornish was saying to Princess Edouard and her mother. The Cabinet Minister had been deeply disappointed when Jimmy had been obliged to refuse his invitation. He had been counting upon his young friend to entertain Mrs. Burghheimer. "I am told that it is a delightful spot, and there is a good hotel where we can take luncheon."

"I guess you'll excuse me, Sir John," said the mother. "I can't stand those mountain roads with the precipices at the side, but Grace won't say no, will you, Duckie?"

"Not if Sir John will endure my company for a whole day."

Sir John inclined his head gracefully.

"There will be no question of endurance, at least not on my part, my dear Princess. I shall be honored if you will tolerate an old man's company for so many hours."

"Old man, indeed! Why, only the other day I was reading in the Times that it was your energy and vitality which kept the Cabinet together."

The Minister wagged his forefinger playfully.

"Ah, but you mustn't believe everything you read. The papers are usually very kind toward us veterans." He beamed. "Then shall we start at about 10?"

"That'll be fine," said the Princess.

"But you are eating nothing," Violet remarked. Lady Swayne smiled faintly.

"I'm a little tired, that's all," she replied. "It took me a long time to dress without Louise."

"How is she?"

"Rather bad, I'm afraid. They took her to Monaco Hospital this afternoon. The doctor is afraid of bronchitis. The girl isn't at all strong."

The band struck up a Strauss waltz and within a few seconds the dance floor was so crowded that movement of any kind was a matter of considerable difficulty.

"WELL, fancy a swell place like this having such a poky little floor," said Mrs. Dobbs to her husband, who was making frantic efforts to get out of the crush and return to their table.

"They oughter come to Surbiton and see how we do things there," Mr. Dobbs replied. "I wonder who that white-haired woman is?"

"Which one?"

"The one Maddock is dancing with. I seem to know her face."

"Yes, it seems familiar to me. Shouldn't be surprised if she was some one important. We've probably seen her photo in the Mirror."

At last, hot and perspiring, Mr. and Mrs. Dobbs succeeded in reaching their table.

"My word, it's hot!" exclaimed the latter, fanning herself vigorously with the menu card. Mr. Dobbs wiped his brow and sat limply in his chair. He was feeling quite exhausted, and remained silent until he saw the "little manager fellow" coming down the room.

"Hi!" The directeur started. He was not used to being addressed in that manner. "Hi!" He went across to Mr. Dobbs. "I want you to tell me who all those people are over there, at the big table, opposite the second window."

The directeur melted. There were names among that party which he liked to roll off his tongue.

"That is Mrs. Franklin Bunge's party, sir. She is the lady in green. The tall, thin man with glasses and white hair is the King of Tyrolonia—(Mrs. Dobbs gasped; her husband just opened his mouth and stared incredulously at the royal personage), the gentleman just sitting down is Mr. Lancelot Maddock, the well-known financier, and the lady he has been dancing with is Lady de Greux, better known as Philippa Connelly on the London stage. The lady in black, at this end of the table, is the dowager Countess of Boscombe; the one in brown is the Honorable Mrs. Ronald Carmichael; the one in blue is the Baroness Czyro, the famous authoress \* \* \* excuse me, sir, I am wanted."

For several seconds Mr. and Mrs. Dobbs gazed at each other in silence.

"Well, did you ever?" said the latter, as soon as she felt capable of expressing herself. "What d'you think of that?"

Mr. Dobbs was still staring at the King, whose laugh could be heard throughout the room.

"H'm! I almost regret giving him the sack."

"Just fancy. But what did the manager mean about him being a well-known financier, Richard?"

"I don't know. I suppose he's posing as one here."

"Well, there's nothing like sauce for getting you on in this world. Who'd have thought of finding him here, as pally as you like with a King, to say nothing of the other swells? Seems to me there's more in that young man than you ever imagined."

For some minutes Mr. Dobbs became lost in deep thought.

"Yes, perhaps you was a bit hasty," his wife went on. "Don't you think you might manage to make it up with him, somehow, and get him to introduce us to some of his friends? I should like to go back and tell Alice and George, and all of them, that we were friends with the King of Tyrolonia. He doesn't look no different from any one else, when you come to think of it, does he?" Mr. Dobbs was still pondering. "Don't you think you might, Richard?"

"It's not such an easy matter, my dear," he replied, gravely. "I was pretty sharp with him."

"Pity. But how was you to tell? You just thought he was up to something underhand. As I say, he must have something in him to have got on like he has here."

"Yes. Having all those swell friends puts an altogether different complexion on the case; gives him a special value, from a business point of view. The worst of it is he took it so calmly. I was expecting him to bluster a bit, or even cringe and make excuses."

"I wonder if I could do anything with him?" suggested Mrs. Dobbs.

"I doubt if he'd remember you. You only met him once."

"So much the better if I had to remind him who I was."

"Well, if you think you can, go ahead, by all means."

"I know just what I shall say, Richard. I shall tell him, not straightaway, of course, but after I've ingratiated myself a little, I shall tell him that you've been very ill, that you have sudden attacks and say and do things which you don't remember anything

about for some time afterward. Yes, you leave it all to me. I'll get round him somehow."

Mr. Dobbs smiled admiringly at his wife. What a woman she was; one of the best; a woman of sound judgment and wonderful tact. How often, he wondered, had she rescued him from some awkward position during the thirty years of their married life?

"Do you know, Connie, I believe that you ought to come into the business as a working partner. You have ideas, and it's ideas that are wanted nowadays."

"Don't be foolish, Richard. I can do far more as I am. If you want a partner take that young Maddock as soon as I've got round him. With all those swells as his friends he'd be able to introduce half the peerage to Richard Dobbs, Spindleway & Dobbs; to say nothing of royalty."

"By Jove, Connie, that is an idea! It hadn't occurred to me. Of course, he would; and he could come down here every Winter and rope in a few more."

"You leave him to me, Richard. I know just how to deal with that young man, but mind you, I shall take my own time over it if I find him standoffish. You see, before very long you and me will be having dinner with that lot."

THE rolling of the orchestra's drum announced that something was going to happen. The major was standing on the stage, facing the room.

"Ladies and gentlemen! I have been asked to announce the result of the draw for the Tombola. The winning ticket is No. 44."

The major saw a hand shoot up. The hand belonged to His Majesty the King of Tyrolonia and it held a ticket. To the accompaniment of general applause, Marsh, followed by an attendant who carried an elegant portable wireless set, went down the room and presented the prize to the King. His Majesty, tall and thin, stood up and received the wireless set with all the excitement of a schoolboy. The applause burst out again but suddenly subsided when a young German got up at the far end of the room and began shouting. He demanded to talk to the major, and when Marsh went over to him he produced a Tombola ticket which was numbered 44. The major swore to himself and tried to pacify the young man by promising to look into the matter.

"But I have won. You see my ticket, No. 44. I demand the prize now."

Marsh tried to lead the German into the corridor but he met with stubborn resistance.

"No, I stay here; you tell the old man you make a mistake."

"I am very sorry, sir," replied the major in his most persuasive tones, "but I cannot possibly do that. The gentleman in question is His Majesty the King of Tyrolonia."

At this point they were joined by Mrs. Scotter-Bland, who had presented the prize. Marsh explained to her the difficulty. She was glad to have another opportunity of displaying her magnanimity.

"If you will give your name and address to Major Marsh I will have a similar set delivered to you tomorrow morning," she said, with a smile which she hoped would produce immediate acquiescence.

"But I win that set and I demand it to have at once," objected the German.

Mrs. Scotter-Bland tried her smile again.

"I am very sorry, sir," she purred, "but you must understand we cannot possibly ask His Majesty to give it up."

The German stuck out his chin, aggressively.

"But why you cannot? It is mine, it is not his."

"His Majesty would be most annoyed," Marsh cried.

"Ach! And you do not mind if I am annoyed. If you had to me it given you would ask me to give it, no?"

The argument continued for several minutes and eventually the German gave his name and address and intimated that he would make himself most unpleasant if another set, identical with the first one, was not delivered to him in the morning.

"How did it happen?" Mrs. Scotter-Bland asked the major as they stood aside.

"I called out the winning number and the King held up his ticket. Somehow he had made a mistake and it never occurred to me to check the number. I felt that we couldn't possibly take it from him."

"No, of course not."

LADY SWAYNE got up from the table.

"I think if you two dears will excuse me I shall go to bed," she said. "I have rather a bad headache."

"Have you? I am sorry."

Lady Swayne smiled and took Violet's arm as they went up the steps toward the entrance. "It's nothing much, dear, I dare say I have caught Louise's cold, or influenza, or whatever it is."

"I'll come back with you."

"Indeed, you must do no such thing. I shall take a couple of aspirins and will be quite recovered in the morning. Go and enjoy yourselves and get Mrs. Bunge to introduce you to the King. He's a most delightful man."

Violet and Gordon escorted Lady Swayne as far as the lift and then entered the gaming hall.

"How are you, Mr. Maddock? Ah, you don't remember me, do you? I am Mrs. Dobbs."

Jimmy blushed. Her friendliness disarmed him.

"I beg your pardon, I \* \* \* er \* \* \* I wasn't expecting—"

"Richard and I saw you dancing and wondered if we should see you in here. What a lot of people there are playing. I can't make head or tail of this new game, although Richard has explained it to me most carefully. Do you play, Mr. Maddock?"

"Sometimes." He was looking round the room to see where Mr. Dobbs was. Didn't Mrs. Dobbs know about the dismissal?

"I love to have a little flutter now and again. I never win, but I think it is so fascinating. Are you staying here long, Mr. Maddock?"

"Er \* \* \* I really don't know." This was very strange, and it was going to be most awkward if Mr. Dobbs came along.

"Richard and I only arrived last week. I simply had to bring him away; he's been so terribly ill."

"Ill?"

"Yes; I thought I was going to lose him at one time. He's much better than he was, but far from well. I think he missed you at the office, Mr. Maddock. Many a time he's said to me that he found everything so different without you, and that he would be thankful when you returned from your holiday."

"But—"

"What, Mr. Maddock?" Really Mrs. Dobbs was a very charming woman. She had such a sweet smile and such a pleasant voice.

"I \* \* \* I don't understand. I met Mr. Dobbs two days ago and he was \* \* \* well \* \* \* he said that he had filled my place at the office."

Mrs. Dobbs appeared to be very surprised.

"He told you that?"

"Didn't you know?"

"Indeed I didn't. Two days ago, did you say? Yes, I remember. He had one of his attacks in the morning."

"Attacks?"

"Yes, Mr. Maddock, you must try to forget every word he said to you, and when you meet him again just pretend that you haven't spoken to him before down here. A terrible time I've had with him. At first his attacks terrified me; he said and did such queer things, but now I'm getting used to them. Why, just before we were leaving home he informed me that he was going right away and that I should never see him again. Would you believe it possible, Mr. Maddock?"

Jimmy did not know what to believe, or say, so he said nothing, feeling that it would be safer to let Mrs. Dobbs do all the talking for a while.

"You will try to make allowances for him, won't you, Mr. Maddock, and forget all about what he said the other day?"

"Certainly, if you are sure—"

"He didn't mean a single word, in fact I don't suppose he has the slightest recollection of what he did say. I assure you, you will find him most friendly. He was talking about your good qualities all through dinner. We are staying at the Ambassadeurs; perhaps you would come and lunch with us one day? Are you doing anything tomorrow?"

This was all very perplexing, but Jimmy saw no reason why he should do otherwise than accept.

"No, I don't think so."

"Then shall we say I o'clock. Why, here is Richard!" Mr. Dobbs was coming slowly toward them, acting his part extremely well. Jimmy saw at a glance that his boss was not in his usual state of health. "Richard, dear, I have just been asking Mr. Maddock to have lunch with us tomorrow and he says he will."

"Hallo, Maddock! How are you? Quite a surprise finding you here. Coming to lunch? Splendid!"

An hour later Mr. and Mrs. Dobbs were walking, arm in arm, back to their hotel.

"Give me a week, Richard, and I shall be entertaining the King."

Mr. Dobbs smiled.

"I dare say you will," he said, "and I believe you'd be marrying him if you weren't already tied to me."

LADY SWAYNE was ill. The doctor made light of the indisposition and said that the patient was only suffering from a common cold, but the invalid thought otherwise, said that it was influenza, if nothing more serious, and predicted for herself a fortnight in bed.

Lady Swayne was not really popular among the Anglo-Americans who constituted Monte Carlo society. People accepted her invitations and enjoyed the excellent food and wines which she provided, but they regarded her as rather a tiresome woman who was too fond of discussing her imaginary ailments. For this reason they avoided her unless there was a reasonable chance of being invited to one of her luncheon or dinner parties, and it caused a good deal of comment, and surprise, when it was noticed that Violet Spurrell was spending more and more time in Her Ladyship's company. No one was more surprised than Lady Swayne herself. It never occurred to her that Violet might have some ulterior motive for mak-

ing herself so extremely agreeable, and she concluded that her friend had discovered in her some pleasing characteristic which had escaped the notice of others.

Lady Swayne's indisposition, coupled with the maid's removal to Monaco hospital, was a godsend to Violet, who still did not know where the emeralds were kept. She had hoped to discover this quite casually, but in case she failed she had made careful plans which had for their foundation the use of a harmless drug and a set of skeleton keys, both of which had been supplied to her by Carl Hentz. When Lady Swayne took to her bed Violet at once insisted upon filling the role of nurse, thereby gaining access to the room at all hours of the day and possibly of the night as well.

Lady Swayne, who had a horror of hospital nurses, readily accepted Violet's offer, and when the doctor paid his third visit and said that his patient might get up, Lady Swayne told him in so many words that he did not know his job and that she would remain where she was. The truth of the matter was that she thoroughly enjoyed being fussed over. Violet sat with her from 11 o'clock in the morning until lunch-time; she returned at 4, when they had tea together; she looked in for a few minutes before dinner, and paid a final visit at about 11, when she made two cups of tea in an electric kettle (Lady Swayne disliked hotel tea and always had her own special brand).

IT WAS on the fifth evening of the illness that Lady Swayne said to Violet: "I want you to go to the righthand drawer of the dressing table and bring me a small leather case, a green one. I think the key is in the drawer. I \* \* \* no, dear, not that one, those are the emeralds, there's another, much smaller."

Violet's heart was beating very fast. What luck! "This one?"

"Yes, that's it. Will you bring it here? \* \* \* It is nothing of any very great value, but the stones are quite good and the setting is old Italian work. I bought it in Rome, years ago." She opened the case and took from it a pendant of rubies. "I should like to give it to you as a little souvenir."

Violet protested that she could not possibly accept such a valuable gift. For some strange reason her conscience was stinging her. How could she take a present like that from the woman she was going to rob? It gave her some satisfaction to know that she still had a conscience.

"But I insist, my dear," said Lady Swayne, as she held out the pendant and fastened the gold chain round Violet's neck. "You have done so much for me, I should like to see you wearing it. How well it suits you."

"How can I ever thank you?"

"It is I who have to thank you. Yes, it looks remarkably well and goes with that dress. Now, my dear, I think I might get off to sleep if you left me. You know how to fix the doors, don't you?"

Violet did know. She had fixed them according to Lady Swayne's instructions since she had been nursing her. The one leading to the bathroom and corridor was to be bolted on the inside, and the one opening into the sitting room was to be locked on the other side, for Violet always went out that way, and then the key was pushed underneath so that Lady Swayne could open it if she wished.

Violet slept very little that night. Turning from side to side, she alternately made plans for taking the emeralds and reviled herself for her duplicity.

Halfway through the night Violet flung herself out of bed and went on to the balcony. She leaned her bare elbows upon the stone balustrade and clasped her face between her hands. They were hot and damp. Why was she allowing herself to be so weak? Why couldn't she control herself? How Carl Hentz would despise her if he could see her standing there. Presently the cool night air calmed her. She recalled something that Hentz had once said to her, "This is a game where the rewards are big, but you have got to crush all conscience. That may not be easy at first, but remember that I only go for the big things, and I only take from those who can afford to lose."

What would Lady Swayne's loss amount to? Annoyance; little more than that. She was probably well insured; her life would go on just the same without her emeralds; she would continue to lead her normal life, staying at the most expensive hotels, traveling in de luxe trains, and going to the most exclusive couturiers for her dresses. She would not have to face poverty as she, Violet, would if she gave up working for Carl Hentz. Lady Swayne had only herself to think of, but she had Gordon. Not that he meant much to her now; but for all that he was her husband, he was a sick man, or thought he was, and depended upon her.

Gradually the attack of nerves subsided and Violet laughed aloud at her own foolishness. Gordon stirred in his bed and a guardian, making his nocturnal rounds, looked up from the roadway and waved his hand, cheekily. Violet went back to bed. Of course, she would see this job through. Every argument left the balance of reason in her favor. Her thoughts went back to her plans. Tomorrow night, when she

made the tea, she would put a few grains of white powder into Lady Swayne's cup. It would be tasteless and mild in its action. Within a quarter of an hour it would produce a deep sleep and, except for a slight heaviness in the morning, there would be no after-effects. When once Lady Swayne was sleeping soundly everything would be simple. She would pretend to slip the key under the sitting-room door and would wait for twenty minutes or half an hour; then she would go back into the bedroom. Yes, it was going to be quite simple.

enough? Better make sure; and yet she must not overdo it. Not that the stuff was dangerous, but she did not want Lady Swayne to suspect that she had been drugged.

"What are you doing, dear?"

"Making the tea."

"But the water can't be boiling already."

"Oh, I was just washing the cups. I'm afraid I forgot them at teatime." Violet went into the bedroom. "You are looking tired."

"Am I? I believe I did drop off for a few minutes



The day seemed interminable. In the evening Violet went to the opera with Gordon and Sir Lancelot, and after the second act she made some excuse for returning to the hotel. Lady Swayne was surprised to see her so early.

"My dear, didn't you enjoy it?"

Violet was almost too excited to speak.

"I was feeling rather tired," she lied. "Have you been longing for your tea?"

"Not more than I have been longing to see you, my dear."

Why did the woman talk like that, making her task more difficult? Violet went into the bathroom and switched on the electric kettle.

"Your beloved Chadwick was singing," she called out. She felt that her nerve would break if she did not talk.

"Did you like him?"

"Of course. He's simply wonderful." She was putting the white powder into one of the cups.

"I can't imagine why they don't have him to sing at Covent Garden," Lady Swayne said. "He's thought a great deal of here, and in Vienna."

"He'd have to change his name to Chadoff, or something like that," Violet answered. Was that

a little while before you came in. I have such a dull book. How is Gordon today?"

"Oh, much the same as usual." Violet was walking restlessly about the room, touching things here and there, putting them straight. She glanced at the dressing-table drawer. Good! It was slightly open. That would save time; not that time was going to be of any great importance, but she wanted to do her job as quickly as possible. This waiting was killing her.

"How is the romance progressing?" Lady Swayne asked.

"Evelyn's?"

"Yes."

"I'm not sure. I haven't seen them together for two or three days. Jimmy is looking pretty glum."

"My dear, I think I hear the water boiling." Violet went back to the bathroom and returned after a few minutes with the two cups of tea. "Thank you, dear. It would be the best thing in the world for that girl if she married and got right away from this place."

"He'd have to pay up all her debts first."

Lady Swayne sipped her tea and sighed contentedly.



Violet's hands were trembling so that she could scarcely hold the small electric torch

the wall. Her breathing was deep and regular. Violet went swiftly across to the dressing table and opened the drawer.

Her hands were trembling so that she could scarcely hold the small electric torch which she had taken from her bag. She found the large leather case and opened it. It was empty! There were several other cases in the drawer. Could she have made a mistake? She opened them all. She found diamond and sapphire rings, gold and diamond bracelets, ropes of pearls, pearl earrings, but no emeralds. In her anxiety she forgot that all these other things represented a sum of money which even Carl Hentz would not despise. She glanced back at the bed. Lady Swayne had not moved. Violet opened the other drawer of the dressing table; it contained only handkerchiefs and gloves. She went across to the chest of drawers and slid her hands between the layers of clothes; she searched the wardrobe but found only dresses, coats and skirts, hats and shoes. Ah! One drawer was locked. It took her ten minutes to open it, but it only yielded a checkbook and several bundles of letters and business papers, all neatly tied with white tape.

Violet went into the bathroom and searched everywhere, and she searched every drawer, and between the upholstered seats and arms of the chairs in the sitting room. Where could Lady Swayne have hidden them? What possible hiding place could she have overlooked? Of course, under the mattress. She went back to the bedroom—this was going to be risky—but she was becoming desperate—she knelt down and slid her hand beneath the mattress. Heavens,

how she was trembling! She went round to the other side of the bed, but felt nothing which could have been the emeralds.

Violet stood up and pressed her hand to her forehead. Her head ached. Had she failed? No, no, she must not admit failure yet. The emeralds must be somewhere in one of the rooms. Once more she searched all the drawers and cupboards, and ran her fingers along the broad hems of the curtains. Suddenly she stood erect, as if she had been startled by a sound. Lady Swayne had said that she "dropped off" for a few minutes earlier in the evening. Was it possible that some one else had stolen them? Who could it have been? A femme de chambre? Unlikely. Another professional thief then? Why hadn't she taken them last night? The possibility had occurred to her, but last night she hadn't the white powder with her, and she hadn't the courage to make the attempt without.

Violet looked at her watch. It was 1:30. She had spent an hour and a half searching those rooms. It was useless to remain there any longer. With the slow gliding movements of a cat she opened the door and looked into the corridor. She heard and saw nothing; she passed out, and went along to her own room.

SEVEN o'clock. Violet had not been to sleep. She sat up and telephoned downstairs and asked for petit déjeuner. Gordon turned over and asked the time.

"Good heavens! You don't want breakfast yet?"

"I was awake at 6. Will you have yours now?"

"May as well, I suppose."

Violet telephoned again and then, for the hundredth time, she asked herself the same unanswerable question—who could have taken the emeralds? She was now convinced that they had been stolen by some one who had entered the room while Lady Swayne was dozing. But who? Who would have dared to go at that hour, between 10 and 11? Whom among the hotel visitors could she suspect? She rattled off a string of names to herself, the names of people concerning whom she knew little or nothing. Henri Devigne? What did she know of him? Nothing. He had been making himself extremely agreeable to Gordon and herself, and to Lady Swayne. But there was no particular reason why she should suspect him.

At 9 o'clock Violet was walking along the Casino Terraces. Nine o'clock. Two more hours before she could pay her usual morning visit to Lady Swayne. Would she learn anything then? Would Lady Swayne have discovered her loss? Then she thought of Carl Hentz. What would he say if she were compelled to admit that she had failed? Back at the poky little flat, with no money and no prospects.

Going down the gardens she met Evelyn Thacker. Strange, Violet thought. Evelyn didn't usually show herself until midday, unless it was to go into the Casino.

"Where are you off to?" she asked.

"Nowhere in particular. Just going for a stroll."

Evelyn looked plain and anxious. Dark rings circled her eyes. Violet suggested that they should sit down on one of the seats overlooking the goldfish pool.

"What's the trouble?" she asked.

Evelyn gave her a quick glance. "Nothing," she answered, dully.

"Nonsense; you look as if you hadn't slept for a fortnight. Been losing again?" Evelyn did not reply. "Why don't you clear out of this place? It's turning you into a haggard old woman."

Evelyn shuddered.

"I can't."

"Rot! Why can't you?"

"I owe too much."

"You wouldn't be the only person who's out and run."

"It's not only that. This is my life."

"A pretty ghastly one, I should think."

Evelyn looked away and watched a gardener who was cutting the grass.

"Can't you raise enough money out of Jimmy Maddock to put yourself straight?" Violet asked, suddenly. Evelyn started.

"I saw him leave your room at 2 o'clock the other morning." Violet went on: "It's no use being squeamish over matters of this sort, you know. It's suicidal for any one in your position to stand on ceremony. Jimmy Maddock simply stinks of money. Didn't he give you anything?" Violet asked.

"Oh, yes, he has helped me."

"Well, he'll help you again, if you go about it in the right way."

"That's the trouble I can't."

"How much are you hung up for?"

"A couple of hundred pounds wouldn't clear me."

In spite of Violet's brutal way of putting things, Evelyn found it a relief to talk to some one. She could no longer confide in Jimmy, whom she dreaded meeting. He had given her the hundred pounds which he had promised at Castellanne, but she had not kept her part of the bargain. She had promptly lost his money at the Casino in a mad effort to double

"This is very comforting," she murmured. "I don't know what I shall do when I'm better. I shall miss our delightful little tete-a-tetes."

"Need they cease?"

Lady Swayne smiled.

"I can hardly expect you to go on fussing over me when I'm well, can I? Poor Evelyn! I sometimes feel quite worried about her. I suppose she owes a lot of money? Has she ever borrowed from you?"

"I lent her a mille this evening."

"You shouldn't lend her money. It only encourages her to go on gambling."

"I didn't like to refuse. She was following one of the transversales and ran short."

"I suppose she lost?"

"I don't know; I didn't stop to see." Lady Swayne put her cup down on the table beside the bed. "I expect you would go to sleep now if I left you?"

"I believe I would."

Violet took the cups into the bathroom and returned almost immediately. She kissed Lady Swayne, and going into the sitting room, locked the door and pretended to slide the key underneath. She waited for half an hour before she unlocked the door silently and peered in. Lady Swayne lay with her face to

it. She knew that Jimmy suspected her of having broken faith with him.

"Can't you get your father to fork out?" Violet asked.

"I've tried, but it's no good. He cabled the other day to say that he had paid my passage money back to India and that I was to return by the next boat."

"Are you going?"

"No. I won't be forced to leave here," Evelyn snapped, and then she began to cry. Violet watched her dispassionately. "I wish I were dead!"

Violet began to feel a little anxious. She would be sorry if Evelyn were added to Monte Carlo's list of weekly suicides. Out of the thousands of persons who have committed suicide at Monte Carlo not more than 3 or 4 per cent have been known as suicides.

"Haven't you any jewelry that you can sell?" Violet asked. She saw Evelyn start and a look of terror sweep across her pale face. Her tears were suddenly checked. "Evelyn, whatever is the matter with you?"

Instead of replying, Evelyn got up and walked quickly away, leaving Violet with a fresh train of thought. Had Evelyn stolen the emeralds? Violet's brain began to work backward, snatching at details as it went. What time had it been last night when she lent Evelyn the mille note? It was during the first interval; about 10 o'clock. She had told Evelyn that she was going back to the theatre. If Evelyn had gone then to Lady Swayne's room it would have been about the time when Lady Swayne was dozing. But what could she have hoped to accomplish by going? Even if she had contemplated taking the emeralds, why should she have imagined that she would be given the opportunity? Knowing that Violet always went to see Lady Swayne before going to bed, she would probably expect to find the door unlocked at that hour. Perhaps she had gone on the pretext of paying a friendly visit, in the hope that she would see something of value lying about.

All this seemed to be hopelessly vague, but in her desperate state Evelyn would have been likely to do anything. If she had entered the room when Lady Swayne was asleep it would have been extraordinary if she had been able to search for the emeralds, open drawers and remove the jewels from their case without disturbing the sleeper. Yes, extraordinary, but not impossible. And if she had done this it would account for her hysterical condition this morning. Having got the emeralds, she would not know how to dispose of them and would be in constant fear of being found with them in her possession. Violet became hopeful on her own account. She would talk to Evelyn again. Perhaps she would be able to force a confession from her and, perhaps, make some arrangement to their mutual advantage.

Eleven o'clock. Violet got up and went across to the hotel. Lady Swayne was sitting up in bed, reading a novel. Violet leaned down and kissed her.

"How are you?" Obviously she had not discovered her loss.

"I'm better today. I didn't wake once during the night; most unusual for me. I had a slight headache the first thing, but it has passed off. I think I shall dress this afternoon and sit in that armchair for tea, if you are coming to keep me company?"

"Of course I shall. I have just been talking to Evelyn (Violet wanted Evelyn to come to Lady Swayne's room while she, herself, was there). I told her I thought you would like to see her for a short while."

"Indeed I should. To tell the truth, I was wondering why she hadn't been."

"She thought you wouldn't want to be bothered with visitors."

"Silly girl! Bring her to tea this afternoon if she hasn't anything more exciting to do."

EVELYN did not appear for lunch and she was not in the gaming room or the Salle Privee when Violet looked for her during the afternoon. Violet was sorry that she could not find her. With Evelyn's presence at tea she had hoped to confirm her suspicions.

When Violet entered the bedroom Lady Swayne was standing before the dressing table, staring into the open drawer. She turned quickly as the door opened.

"Violet! My emeralds have been stolen!"

"Your emeralds!"

"Look!"

Violet went forward and Lady Swayne pointed to the empty case. Violet's hopes revived. If only Evelyn had taken them, all would be well, she was certain.

"But how terrible! When could it have happened?"

"I can't imagine. I put them in there when I went to bed, the night when I wasn't feeling well, and as you know I haven't been out of this room since then."

"But didn't you tell me last night that you had been dozing before I came in?"

"I have only just remembered. I did go to sleep, and I woke with a start. I wonder if any one did come in then. My dear, I must send for Mr. Martini at once."

The manager left the letter which he was writing and hastened to Lady Swayne's room.

"Mr. Martini, my emeralds have been stolen!"

"Your emeralds, Madame?"

"Look for yourself, Mr. Martini. There is the empty case. I put them in there myself, last Saturday, when I returned from the Sporting Club, and I have not had occasion to go to that drawer until this moment."

M. Martini glanced at Violet. What a charming woman, so elegant, so typically well bred. What a fool old Bernard was to have suspected her.

"I am deeply concerned, Madame, but Madame will pardon if I say that the direction cannot take responsibility for jewelry which is not left at the office."

"I understand that perfectly, Mr. Martini, but I could not be expected to do that with jewelry which I was wearing practically every day."

"I must beg Madame, also Madame Spurrell, to keep silence for the present. Not only would it cause much talk and excitement, but it would prevent the police from making good investigation. Madame has no suspicion?"

"None whatever, Mr. Martini."

"I have your assurance, Madame, that nothing will be said?"

"I will respect your wishes and I know that Mrs. Spurrell will do the same."

"Then I will telephone at once to M. Bernard."

"Who is he, pray?"

"An inspecteur of the police, Madame."

M. MARTINI bowed and backed out of the room. A few minutes later there was a knock at the door and M. Martini introduced Armand Bernard.

"Monsieur Bernard speaks English, Madame," said the manager, following the detective into the room. Bernard bowed and looked questioning from Violet to Lady Swayne.

"This is my friend, Mrs. Spurrell," the latter announced. "She has very kindly been looking after me while I have been ill."

"Madame Spurrell is kind," Bernard answered curtly, with a stiff bow toward Violet. "I understand that Madame's emeralds are missing," he said.

"Yes. There is the drawer where I kept them, and that is their case, empty, as you see."

Armand Bernard listened attentively, and when Lady Swayne had finished he looked across at Violet. He found her staring at him. An attractive woman, he thought.

"I shall be obliged, Madame, if you kindly answer two, three questions," he said, turning again to Lady Swayne. "You keep the drawer locked?"

"Usually, but it has not been locked while I have been ill."

"Not locked? But why, Madame?"

"I just did not trouble while I was lying in bed, facing it all the time."

"Not even at night, Madame?"

"No, there was no need. The shutters were always fastened; Mrs. Spurrell always came to see me before she went to bed and she left both doors fastened on the inside."

"But how, Madame? I do not understand. How she go out if both doors are fastened on the inside?"

Lady Swayne explained how Violet slipped the key under the door leading to the sitting room. Bernard glanced again at Violet. She was still looking boldly at him.

"Your emeralds were of much value, Madame?"

"They were insured for £30,000."

"And your maid, you do not suspect her?"

"She is ill and was taken to the hospital before I was compelled to take to my own bed."

"And Madame has no visitors since she is ill?"

"Only Mrs. Spurrell, Mrs. Franklin Binges, and the doctor."

"Does Madame suspect any one?"

"No one."

"Or which day and which hour the emeralds are taken?"

"No, unless it was last evening when I slept for a few minutes before Mrs. Spurrell paid her last visit."

"Ah! You sleep a little? With the doors unlocked?"

"Only for a short while. You could hardly call it sleeping, dozing, if you like."

"At what hour?"

"I cannot say exactly, but it was after 10 and before 11 when Mrs. Spurrell returned from the opera."

"But the opera does not terminate at 11?"

"Mrs. Spurrell came out after the second act."

More writing in the notebook.

"Madame is certain it was after 10 when she fell to sleep?"

"Certain. I happened to look at my clock at five minutes past 10."

Writing again, and a silence which lasted for several seconds.

"Now, Madame, I will speak with you alone," said Armand Bernard, closing the notebook. Violet got up.

"My dear, I do not see the slightest necessity for—"

"But if Monsieur Bernard wishes—"

"I demand your pardon, Madame Spurrell, if I

make any impoliteness. Sometimes others make the distraction."

"Come back, dear, as soon as Mr. Bernard has gone," Lady Swayne called out. Violet smiled and passed out of the room.

"Before I ask more questions, Madame, I will assure you that your emeralds have not gone far and they must be returned to you before many hours pass."

"Mr. Bernard! I don't understand. Do you mean to say that you suspect some one?"

"They are still in this hotel, Madame, and it will be impossible for the thief to take them away without being followed. May I ask Madame how long she knows Madame Spurrell?"

"Since we arrived here, by the same train, a week before Christmas."

"You do not meet her before that, in England or in Paris?"

"No."

"And how did Madame make the friends with Madame Spurrell?"

"Really I cannot remember now, Mr. Bernard; and I don't know why you should ask such questions. Mrs. Spurrell is one of my greatest friends. I don't know what I should have done without her during my illness."

"Madame Spurrell must be very kind. Did she ever sleep in your room?"

"Of course not. She slept in her own room."

"Yes, yes, I understand." Lady Swayne's impatient manner was irritating him. "At what hour did Madame Spurrell make her visits?"

"First at 11 o'clock in the morning."

"She remains long time?"

"An hour, sometimes two hours."

"And after?"

"She always comes and has tea with me, as she did today, just when I had discovered my loss."

"And she visits again?"

"Really, Mr. Bernard, you are wasting your time asking all these ridiculous questions about my friend; and you are causing me a great deal of annoyance. What has Mrs. Spurrell to do with the disappearance of my emeralds?"

"It is for that I come to find out."

"Good gracious! You are not going to tell me that you think she stole them?"

"I tell Madame nothing. It is Madame who tells me things. That is why I ask so much question. And in the evening, Madame Spurrell come again?"

Lady Swayne did not reply and looked as if she had no intention of doing so. "Does Madame wish to recover her emeralds?" Bernard asked, sharply.

"Of course I do, but you are not going to find them by asking a lot of absurd questions about Mrs. Spurrell."

"Pardon, Madame, but that is for me to decide. I ask you again, did Madame Spurrell always pay you the visit after you take the tea?"

"I have already told you that she came just before going to bed."

"And last night you say you sleep a little just before she come?"

"Yes. I was fully awake when she entered."

Bernard was beginning to imagine that Lady Swayne suspected Violet and was trying to shield her for some reason.

"What wakes Madame?"

"I don't know."

"How long before Madame Spurrell come did Madame awake?"

"How can I possibly answer all these questions, Mr. Bernard? I do not look at my clock every few minutes."

"And what happen when Madame Spurrell come?"

"She made tea as usual, and we talked."

"At what time she leave you?"

"Half-past 11, perhaps 12, I do not know."

"And she go out by this door?"

"No. I told you only a few minutes ago that she always bolted the door and went out through the sitting room."

"Yes, yes, I remember, she lock the sitting room door and push the key underneath. You see the key arrive this side?"

"No, of course not, but I heard it being slid along the floor."

"Now, Madame, I ask only one more question and then I depart. Did Madame Spurrell know where you keep the emeralds?"

"Mr. Bernard, I refuse to answer such a stupid question. Of course she knew. Have I not told you that she is my greatest friend?"

Armand Bernard stood up and slipped his notebook into his pocket.

"I understand, Madame has confidence in Madame Spurrell. In a day or two, perhaps in a few hours, the emeralds will be in their case once more."

"IT'S terrible!" exclaimed M. Martini, who had been confiding to Lamotte the reason for Armand Bernard's presence in the hotel. "I begged both Lady Swayne and Madame Spurrell to say nothing to any one about the theft"—a shrug—"but I have not much hope; you know how easily these things become known."

"And Bernard, he still suspects Madame Spurrell?"

"But yes, I saw suspicion flash in his eye directly he entered the room, and after five minutes, perhaps ten minutes, he demands to talk with Lady Swayne alone. For myself I am still confident that he is wrong, but it is useless for me to say anything; he has what the English call 'the pig's head.' You and I, Lamotte, must do all we can to keep the unfortunate affair secret. If any of the employes remark upon Bernard's presence you must make some excuse; and if any newspaper people come asking questions you must laugh and ask them who has been telling them fables."

A KNOCK at the door and Armand Bernard entered without waiting for permission.

Martini greeted him with affected lightness.

"Well, my dear Bernard, I hope that you will soon dispose of this little business without making any fuss." Bernard glanced quickly at Lamotte. "It is all right," the manager went on; "I have just been explaining. You may speak as you wish. Lamotte is discreet."

"Then I will ask you to place a room at my disposition, my dear Martini, and I shall be obliged if you will be so good as to tell a chasseur to find Madame Spurrell and ask her to come to that room. I make the guess that she will be found in her own room."

"You do not seriously suspect Madame?" asked Martini, pretending to be surprised.

"My suspicions are of such a nature that I shall ask Madame many questions," said the detective, pompously, "and if I am unable to obtain from her an admission, as I hope to do, I shall make careful search of her room, and if I do not find the emeralds there I shall order Madame Rouget and Madame Benoit, of the Surete Bureau, to search Madame's person."

"But it is not possible that you do such a thing!" Martini cried. "No, no, you cannot do that. Do you not realize what will happen if you fail to discover the emeralds? Madame will be mad with fury, and not without reason."

Bernard snapped his fingers. "I cannot help what she will do, my friend," he said. "I have my duty to perform."

"It is all very well for you, but I have my hotel to consider. Whatever happens this must be kept from the ears of the journalists, especially those who work for the English papers. The season is bad enough as it is; we do not want people to be frightened away."

"Calm yourself, calm yourself, my dear Martini; and allow me to do my work in my own way. I know what I am about and I can tell you that Lady Swayne's emeralds will be restored to her within a few days, perhaps within a few hours."

"Now will you kindly take me to a room, one where there will be no risk of my talk with Madame being overheard?"

"WILL you not sit down, Madame? I should like to ask you a few questions concerning Lady Swayne's loss. I understand that you and Lady Swayne are great friends?" Bernard remarked when Violet was summoned to his room.

"Very great friends," replied Violet, with perfect composure.

"You spend much time with her while she is ill?"

"Several hours each day."

"Have you ever heard or seen anything to make you suspicious since you look after Lady Swayne?"

"In what way, Monsieur Bernard?"

"Pardon. I will be more exact. Have you seen any one entering or leaving Lady Swayne's apartment; any one you could now suspect of taking the jewels?"

"No one."

"You visit Lady Swayne at a late hour each night?"

"Soon after 11, as a rule."

"Was it you who suggested that you push the key under the door when you go into the sitting room?"

"No, it was Lady Swayne's idea."

"You think that Lady Swayne may have been a little nervous for the safety of her valuable jewelry?"

"Perhaps, but she never said anything to me about being nervous."

"You knew where she kept her jewel case?"

"Oh, yes."

"Can you tell me if any one else knows where she kept it?"

"Possibly Louise, the maid, knew."

"We need not concern ourselves with the maid, Madame. She went to the hospital before Lady Swayne becomes ill."

"She might have told some one else where it was kept."

"This woman was clever!"

"It is possible, but do you not agree with me, Madame Spurrell, that it is not likely that any one enters the room during the daytime without Lady Swayne seeing them?"

"But who could have entered at night when both doors were fastened?" she asked.

"That, Madame, is a question which you should have easiness in answering."

"I do not understand, Monsieur Bernard."

"Were you not free to enter and leave the room as you pleased?"

Violet sprang to her feet and stood before him, her eyes flashing defiance, her lips quivering; a splendid imitation of an innocent woman who had been insulted.

"What? You think that I stole the emeralds? You dare to—?"

"I do not think, Madame; I know," replied Bernard, quietly, fixing his large brown eyes upon her.

"How dare you? How dare you suggest that I'm a thief? Do you realize that Lady Swayne is my dearest friend?"

Bernard was unmoved by her fury. He decided on another bold stroke.

"Dearer than Carl Hentz?"

For the first time during the questioning Violet's self-control slipped. Armand Bernard noticed the sudden fading of her color and the swift flash of surprise.

"You need not trouble to deny your friendship with Carl Hentz," he said, speaking sharply, "because your association with him is well known to me. He, of course, is the real thief; you are only his aide; you do as he commands, and perhaps you would have been well paid for your work if it had not been for me. Nevertheless, Madame, you will be judged a thief and you will be punished as one. Now, Madame," his tone changed, become softer, a little confidential, "you do not interest me at all; it is Carl Hentz that I will catch, and if you make me a little assistance I give you my promise that you shall be permitted to cross the frontier into Italy if you wish, without question."

THIS involved speech had given Violet time to recover her composure and she spoke with apparent fearlessness.

"I haven't the remotest idea of what you are talking about," she said with a calmness which surprised the detective.

"Listen, Madame. Carl Hentz is now at Cannes, of course you know that; he waits to receive the emeralds from you. You have some secret arrangement with him. At the moment I guess what that arrangement is, by tomorrow, perhaps before, I shall know for certain, but I wish to act immediately. Carl Hentz is being watched, night and day, as you have been watched since you came here. Now do you not see, Madame, that it must be for your advantage to help me? If you refuse you will find yourself in prison for five, perhaps ten years; if you do as I wish, tell me of your plans so that I can arrest Carl Hentz at once, you will be free."

Much to his annoyance Violet laughed in the detective's face.

"Monsieur Bernard, are you quite mad?" Violet noticed his self-confidence slipping away.

"No, Madame," he replied, with an effort. "I am offering you your liberty."

"And you would not allow me to escape if I offered you a pouboire of a hundred francs?"

Bernard missed the sarcasm.

"No, Madame, I would not."

"You are not French, perhaps?"

He ignored the thrust.

"You refuse then?" he asked.

"Of course I refuse, for the simple reason that I did not take Lady Swayne's emeralds; and if you do not give me a written apology at once for having accused me, the whole of the English press will be full of your silly mistake tomorrow."

Bernard stood up. It was useless to continue arguing with this woman. She was clever with her bluff, but he could see through it.

"Then I shall be compelled to make the search of your room, Madame."

Violet had been prepared for this, and had taken the precaution of throwing her bunch of skeleton keys into the shrubbery, below her window, while Bernard was talking alone with Lady Swayne.

"But this is an outrage!" she cried, wondering if she was working up enough indignation. "I refuse to submit to such an insult. I shall go to M. Martini at once." She took a step toward the door, but Bernard stood before her.

"Madame will not leave this room without my permission."

"You dare not treat me like a prisoner?"

"For the moment Madame is my prisoner."

"Where is your warrant for arresting me and for searching my room?"

"In Monaco, Madame, no permit is necessary. Now will you be so good as to lead the way to your room. I warn you that you will be stopped before you go three yards, if you try to make the escape."

"Is this how you treat English visitors who come abroad and spend their money?"

"Please, Madame, do not waste time." Bernard held the door open.

"I refuse to go."

"Marcell!" A young man stepped from the corridor into the room. "Keep Madame here until I return."

"No, I will come with you, but I warn you that you will not find Lady Swayne's emeralds in my room, and I shall make you pay for this outrage."

"We shall see, Madame," said Bernard, a little uncertainly. Violet's manner was disconcerting. Suppose she were speaking the truth? It would be very unpleasant for himself afterward. But that could not be. She was making a bold fight. "Marcel, you will come, too."

For two hours Armand Bernard and Marcel searched every corner of the room, but they found nothing of interest except a rough sketch and a small scale sketch map. Violet had forgotten these when she got rid of the skeleton keys.

"Madame is an artist?" asked Armand Bernard, as he looked at the two sketches with a gleam of hope.

"No, I did not do them."

Bernard was studying them closely.

"Perhaps Madame will explain what they represent?"

"I cannot tell you any more than you can see for yourself. They were done by a friend of mine."

Bernard remained silent for several moments. He was still studying the sketches, noticing particularly the small neat writing: PERRIER—BUSHES—RESERVOIR—WALL—TROFEUQOR—a strange word, the name of a village, apparently. He read them a second time in order to commit them to his memory, then he threw the two slips of paper carelessly aside, as if he regarded them as being of no importance.

"Marcel, go to the telephone and ask M. Martini if Madame Rouget and Madame Benoit have arrived."

"Oui, Monsieur."

"You are satisfied with your search, Monsieur Bernard?"

"It is not yet finished, Madame."

"No?" she said amiably. "But where else can you look?"

"I look nowhere, but it will be the duty of two women to search Madame's person."

"You will not dare to do that?"

For reply Armand Bernard raised his shoulders. "You will find nothing, Monsieur Bernard, until tomorrow, when you will find your name in every paper and the world laughing at you for your stupid inefficiency." Bernard remained silent. "I imagine that your chief, whoever he is, will have something to say about it. The French detective force is supposed to be the best in the world, and he will not be pleased to find it being ridiculed."

Bernard scowled. He had thought of this, but it was too late to stop. He must complete the search.

"Whatever Mesdames Rouget and Benoit may report to me, you, Madame, will be well advised to remain silent."

"You think so? And why?"

"Have you not an English expression that with smoke there must always be fire?"

"Madame Rouget and Madame Benoit are on their way upstairs," said Marcel from the other side of the room.

HALF an hour later Armand Bernard, disappointed and perplexed, went downstairs. Martini was waiting anxiously and took him at once into his private office.

"Well; you have found them?"

"No. But I will!"

"So I was right?"

"It is true that I have not yet found the emeralds, but I know that I have done right; I know that Madame Spurrell took them, as certainly as if I had seen her with them in her hand. You see, in a few days, perhaps in a few hours, they will be restored, and she will be—"

A knock at the door and Lamotte entered.

"Madame Spurrell is asking for a telephone call to London," he said, uneasily. "She will speak to the office of the Daily Express."

Martini gripped the arms of his chair.

"You see what you have done, Bernard?"

"Well, that is not my fault. I have my work to do," as he left the office.

"All right, Lamotte. No, wait a minute. Get me Delmasso at the Palace, at once." Lamotte had gone out and after a few seconds Martini sat down again and took up the receiver. "Hullo! Hullo! . . . is that you, Delmasso? . . . yes, Martini speaking. We have a little trouble here . . . no, nothing very serious, but I wish to take precautions . . . hullo . . . are you there? Yes . . . I want you to obtain authority to hold up all press communications, by telephone and telegraph, with London and Paris, for an hour or two . . . I am getting on to Bonfiglio at once and he will confirm, but it is urgent. You can do it? . . . You must try. No, I cannot explain now. . . . Yes, say it is a matter of great importance."

Martini rang off and after a pause he took up the receiver again. "I want to speak to Monsieur Bonfiglio . . . is that you, Bonfiglio? . . . Where do I find him? Bon! I will ring up his villa." He rang off once more, waited and then gave another number. . . . "Is that Monsieur Bonfiglio? Yes, yes, I regret to disturb you, but it is a matter of urgency. I must speak to you at once. No, that will be too late. If you like I will . . . what? Very well, I will await you here."

Ten minutes later Monsieur Bonfiglio, a tall, lean man who, not many years since, had been a chasseur and was now an administrator, was shown into the office.

"Not another suicide?" he asked, directly the door was closed.

"No," replied Martini, who proceeded to relate the history of the missing emeralds, commencing with Bernard's early suspicions of Violet Spurrell.

"That Bernard! He is a fool!" barked Bonfiglio.

"Yes, he always makes a fuss," agreed the manager, "but what are we to do now? If the English papers get hold of the story there will be a terrible scandal."

Monsieur Bonfiglio was chewing one of his thumbs.

"Madame Spurrell, she is rich?" he asked.

"I cannot say. She and Monsieur have an expensive room, their bill is paid regularly every week, they dress as people of wealth and they entertain a little, but Bernard thinks they have nothing except what they get from this fellow Hentz."

"We will hope that Bernard is correct," returned the administrator. "If he is, then it should not be difficult to keep Madame's mouth closed."

"Ah! You will offer a little compensation? I hoped that you would take that course."

"It is the only thing to do. It will cost us dear, but it cannot be helped. We must run no risks, so we will be generous."

"And if Madame refuses to accept what you offer?" asked Martini.

"It will depend upon her attitude, but I do not think she will refuse. I shall offer her 50,000 francs, and go up to 100,000 if necessary."

"And suppose, just suppose, that Bernard is right and he does arrest her on a good charge?"

"Well?"

"You would have paid all that money for nothing."

"No. If Bernard arrests her it will be easy to keep the whole affair quiet. She is only dangerous now, while she is free. I shall, of course, guard against her breaking faith with us."

Lamotte knocked at the door and entered.

"Madame Spurrell is worrying about that London call again," he said. "The exchange reports that they cannot get the number."

"You have told Madame?" asked Martini.

"Yes. She is furious."

VIOLET was well aware of the Administration's horror of any scandal, and for that reason alone she had asked for the telephone call to London. She knew that "hush money" was sometimes forthcoming, and she saw no reason why the Administration should not make some provision for her future. It was money that she wanted, and money that she must obtain, at all costs, so that she would not be destitute if the emeralds remained lost to her, and if Hentz threw her over.

"If Madame will wait in the manager's office she will be able to speak more comfortably," Lamotte was saying as he escorted her across the hall. Violet smiled to herself. How clever they were trying to be. She suspected that the failure to get London was a fake, and that she had scared them all.

Bonfiglio and Martini, both looking rather like sheepish schoolboys, stood up as she entered, and towered with great formality.

"Monsieur Lamotte said that I could telephone from here," she said, looking from one to the other.

"I would like to express to Madame my deep regret for what happened this evening," Bonfiglio began. "I trust Madame will understand that Monsieur Martini is not to blame for the conduct of the police."

Violet looked at Monsieur Bonfiglio with eyes which froze even his chilly soul.

"I do not see how it is possible for you to make any reparation for such outrageous conduct," she replied with splendid dignity.

"Come, Madame Spurrell," said Bonfiglio. "To begin with, I feel that an apology in writing from myself may be of some satisfaction."

"It would give me no satisfaction whatever. Monsieur Martini, can you explain why they cannot put me through to London? I asked for the number nearly two hours ago."

"I am sorry, Madame. Perhaps the storms have made damage to the wires."

"What storms?"

"In the Rhone Valley, Madame."

"I believe you are making excuses, Monsieur Martini. I shall go over to Nice and try to telephone from there. Would you be so good as to order a car to take me over?"

"One moment more, I beg of you, Madame," Bonfiglio said, realizing that she was getting the better of him. "You know, without my telling you, that we try to avoid all unpleasantness at Monte Carlo."

"You were not very successful this evening, were you?"

"Madame, I admit that was most unfortunate, and while I take no responsibility for myself, or Monsieur Martini, I am prepared to make Madame reasonable compensation."

"That will not be easy, Monsieur."



The Terrace—Monte Carlo

"Would Madame make a suggestion?"

"No, Monsieur, it is for you to do that."

"I must repeat, Madame, that we admit no responsibility, but I am prepared to pay you, at once, the sum of 25,000 francs, and a similar sum in one month's time, if you undertake to say nothing to any one concerning what took place this evening."

"Is that the price you place upon my silence, Monsieur?"

"It is a large sum of money."

"For so rich an Administration as yours?"

"These are hard times, Madame."

"Before you say any more, Monsieur, I will tell you that whatever you may eventually pay me I shall not keep a penny of it. I am a rich woman and I should pass it on to my friend in London as compensation for the loss of valuable and sensational news. That news, you must understand, would, undoubtedly, make a great difference to his career if I gave it to him tonight."

"Then I will offer you 50,000 now and 25,000 a month later."

"Has Madame told any one of what happened this evening?" Martini interposed.

"No."

"Then unless Madame speaks no one will ever know. I do not suppose it will be possible to conceal the loss of the emeralds, but that is not of such importance."

"No, I suppose not," said Violet, with an air of indifference, "but it would be rather unpleasant for you if it were generally known that one of your guests had been forcibly searched when there wasn't the slightest justification for such a measure. No, Monsieur. A blunder has been made, and somebody has got to pay for it. If you like to give me a check for 100,000 francs now, all of it now, I give you my word of honor that I will not breathe a word to any one."

Bonfiglio hesitated. This was quite what he wanted. Violet guessed at his thoughts.

"You can choose between my terms, Monsieur, and \* \* \*"

"Very well, Madame. I will go to my office at once and within ten minutes my check will be delivered to you."

"You are wise, Monsieur. I wish you good night. Good night, Monsieur Martini."

GORDON SPURRELL had been out all the afternoon with Sir Launcelot and did not return until Violet was dressing for dinner. She told him nothing, and he remained in ignorance of all that had happened during his absence. She casually remarked that she was going to telephone to some one in London.

"Get your call?" he asked, when Violet returned to the lounge after her long interview with Bonfiglio.

"No, I couldn't get through. I shan't bother now. It wasn't important."

She said good night and went up to her room. Lying on the bed, she relaxed and closed her eyes. Heavens! She was tired. It had been child's play dealing with that old fool, Bernard, but fighting Bonfiglio with bluff as her only weapon had been a very different matter. She was exhausted. A hundred thousand francs! Twelve hundred pounds! Whatever happened, she and Gordon would be able to live in moderate comfort for at least a couple of years, and anything might turn up in that time.

A knock at the door. Violet got up. It was a chasseur with Bonfiglio's check. She gazed at it, fascinated. Carl Hentz could do what he liked for all she cared.

Violet locked the check in a drawer and went along to Lady Swayne's room.

"My dear, how nice and early you are. I was so sorry I was in my bath when you came before din-

ner. Did that silly detective ask you a lot of ridiculous questions?"

Did Lady Swayne know about Bernard's suspicions?

"Yes, he kept me talking for ages."

"He assured me that my emeralds would be returned within two or three days. Personally, I don't believe he knows anything about them; do you?"

"I shouldn't think so."

"I can't imagine what I shall do when you and Gordon leave here."

"Why?"

"I shall feel so terribly lonely without you. If only you were poor."

"How would that help?"

"I should ask you to be my companion and Gordon my secretary. There would be quite a lot for him to do."

"That sounds rather fun," said Violet as she went into the bathroom. Companion and secretary! Well, they might do a great deal worse than that. It was worth considering. Lady Swayne would be generous if she thought she was getting value for her money. No more planning and scheming for Carl Hentz. That would be a relief. She could easily rake up some story to account for her readiness to accept such an offer. Sudden loss of capital. Easy. And her £1200 could be invested. Yes, it was worth considering.

JIMMY was sitting with Gordon and Sir Launcelot in the bar of the Sporting Club. They were joined by the major, who said:

"By the way, did you know that Sir John's sister suddenly rolled up this afternoon?"

"Didn't know he had a sister," replied Jimmy. "Oh, yes, I did. He told me he lived with her. Why shouldn't she come here?"

"Apparently she has very good reasons for coming. Mrs. Bunge told me that some one wrote to the sister and told her that Sir John was making a fool of himself with Princess Edouard, so I imagine that our Cabinet Minister will be taken back to London by the next train, before any damage is done."

"I don't believe it," said Jimmy, irritably.

"Don't believe what?"

"That he's doing anything more than making himself pleasant, just as he did with me."

"Possibly that is his own opinion, but I doubt if Mrs. Burghelmer or Princess Edouard mean the friendship to stop there."

"Well, it's no business of mine," snapped Jimmy.

The others left him. Jimmy was glad to be alone, instead of having to listen to the major's piffle. He was feeling fed up with everything and everybody. Monte Carlo was getting on his nerves, in fact he would not care a damn if some one told him that he must go back to London tomorrow. Strange, he thought. A few weeks ago, when he arrived, he had imagined that he would never want to leave the place. He had dreaded having to go back to his old life. And how thrilled he had been by the people whom he first met. None of them cared for him, except for what they could get out of him.

Ah! But he had forgotten Sir John. He was genuine enough, but he was a square peg in a round hole, or had been until Princess Edouard monopolized him. Why should he remain here any longer? Why not go back to England? He thought of his little room in Guildford Street with affection. No, he had had his fill of Monte Carlo, and was ready to clear out at any time.

While these thoughts were passing through his mind, Jimmy saw Mr. Dobbs standing at one of the roulette tables, throwing an occasional chip on to a number. Dobbs and his wife were still a puzzle to Jimmy. There was certainly something very fishy about their unaccountable friendliness.

Presently Jimmy caught Dobbs' eye and beckoned to him. Mr. Dobbs smiled and waited until the ball had stopped rolling, then he went across to the bar.

"What will you have?" Jimmy asked. Mr. Dobbs noticed the air of assurance and contrasted it with his clerk's former timidity.

"Oh, thanks; I think I'll have a whisky if I may. I never take anything else at night. Can't sleep if I do. Interesting lot of people here tonight."

"Are there? To tell you the truth, I'm getting a bit bored with the crowd. Waiter, two whiskies."

"Who's that tall woman in red, sitting at the first table?"

"Some Princess by marriage, I believe."

"I saw you chatting with the King just now," Mr. Dobbs remarked.

"I like him," Jimmy replied. "He has the advantage of being the real thing. Monte Carlo is full of sham stuff."

"My wife is just dying to make His Majesty's acquaintance."

"Is she? Well, that can easily be arranged. I'll ask him to make a date for dinner, and then you and Mrs. Dobbs can meet him."

"I say, that's awfully sporting of you, Maddock."

So that was why the Dobbs were so deuced affable. "Not at all. I shall be delighted. I'll try and arrange it for one night this week. I'm thinking of going back to London at the end of the month."

"So soon?"

"Yes. It's time I thought about work," Jimmy answered, casually.

"I—I believe my—er—my wife—er—explained to you that I had been somewhat—er—queer lately."

"Yes. I do hope you are better?"

"Much; in fact, I may say that I am quite recovered. This place has done me no end of good." Mr. Dobbs was gaining confidence. He put down his half-smoked cigarette and leaned across the table. "You know, Maddock, my illness took me in a most extraordinary manner. I was continually saying things in such a way that I said just the opposite to what I intended."

"Really! That must have been most awkward."

"Now, to tell you the truth, I had been discussing you in the train on our way here, and I had told my wife that I was going to offer to take you into partnership."

Jimmy did not know how to take this astonishing announcement. Was Dobbs pulling his leg? He decided to feel his way.

"Well, as a matter of fact—"

"Don't tell me that you have already arranged something?" exclaimed Mr. Dobbs, anxiously.

"Nothing is definitely decided yet, but I have been—"

"As the junior partner I am prepared to offer you a third of the firm's certified profits," Mr. Dobbs explained, quickly.

"Perhaps you will allow me to think it over for a day or two. Ah! There's the King. If you will excuse me for a moment, I'll see if I can fix up that little dinner party."

"Of course, of course, my dear fellow. Think it over, by all means," said Mr. Dobbs, cheerfully.

WHILE Jimmy Maddock and Mr. Dobbs were talking at the Sporting Club, Violet was saying good night to Lady Swayne. As she went along to her own room she met Evelyn coming up the stairs.

"Hullo, Evelyn!"

"Hullo," dully.

"I was looking for you after lunch. Lady Swayne wanted you to come and have tea in her room."

"Oh." Evelyn glanced furtively at Violet, and then along the corridor. Her cheeks were pale and there was a strained look in her eyes.

"I thought I might find you in the Casino, but you weren't there."

"Come along to my room and talk."

Violet followed her up to the next floor. On entering the room Evelyn threw her wrap carelessly on to a chair. She switched on the light over the bed and touched things on the mantelpiece and dressing table, moving them unnecessarily.

"I heard something about a robbery in the hotel," she said, turning suddenly.

"My dear, who told you that?"

"Is it true?"

Violet laughed lightly.

"I haven't heard anything."

"I was told that detectives had been here all the evening."

"Well, I don't see that there's any need for you or me to excite ourselves about it; even if it is true."

"No, of course not." Her voice had become more normal, less lifeless. She took her cigarette case from her bag and offered it to Violet. "Have one?"

"No, thanks." Evelyn took a cigarette from the case and lighted it. "Evelyn, have you thought any more about what I was advising you this morning?"

"What was that?"

"About Jimmy Maddock."

Evelyn began walking about again.

"I can't, Violet. I can't do it. The mere thought of it makes me shudder." Another pause. "Have you seen Gladys today?"

"Gladys?"

"Princess Andrew."

"She isn't here, is she?"

"She said she would come over. I suppose she'll come tomorrow."

"Evelyn, what is the matter?"

"I promised to repay her a hundred pounds today."

"And you can't?"

Evelyn flopped on the edge of the bed.

"I couldn't even pay her a hundred francs." She opened the little gold and black bag from which she had taken her cigarette case. "Fifteen—no seventeen francs. That's all I've got, and the bank won't let me have another centime."

With a sudden jerk of her hand she flung the bag away from her and it went spinning into the far corner of the room. She jumped up and went over to the window again. Hard though Violet had become, she felt sorry for Evelyn. Morally the girl was no worse than herself, perhaps her morals were of a higher standard, but she lacked courage and stability. Violet was now certain that she had taken the emeralds last night while Lady Swayne dozed, and that they were hidden somewhere in this room. And now she was terrified of being found out. Should she play a bold game and ask Evelyn where they were? But what would she say if Evelyn confessed? No, that would make her own position too difficult.

She must try to prevent Evelyn from confessing, as she might easily do in her present overwrought condition. She must discover the truth by some other means. Presently Evelyn came back into the room and sat down again.

"I think I'll go to bed if you don't mind. I shan't sleep but—" She left the sentence unfinished and began to pull off her stockings. She did not seem to realize what she was doing.

"Look here, Evelyn. There's not much object in your meeting Princess Andrew tomorrow."

"None at all."

"Then come over to San Remo with me. We can go and watch the tennis. It will do you good to get away from this place for a few hours."

Why was she bothering? Was she really trying to help the girl or did she hope to gain anything for herself by appearing to be kind? Violet did not answer the question.

"All right. What time?"

"I'll order a car in the morning."

Evelyn had not appeared by a quarter past 10, so Violet telephoned up to her bedroom. As there was no answer, she went up. Evelyn was lying in bed, apparently asleep.

"Evelyn!" No reply. Violet went up to the bed; she could see no movement beneath the clothes. "Evelyn!" Silence. She laid her hand over Evelyn's breast. It was cold, but she felt a faint beat. By the side of the bed she saw a small phial marked "sleeping powder."

Violet began searching the drawers and cupboards, as she had done in Lady Swayne's room, and then she noticed a small trunk standing by the wardrobe. She found the key in the little gold-and-black bag which still lay on the floor where Evelyn had thrown it. She slid her fingers among the clothing. She felt something hard and when she stood up she was holding the emeralds. She thought she was going to faint. She hadn't failed! In a few hours she would be sending Carl Hentz that message which would tell him that the emeralds were in the reservoir.

A low murmur from the bed. Violet looked round. Poor Evelyn! Violet slipped the emeralds into her bag, locked the trunk and went downstairs. She asked to speak to Monsieur Martini at once. He was in his office.

"What! You think that mademoiselle poison herself \* \* \* ah! to make herself sleep. We must not distress the other guests. We say that mademoiselle becomes suddenly ill. Yes, it will be quite simple."

Half an hour later Evelyn was smuggled out of the hotel by a side entrance. The doctor could not say if she would recover. He hoped she would. It would depend upon mademoiselle's constitution. He was sending her to a clinic at Nice. It could be announced that an immediate operation for appendicitis was necessary.

WHILE Evelyn was being removed to Nice, Armand Bernard was conferring once more with Paynton and Devigne.

"You've got to reconcile yourself to the fact that you have made a nasty mistake," Devigne was saying, much to Bernard's annoyance. "You may have had some justification for accusing and searching madame, but she obviously hasn't got the emeralds, and I don't believe she even did have them."

"Then who has got them?" asked Bernard. Devigne shrugged and Bernard continued, "I don't agree with you. I still believe that she took them and passed them on to some one else in the hotel. Probably to that fellow Maddock."

Devigne grinned. "You'd better search him," he said.

Bernard took no notice of the remark. "I have something of importance here," he said, taking his

notebook from his pocket. "In madame's trunk I found two sketches; at least one sketch and a plan."

"What does TROPEUQOR mean?" asked Paynton. "Is it the name of the village?"

"Probably, but there is no village of that name anywhere in this department. Perhaps it is a cipher."

"If you reverse the letters," said Devigne, "you will find that it spells ROQUEFORT."

"Possibly you are right," said Bernard, grudgingly. "If so it will not be long before we get hold of the emeralds and Carl Hentz also, I hope. It is my opinion that Hentz arranged for madame to take the jewels to that house. Probably she was to hand them, locked in a box, to the people who are living there."

"It seems far more likely that the box was to be dropped into the reservoir, since it is so cleverly marked on the plan," suggested Devigne.

"That is possible," Bernard admitted. "In that case, Devigne, you will tell Fontana to go over to Roquefort at once to investigate, and he will report direct to me here."

A few hours later Fontana reported to Bernard.

"I found the house, Monsieur; it is deserted."

"And the reservoir?"

"It contains ten or fifteen centimeters of water. The surface is covered with weed, smooth, like green velvet."

"Good, Fontana. Now listen. Get hold of Grenier and Lacaze at once, take blankets and food and go up there immediately, but no one must see you approaching the house. You may have to watch for several days, but eventually some one will come, perhaps a man, perhaps a woman, perhaps both, and they will drop something into the water. As soon as this happens you will detain them and telephone to me. Sooner or later some one else will appear, probably a man, and he will search in the water. I may be with you by that time, but if I shouldn't be, you will detain him also. You will, of course, be armed, and you will shoot if necessary. You understand?"

"Oui, Monsieur."

VIOLET decided that she would ask Jimmy to take her over to the clinic at Nice, to inquire for Evelyn, and then she would suggest their going to Grasse.

"Have you heard about Evelyn?" she asked him.

"What?"

Should she tell him the truth or the appendicitis fable? Why tell him a lie? He would probably hear the truth sooner or later.

"Come and sit down," she said, lowering her voice. "She tried to poison herself."

"When? How?" Violet explained. "How horrible."

"Will you take me over to the clinic after lunch?"

"Of course."

"Bon jour, Madame; bon jour, Monsieur. I think we have some rains, no?" It was Henri Devigne, trying to make his futile job, as he considered it to be, less boring.

"I hope it won't," Violet replied. "Mr. Maddock has very kindly offered to take me over to Nice this afternoon to inquire for Miss Thacker."

"I am so sorry. But this is bad news. I hope mademoiselle is not in danger?"

"I don't know; that is what I want to find out. She has been looking rotten for several days. I—" The major was coming toward them and Violet broke off.

"Good morning, everybody," said Marsh, adjusting his monocle. "What is this I hear about Lady Swayne's emeralds having been stolen?"

For a moment Violet was seized with fear. Ought she to appear to know nothing about it? But they might think that was very strange since she was spending so much of her time with Lady Swayne. There was an exclamation of surprise from Jimmy, but Devigne remained silent. He was watching Violet.

"Who told you that?" she asked.

"Every one's talking about it. I felt sure that you would know something if it were true."

Violet laughed.

"Don't you know that such things should not be discussed in public in Monte Carlo?" she said.

"It is true then?" asked the major.

"You had better go and question Monsieur Martini; he might be able to tell you something."

"All right, Violet, I won't try to make you break your promise. I suppose they've tried to muzzle you. I'm afraid Lady Swayne won't see them again."

"But this is—how you say it?—quite thrilling," exclaimed Devigne. "And why do you not think Lady Swayne will recover her jewels?"

"I haven't much faith in these French detectives," Marsh replied. "They're a pretty slack lot."

"We were just talking about poor Evelyn," Violet said. "You have heard, of course?"

"No."

"She's got appendicitis and has been taken to a clinic at Nice. Jimmy and I are going over this afternoon to see how she is." Violet got up. "Then we start about 1:30, Jimmy?"

"All right. I'll be ready."

Violet went toward the stairs and Marsh followed her.

"I say, what's really the matter with Evelyn?"

"I told you, appendicitis."

"Has she tried to kill herself?" Violet did not reply. "I see I'm right. I'm sorry. One more addition to Monte Carlo's death roll. Is there any hope?"

"I don't know. The doctor wouldn't commit himself."

"What was it, poison?"

"Sleeping powder!"

"Ah! I suspected her of taking something of that sort. I almost hope she won't recover. This damn place has about done for her."

DEVIGNE took a taxi and drove up to the Rock. He found Bernard pacing up and down his room.

"I have just received a message from Cannes. Our friend, Hentz, has ordered his car for 11 o'clock to bring him over here. He is a bold fellow, that Hentz; but he will be bold too often one of these days. He is not coming here just to look at the Casino. He is coming for some special purpose and must not be allowed to escape our surveillance. Who is working with you now?"

"Yves and Desage. Fontana is keeping watch on the Perrier cottage."

"Then you must send one of them to the boundary on the Moyenne Corniche and the other to the lower road. The number of Hentz's car is BA01567; make a note of that. They must go up there at once and follow him directly he passes; and you will be on the lookout for him at the hotel."

"But you do not imagine that he will go there?"

"Hentz may go anywhere. The most impudent thing he can do is to go to the hotel, so I expect him to go there. I shall be at the hotel myself, but out of sight. If you want me, Martini will know where I am to be found."

"This is awkward," said Devigne. "Mme. Spurrell and M. Maddock go to Nice to inquire for Mile. Thacker, who has an operation for appendicitis. I must follow them."

"No, no, leave them, for the present. Their little trip to Nice is probably a blind to draw our attention away from Hentz. He knows we watch Madame, but not that we watch him also."

"But what can be his object in coming right into our arms like this?"

"How can I say? But I have my suspicions that he has an accomplice besides Mme. Spurrell. Madame has already handed the emeralds to that person and he, or she, will pass them to Hentz. Directly he arrives at the hotel you must not lose sight of him. You have his photograph? Good! You must watch every movement. Do not forget that his accomplice may be a waiter or a page."

"Why should you think that he will go to the hotel?"

"My instinct tells me he will. Now be off and send those two fellows to the boundary."

Carl Hentz had made a study of the detective mentality and had come to the conclusion that nothing perplexed the average sleuth more than brazen conduct on the part of the suspected person. Knowing that he was perfectly safe to go anywhere he pleased (so far the police had nothing definite against him), he thought that he would like to nose round Monte Carlo for an hour or two and see what was happening. If he came face to face with Violet he would bow formally and pass on without speaking. They had already arranged this. He might be able to discover something about Bernard's activities; if Violet was being watched he would probably be able to spot the watcher, or watchers; and the knowledge that his presence in the Principality would cause a good deal of excitement and speculation in Bernard's camp was another incentive for him to go over there.

Carl Hentz arrived at Monte Carlo a little after midday. It was not many minutes before he became aware of some one following him. He smiled to himself as he turned into the Boulevard des Moulins, where he met a young journalist whom he had known a couple of years ago. The journalist told him that he was trying to verify a story about a rich English woman having been robbed of her emeralds, which were reputed to be worth millions of francs.

"Well, such occurrences are not uncommon in Monte Carlo," Hentz was saying as Henry Devigne sauntered past. Hentz gave the young detective a quick glance, nodded to his journalist friend and then went slowly back to the hotel, where he told the porter to order his car. He drove back to Cannes, hoping to find a message from Violet at his hotel. He was disappointed.

JIMMY and Violet decided to start at once. They lunched at the Bristol and then went on to Nice. Jimmy waited in the car while Violet made her inquiry at the clinic, where she was told that Evelyn was still unconscious, but the doctors were satisfied with her condition. Jimmy had been feeling depressed for several days and Evelyn's attempted suicide had increased his depression. There was no

question of his being in love with her now, but he felt that he had been a miserable failure. Having become her lover, he felt that he ought to have had some influence over her. Somehow he felt almost responsible for Evelyn wanting to take her life.

Such were his thoughts when Violet came out of the clinic and suggested that they should "run up to Grasse and have tea there." He jumped at the idea.

"I wonder if you'd let me drive?" Violet asked.

"I'm a pretty good driver."

"Of course."

A bag containing the emeralds, packed in a cigarette case, lay casually upon Violet's lap. She was not conscious of speed. Suddenly, as they rounded a sharp corner, a dog leaped suddenly into the road. Violet jammed on the brakes. The car swerved, hit a pile of stones and, turning a complete somersault, rolled down a low embankment. Jimmy was thrown clear. He was dazed and could see nothing clearly. Then he managed to stand up and look around. He saw Violet lying half in and half out of the car, which was lying on its side.

Jimmy's right knee was hurting him, but he was able to hobble to the car. Violet's eyes were closed and a little stream of blood was trickling down her face from a cut on her forehead. He called her by name; she stirred, but did not speak. He took off his jacket and, rolling it up, slid it under her head. Then he stood up and surveyed the wreckage. What was that? Violet's bag was lying on the ground. It was open and within he saw the glint of something green. Lady Swayne's emeralds!

He stared foolishly at them as if he expected them to explain their own presence there. He looked at Violet. What did this mean? Was it possible that she—? No, surely not \* \* \* but how—? A moan checked his conjecturing. He must get help quickly. The emeralds! He took them from the bag and stuffed them into his trousers pocket. He managed to scramble up the embankment. The road was deserted. He began to walk, but stood still almost immediately. A large car was coming round a bend. Jimmy stood in the middle of the road and waved his arms. The car pulled up with screeching brakes and two men jumped out. Jimmy pointed to the embankment and tried to explain what had happened, but the men were French and did not understand. They ran to where the overturned car lay and knelt down. One of them looked up and said something to Jimmy, but he only caught the word Grasse and assumed that they would take Violet and himself there. Between them they carried Violet to the car in the road and arranged the back cushions so that she was able to lie flat. Jimmy got in beside her and supported her head upon his knees.

The hospital at Grasse. Violet was taken to the accident ward. After half an hour the Commissaire de Police arrived and began questioning him. Jimmy gave an account of the accident.

Presently a doctor announced that Madame was still unconscious. As far as they could tell at present there were no fractures, but an X-ray examination would be made as soon as possible. Probably Madame would have to remain in the hospital for several days.

AS JIMMY drove back to Monte Carlo in an old and rattling taxi he tried to sort out his thoughts. They had become hopelessly muddled and his brain was not functioning very clearly. He shuddered when he thought of what might have happened. Violet might easily have been killed outright, or terribly disfigured.

The emeralds! Why had they been in Violet's bag? Tucked away at the back of his mind was the conviction that she had stolen them, but he tried to keep his conviction in the background and sought some reasonable explanation. Had Lady Swayne handed the emeralds to Violet for some reason? Was Lady Swayne hard up? Had she invented the theft, and had she asked Violet to pawn her jewels for her? Little by little the conviction forced its way out until it could no longer be ignored. Violet must have stolen them and had some plan for getting rid of them at Grasse. And now, what was he to do with the things? He had been tempted to tell the Commissaire about them, but some flash of wisdom had held him silent. But what was his own position? Suppose the emeralds were found in his possession? He could never be accused of having stolen them—or could he? Jimmy began to realize that he was running a grave risk. He would keep Violet's secret to himself. He must strive in some way to return the emeralds secretly to their owner.

Having come to this decision, Jimmy felt happier and he lit a cigarette. He puffed at it twice and then suddenly remembered that he was entertaining the King and half a dozen other people that evening. What a damned nuisance! He was in no mood for entertaining. The accident had shaken his nerves; besides, Violet and Gordon were to have been of the party. Could he possibly put the King off? No, it was too late, he would have to go through with it. Jove, how fed up he was with these gala dinners. He hoped that this might be the last. What did one

more gala matter? He would be returning to London very soon.

When Jimmy reached the hotel he found that Gordon had been out all day with Sir Lancelot and had only just come in. They were sitting in the hall and he told them about the accident. To his amazement Gordon went deadly white, cried, "What a shame!" and suddenly burst into tears.

They took Gordon, still sobbing, to his room. Sir Lancelot made him drink some brandy. "He's a sick man," he said, turning to Jimmy. "That damned fool of a girl never realized how weak, nervously and physically, he was. She always imagined that he was exaggerating."

"What are you saying about my wife?" screamed Gordon. "How d'you get up to Grasse? I'm going to her."

They tried to dissuade him.

"Leave him to me," Lancelot whispered to Jimmy. "I'll pack a couple of suitcases and take him up there. He isn't fit to be alone."

Jimmy locked the emeralds in his trunk and began to dress for dinner. It would be time enough in the morning to consider how he would return them to their owner.

At 10 o'clock Jimmy was receiving his guests in the foyer at the Sporting Club. The King was very concerned when he heard about Violet, and said that he would pay a personal visit to the hospital tomorrow and leave a few flowers. Being very much flustered and painfully nervous lest she should make some faux pas, Mrs. Dobbs was unable to express many regrets.

Being a far-seeing woman, Mrs. Dobbs had taken some trouble to become acquainted with the King's interests in order that she might be able to converse intelligently with him.

Only that afternoon she had heard that he was a great "rummy" enthusiast and she had gone to a great deal of trouble to learn something about the game. As soon as the caviare had been served Mrs. Dobbs plunged straight into her recently acquired subject. The King was delighted, and for fully half an hour they discussed the numerous variations of the game.

"My great trouble at Monte Carlo is that I can very seldom get a game of rummy," His Majesty said. "Every one is cracked on bridge, a game that bores me stiff."

Mrs. Dobbs gave a little laugh. How delightfully informal His Majesty was!

"I have played bridge, of course," she replied, "but I am not very expert; I much prefer rummy; in fact, I am giving a little party next week. I wonder if you would honor me?"

"Why, nothing would give me greater pleasure, Mrs. Dobbs. Which day?"

Although she had made no arrangements, Mrs. Dobbs quickly replied, "I have sent out my invitations for Friday."

The King made a queer grimace at his chamberlain, who was sitting on the other side of the table.

"Axellson, are we doing anything on Friday next?"

"Yes. Your Majesty is taking tea with Mrs. Blumington Howard at Cannes."

"Put her off, Axellson; say I will come on Saturday and make a note that I am playing rummy with Mrs. Dobbs on Friday."

"Where?" asked the chamberlain.

The King did not know, so he inquired. "At the Ambassadeurs, Axellson."

"At what time?" Axellson wished that his royal master would try to be a little more businesslike. It was no easy matter looking after him.

"Oh, what time, Mrs. Dobbs?"

"Four o'clock."

"Splendid. Nice and early. Four o'clock, Axellson. Mind you don't forget."

DAMN these emeralds! How the devil was he to get them back to Lady Swayne without any one knowing? It had seemed an easy matter until he came to do it. Lady Swayne had been greatly distressed when she heard about the accident, and at once announced her intention of remaining in her room. This upset Jimmy's calculations. He had hoped that he might be able to sneak into the sitting room and leave the emeralds there. Now he had to think of some other way of getting rid of them. Could he make them into a little parcel, address it, and leave it outside the door? No, that wouldn't do. Any one might get hold of it and keep it. He thought again and presently remembered that there was a parcels box at the postoffice. Why shouldn't he drop them in there? But suppose some one saw him? They might suspect what he had done when it became known that they had been returned. Too risky. Perhaps it would be safer to post them over at Menton where he knew no one. Yes, he would go over to Menton as soon as he had heard how Violet was. He made up the parcel and went downstairs. He asked Lanotte to telephone to the hospital at Grasse.

"They will not tell me much," Lanotte reported ten minutes later. "Madame Spurrell is still unconscious."

Jimmy turned away from the reception desk and

met the major coming downstairs. He told him the news.

"I shall go up to Grasse this afternoon," Marsh said. "I'm going to the clinic at Nice after lunch to see how Evelyn is. I've just had a reply from her father. I cabled to him. He's asked me to pack her off to China as soon as she's fit to travel."

"D'you think you'll get her to go?"

"Oh, yes. The General has authorized me to arrange with the bank to settle her debts. I don't think she'll put up much resistance. I shall get her to Marseilles as soon as possible. If I get her that far I think the rest will be easy."

They parted and Jimmy took the bus to Menton. Having posted the emeralds, he walked along the front as far as the gardens, when he heard a familiar

"Staying here, in Menton?"

"No, Monte Carlo."

"Oh, swank!" exclaimed Winnie. "I like Monte Carlo. Don't you?"

"To tell you the truth, I'm getting fed up with it; in fact, I shan't be sorry to get back to London."

"I shall hate it," she said, feelingly. "I'd stay here forever, if I got the chance. But I've got to go back next week, worse luck. I wonder when we shall meet again?"

Jimmy was wondering the same thing as he looked at a jolly little auburn curl which peeped cheekily out from beneath her crocheted hat.

"Doing anything special today?" he asked.

"I thought of going to the pictures this afternoon, that's all. Why?"

"Shall I tell you why I came to Monte Carlo?" Jimmy asked.

"If you like."

Then he made a full confession, going back to the moment when his big idea first obsessed him and ending with his present disillusionment.

"Well, you are queer!" she exclaimed, and then they both became shy and self-conscious.

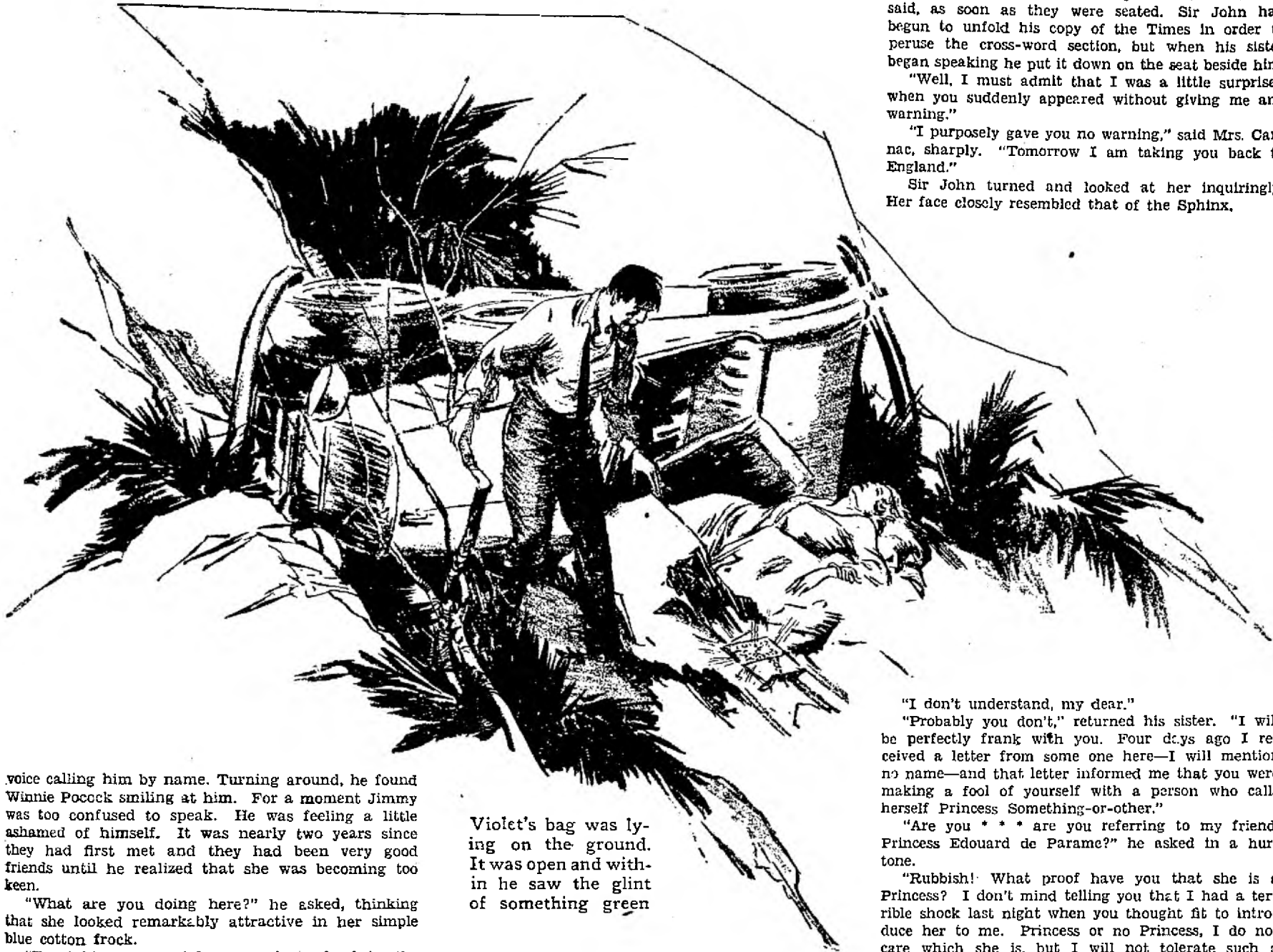
WHILE Jimmy and Winnie were eating ices at Rumpelmayer's Sir John Cornish was allowing his sister to steer him to a seat in a secluded corner of the gardens. Mrs. Carnac was her brother's senior by four years and had made stern use of that seniority for as long as he could remember.

"I dare say you wonder why I came here?" she said, as soon as they were seated. Sir John had begun to unfold his copy of the Times in order to peruse the cross-word section, but when his sister began speaking he put it down on the seat beside him.

"Well, I must admit that I was a little surprised when you suddenly appeared without giving me any warning."

"I purposely gave you no warning," said Mrs. Carnac, sharply. "Tomorrow I am taking you back to England."

Sir John turned and looked at her inquiringly. Her face closely resembled that of the Sphinx.



Violet's bag was lying on the ground. It was open and within he saw the glint of something green

voice calling him by name. Turning around, he found Winnie Pocock smiling at him. For a moment Jimmy was too confused to speak. He was feeling a little ashamed of himself. It was nearly two years since they had first met and they had been very good friends until he realized that she was becoming too keen.

"What are you doing here?" he asked, thinking that she looked remarkably attractive in her simple blue cotton frock.

"I'm taking my holiday now instead of in the Summer," she replied, with no sign of resentment. She made him feel horribly guilty. Jolly sporting of her to be so pleasant, he thought. "Came with a Cook's party; £10 inclusive, for a fortnight."

"Let's go over to that tea shop and have some ices or something to drink," Jimmy suggested.

Winnie said it would be "ever so nice," so they went across to Rumpelmayer's and Jimmy ordered two ices.

"What made you come here?" he asked.

Winnie was blushing.

"How you do stare, Mr. Maddock," she said, her color deepening.

"I'm sorry." Without realizing it he had been staring hard. Had she changed so very much, or had she always been so fresh and pretty? He was comparing her with Evelyn Thacker, Princess Andrew, Violet Spurrell and a dozen other women whom he had been seeing every day during the last two months. Winnie came out well by comparison. He liked her smooth, clear skin, he admired the natural arch of her eyebrows and her small, well-shaped lips, which were only slightly tinged with rouge. And he found her simple, unaffected manner most attractive.

"I'm sorry," he repeated. "I was admiring your frock."

"Glad you like it. Made it myself."

"You are clever. You made the hat, too."

"Yes."

"You haven't told me yet what made you come here."

"Nothing special. I just saw the trip advertised and Mr. Bayliss said I could come now if I liked. I don't see why one should always stick to England, d'you?"

"That's what I thought."

"Let's go and have lunch somewhere. Would you like to?"

"You bet."

"Where shall we go?"

"I don't mind."

Jimmy considered the question. The Cafe de Paris? The Bristol at Beaulieu? The Chateau de Madrid? The Ruhl at Nice? All fashionable places. He was tired of them. He would have preferred some little back-street restaurant; but Winnie? She had probably never been to any of those places. "Let's take a taxi and go up to the Chateau de Madrid," he said. "Would you like that?"

"Don't know anything about it, but it sounds all right."

Winnie had become very shy during the drive up from Menton and they had scarcely spoken, but as soon as they began to eat she gained courage and asked him, point blank, what she had done to offend him in England. Jimmy had been expecting something of this sort and had been unable to think of a suitable reply.

"Why, nothing," he said lamely.

"I must have done something," Winnie replied nervously and, Jimmy thought, a little pathetically. He remained uncomfortably silent for some moments, and allowed his thoughts to slide back over the last two years. He had been a fool to sheer off just because of his mad idea of living the life of a millionaire for a few weeks. What had he gained by it? During the last hour Winnie had soared in his estimation while Evelyn, Violet, Princess Andrew, Princess Edouard and all that crowd had fallen. Winnie was worth more than the whole lot of them put together. She was sincere and genuine, those others had not a grain of sincerity between them. Their lives were artificial; they lived without any aim.

"I don't understand, my dear."

"Probably you don't," returned his sister. "I will be perfectly frank with you. Four days ago I received a letter from some one here—I will mention no name—and that letter informed me that you were making a fool of yourself with a person who calls herself Princess Something-or-other."

"Are you \* \* \* are you referring to my friend, Princess Edouard de Parame?" he asked in a hurt tone.

"Rubbish! What proof have you that she is a Princess? I don't mind telling you that I had a terrible shock last night when you thought fit to introduce her to me. Princess or no Princess, I do not care which she is, but I will not tolerate such a woman for my sister-in-law."

"The Princess takes the greatest interest, a most intelligent interest, in cross-words," replied the Cabinet Minister, bravely.

"Perhaps she does while she is trying to catch you, but she would very soon get sick of them. Besides, what do you imagine would happen when a command came for Sir John and Lady Cornish to present themselves at court?"

"Sir John and Lady Cornish would naturally obey the command."

Mrs. Carnac sniffed.

"That just shows how you have lost all sense of proportion," she said. "No, John, I am going to be firm about this. You have arranged to take your friend to Grasse today, but you will come back to London with me tomorrow. Our places are already booked on the Blue Train."

Sir John made no reply. It was impossible to argue with Marion; besides, he felt that he would go back to London tomorrow, whatever he said now.

Half an hour later Sir John returned to the hotel and found the car which he had ordered waiting at the door. After calling for Princess Edouard he instructed the driver to take them up to Grasse. On the return journey they had to stop on account of a puncture, and while the wheel was being changed they got out and walked a little way along the road.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Sir John. "Do I hear ducks quacking?"

The Princess laughed and laid her hand upon his arm.

"Do you mean to tell me you've never heard frogs croaking before?"

"Frogs! Are frogs making that peculiar noise?"

"Of course. They're in a pond somewhere. Shall we see if we can find them?"

"Most certainly. I should be most interested to see them."

They turned from the road and were guided by the croaking. Making their way along a rough track, they came to an old cottage, and as they approached the building the noise ceased.

"There must be water about somewhere," said the Princess. "Ah! There is a tank." They went on a few yards and came to a concrete reservoir at the bottom of which they saw a covering of green slime. "There's one. Do you see it? Sitting on that piece of stick."

"Dear me, so it is. How very interesting. But what a small frog to make so much noise."

"And there is another, in that corner." The Princess stooped down and picked up a stone which she threw into the water. The frogs dived, and at the same moment there was the sound of hurrying footsteps. Sir John and the Princess turned and found themselves confronted by two men who turned back the lapels of their coats and revealed their Surete badges.

"What do you want?" asked the Cabinet Minister in halting French.

"We have orders to arrest any one who comes here," said one of the men.

"Madame threw something into the reservoir."

"I only threw a stone to make the frogs move," the Princess told them.

"We regret—"

Sir John demanded: "Do you know who I am? I am Sir John Cornish, one of His Britannic Majesty's Ministers of State; and this lady is Princess Edouard de Parame."

THIS announcement made no impression upon Fontana, who was not going to take any risks.

"I regret, Monsieur," he said, "but I have strict instructions to detain any one who approaches the reservoir. I have sent a man to inform my chief, to whom Monsieur will be able to explain as soon as he arrives. In the meantime I must order Monsieur and Madame to remain here."

There were further protestations, but they were useless, and Sir John and the Princess sat down on a low wall and waited patiently for the arrival of "the chief."

That morning Armand Bernard had read an account of the accident and at once assumed that Violet had been on her way to dispose of the emeralds.

As soon as he had read the report of the accident Bernard got into a car and drove to the spot where the car had been wrecked. From there he went on to the hospital at Grasse, where he was informed that Madame Spurrell was still unconscious and that it was very doubtful if she would recover.

"But last night Madame talked incessantly," the surgeon told him.

"What did she say?" asked Bernard, excitedly.

"She spoke English, of course, and she constantly repeated the words 'emeralds' and 'Jimmy.' She seemed to be asking some one to do something."

"She has visitors?"

"Only her husband and a friend who came together."

"A friend! You know his name?"

"Sir Maddock, or something like that. An Englishman."

"I can see her?"

"If you wish."

Bernard was taken to the ward where Violet lay silent and motionless, except for her labored breathing and an occasional groan. He remained for half an hour hoping that she would say something, but he was disappointed. He thanked the surgeon and returned to his car. He would stop for a few minutes at the Perrier cottage and then hasten back to Monte Carlo.

As Bernard approached the cottage he saw Jules Yves, who had just returned from telephoning to Monaco.

"We have caught them, Monsieur!"

"Who?"

"A man and a woman. We saw Madame throw something into the reservoir, so Fontana arrested them."

"But this is splendid! Where are they?"

"By the cottage, I expect."

"You do not know who they are?"

"No, Monsieur, but you see their car has the Monegasque registration."

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "it will not be long now before we catch Carl Hentz." Suddenly Bernard stood still, for they had come within sight of the reservoir and he saw Sir John Cornish and the Princess sitting, side by side, on the wall.

"If you are responsible for this outrage I should like an immediate explanation," Sir John said, in a voice which was very different from that to which Jimmy Maddock was accustomed. Armand Bernard removed his hat, wiped his streaming forehead and bowed again.

"Monsieur le Ministre," he began, "I apologize, and to Madame I also apologize. Permit me to explain; a daring jewel robbery took place at Monte

Carlo three days ago. It was the work of a notorious international thief and I had definite information which led me to suppose that the jewels would be hidden in this reservoir. I at once set three men to keep watch and ordered them to detain any one who threw anything into the water. Those are the facts and I can do no more than express to Madame and yourself my profound regrets for such an unfortunate mistake."

As Armand Bernard wiped his streaming face the Princess went off into peals of laughter, and then Sir John began laughing also. Armand Bernard maintained the expression of a bereaved mourner.

"Well, well," said Sir John, as soon as he was able to speak, "that is very droll, and I would not have missed the experience for anything. May we now proceed to Monte Carlo?"

Armand Bernard stepped aside and bowed low as they left.

"For heaven's sake be careful another time, Fontana."

"You told me to arrest any one who—"

"Yes, yes, I know, but I never thought. I must go. I have at last discovered who has the emeralds."

"You have, Monsieur; who?"

"That Englishman, Maddock."

An hour later Armand Bernard was asking Lamotte if Monsieur Maddock was in the hotel.

"He has just mounted to his room," replied the chief reception clerk.

Bernard went upstairs and knocked at Jimmy's door.

Jimmy's head appeared.

"Pardon, Monsieur. My name is Armand Bernard, of the Surete. I show you my badge. I occupy myself with the loss of Madame Swayne's emeralds."

"Er \* \* \* Oh, yes \* \* \* they were stolen, weren't they?"

"Ah! You seem to know all about it. May I ask how you know, Monsieur?"

Jimmy looked a little perturbed.

"I heard some one talking about it every one's talking about it, in fact."

"I believe, Monsieur, that Mme. Spurrell was in your car yesterday when you have an accident?"

"That's right; Mrs. Spurrell happened to be driving."

"And Mme. Spurrell hand you the emeralds of Mme. Swayne?"

Jimmy sat down and gaped at Bernard. How the deuce did he know that the emeralds had fallen into his possession? Had he been watched when he posted the damned things at Menton?

"No, you have made a mistake, Mr. Bernard. Mrs. Spurrell—" Jimmy paused. His throat had become suddenly dry and he could only speak with a great effort.

"M. Maddock, will you tell me where those emeralds are?"

Silence. Should he make a clean breast of it? Bernard seemed to know that Violet had had the jewels, so what harm would there be in telling him? Yes, it would probably save a lot of trouble in the end. The fact that he had posted the beastly things to Lady Swayne would be proof of his good intentions.

"Look here, Mr. Bernard—" Jimmy got no further, for the telephone bell by the bed began ringing. He moved toward it, but Bernard moved also, and reached it first.

"Hallo, hallo! \* \* \* comment? No, no, this is Bernard speaking \* \* \* what? They are found!" Bernard replaced the receiver and turned round.

"M. Maddock, were you in Menton this morning?"

"Good heavens, no! Why?"

"Monsieur, I see you tell me the truth. I apologize to you for this intrusion. This afternoon I am at Grasse and at the hospital I am told that Mme. Spurrell speaks without the consciousness. I tell you frankly that I have suspected she take the emeralds, and now I know, for I am told she speak about them and she speaks your name as if she wish you to do something. You understand, I at once conclude she give you the jewels and it troubles her mind; she has wish to tell you to do something with them. So I come to see you, I think you have the emeralds. Then Lamotte speak on the telephone and tells me the emeralds have been returned to Mme. Swayne. She receive them in a parcel which some one post this morning at Menton. I offer my regrets again, Monsieur. It is strange. I had thought I catch the thief if I find you have had the emeralds. But now—a shrug—"It seems not. However, I can console myself with the thought that I have promised Mme. Swayne that her jewels come back to her in two or three days. You see I was right. My pardon again, Monsieur."

"Well, I'm damned!" Jimmy muttered to himself as he watched the detective going out of the room.

"FOOL! Fool! Fool!"

Carl Hentz threw down the paper containing an account of the accident on the road to Grasse and shook his clenched hands.

"Fool! Imbecile! Weak fool!" Why had he allowed himself to give way to a trick of his nerves just because the police of London and Paris had

begun to show a mild interest in his activities? Wasn't he, Carl Hentz, clever enough to be able to laugh at them? Fool! If only he had continued to work alone, as he had done in the past, without a single failure, those emeralds might have been his by now.

Carl Hentz took up the paper again. Violet had obviously been on her way to the reservoir with the emeralds when the accident occurred. Then what had become of them? He must tackle this job afresh, himself; go at it boldly, in the face of Bernard and his crowd. Hadn't he run risks a hundred times before this? Why should he, who had never failed, be afraid now? The first thing to do was to make sure of what had become of the emeralds, and that could only be done by going over to Monte Carlo and nosing round. If they had been returned to Lady Swayne he would follow her wherever she went, until he got them.

A few hours later Carl Hentz arrived at Monte Carlo, where he registered boldly under his own name and was shown to a suite of rooms on the first floor.

MONTE CARLO station at 4:30 in the afternoon.

Small groups of people and piles of luggage dotted the platform at which the Paris-bound train would arrive. Sir John Cornish, rather gloomy, was chatting with Princess Edouard de Parame while his sister pretended to be looking after their trunks a little distance along the platform.

"I must tell you," Sir John was saying, "that I have just received a letter from the Prime Minister asking me if I will accept a peerage and I am seriously considering the question."

"So when we get to London we may find no Sir John Cornish but Lord Somebody in his place?" smiled the Princess.

"But you will find the same friend and, if I may say so, the same admirer, awaiting you," replied the Cabinet Minister, gallantly.

The Blue Train steamed slowly into the station.

"Then we shall meet in London next week," the Princess said, as she held out her hand. "We shall stay at the Ritz. I'll let you know directly we arrive and you will come and see us, won't you?"

Sir John smiled and glanced quickly at his sister, who was coming toward them.

"Most certainly I shall, at the first opportunity," he replied, lowering his voice. "Ah, here is our train. Good-by, and please give my kindest regards to Mrs. Burgheimer."

Princess Edouard remained standing on the platform. As the train pulled out Sir John popped his head out of the compartment window.

The Princess smiled and waved, then turned and found herself side by side with Ian Northey. They left the station together.

Ian watched her go up the steps and then turned away. As he was passing the Cafe de Paris some one called him by name and he saw Jimmy Maddock sitting at one of the tables with a pretty girl in a blue frock.

"Come and join us. Miss Pocock, Mr. Ian Northey. Any news from Grasse?"

"Nothing since the morning. I've just been witnessing a tender farewell between Sir John and Princess Edouard. She says he's been offered a peerage, and also that I can announce their engagement. By the way, Jimmy, have you heard anything of the story that it was Violet who pinched those emeralds?"

"Good heavens, no."

"You needn't be afraid to tell me; I've been well squared not to say anything about it, but the story's going round Nice that she was working for some well-known international jewel thief."

"First I've heard about it," Jimmy persisted. "What a filthy hole this is! I shan't be sorry to get away," Jimmy grunted. Ian laughed.

"Monte's getting on his nerves," he said, turning to Winnie. "Hallo, there's Marsh!"

The major was walking around the Mall. As soon as he saw Jimmy waving he went across and was introduced to Winnie.

"I'm afraid it's all up with poor Violet," he said, gravely, as he sat down.

"Isn't there any hope?" Ian asked.

A pause.

"As a matter of fact, she died this afternoon," Marsh said, at length. "I've just been talking to Lancelot over the phone."

Jimmy had turned white.

"How's Gordon taking it?" he asked.

"Badly. Lancelot says he's in a state of collapse. It's lucky he's got Lance to look after him. Lance says he will take him to England as soon as they can get away and will take him on as a sort of secretary-companion."

"I'm damned sorry," Jimmy muttered.

"So am I," from Marsh. "I liked Violet. She was one of the best."

"And how's Evelyn?" asked Ian.

"She'll be able to leave the clinic in a few days. She's going to sail next week. Most extraordinary thing, she questioned me for half an hour yesterday about Lady Swayne's emeralds, and seemed to be frightfully relieved when I told her that they had

been returned and that no one knew who had taken them. Queer, wasn't it?"

Jimmy turned to the journalist.

"If you want a bit more gossip for your paper, you can say that a marriage has been arranged and will shortly take place between—well, between us."

He took Winnie's arm and marched her across to the taxi stand outside the Sporting Club.

"Whatever made you say that?" she asked.

"Well, it's true, isn't it?"

"I don't know. It's the first I've heard about it."

THE restaurant-car attendant went down the length of the train announcing that the first dinner was being served.

"I shall go along and have mine, Louise," Lady Swayne said to her maid. "You can go when I come back."

In the next compartment but one Jimmy Maddock, who had booked a seat for the second dinner, was reviewing the events of the last three months.

Jimmy would have left Monte Carlo a fortnight ago, if he had been free, but he was told that his presence would be necessary at the inquiry which was held after Violet's death.

Armand Bernard had wanted to question Gordon, but Gordon was in a state of collapse. The nervous breakdown which had been creeping slowly upon him for several weeks had burst with the sudden fury of a storm when Violet died, and Sir Lancelot had taken him to a nursing home at Cannes.

Evelyn Thacker. A week after she had tried to poison herself (she had admitted to Marsh that she had tried) she was able to leave the clinic and allowed herself to be taken to Marseilles, where the major saw her embark, and waited on the quay until the ship pulled away. He had returned to Monte Carlo, where he settled all Evelyn's debts, and then went off to Le Touquet for Easter.

The Dobbies and Winnie Pocock had already returned to England, and Princess Edouard and her mother were at the Ritz in London, where, it was assumed, they were struggling with Mrs. Carnac for the possession of Sir John. Jimmy Maddock and Lady Swayne were among the last of that set to leave Monte Carlo.

Further along the corridor of the Blue Train Armand Bernard, unrecognizable behind a black beard and mustaches, and pellets inserted into his nostrils so as to change the shape of his nose, was also occupied with his thoughts when the attendant went along.

Five days ago Carl Hentz had suddenly disappeared from Cannes and all traces of him had been lost. Armand Bernard, who allowed himself to be guided by what he called "instinct," had become convinced that Hentz would make a final effort to get hold of the emeralds himself, and that he would probably travel by this train. He had closely scrutinized every one who got into the train when it stopped, but he saw no one whom he could suspect of being Hentz in disguise. He had failed to notice any resemblance between Hentz and an old lady whose white hair, pale face, dignified bearing and manner of speech at once gave the impression that she might belong to one of the old aristocratic families of France. Her hands were concealed by black lace gloves, she wore old-fashioned earrings, a large cameo brooch was pinned into the lace of her bodice, her skirt touched the ground when she walked, and her hat was of a style which elderly ladies favored thirty years ago. While this clever disguise completely deceived Armand Bernard, Bernard's black

beard and mustaches and altered nose were equally successful against Hentz.

Jimmy Maddock noticed Lady Swayne passing along the corridor on her way to the restaurant car. As he returned to his compartment, ten minutes later, he saw an old lady talking to Louise.

"Your mistress is taken ill in the restaurant car," she was saying in English, but with a foreign accent.

Jimmy went into his own compartment and sat down. He saw Louise hurrying past the door and wondered what was the matter with Lady Swayne. Curious that she should have been taken ill. She had seemed so very well when he spoke to her on the platform at Monte Carlo. He decided to go and ask the old lady what was the matter. As he stepped into the corridor he saw her come out of Lady Swayne's compartment and then, with a quick glance over her shoulder, rush, with extraordinary agility for so old a woman, in the opposite direction.

Six months ago Jimmy would have pondered over the incident for half an hour, but Monte Carlo had stimulated the action of his brain, if it had done nothing else for him, and he went into Lady Swayne's compartment. Lying on the seat was a leather dressing case which had been ripped open and half its contents were strewn upon the floor. Jimmy dashed out and went in search of the old lady. He went the length of three coaches but could see her nowhere. He searched all the compartments, as he returned, but saw no one even resembling her remotely. Where the deuce had she gone? The train was traveling at forty or fifty miles an hour; she could not have jumped out. He heard excited voices coming from the next coach.

"Do not be alarmed, Madame, I search the whole train. In ten minutes, perhaps five, I find the lady and your jewels."

Jimmy tiptoed and entered the corridor of the next coach. There he saw Lady Swayne and a dapper little man with a black beard whom he did not recognize.

"There is Mr. Maddock!" exclaimed Lady Swayne, "perhaps he can tell us something."

"You do not recognize me, of course," said the detective, excitedly, "I am Armand Bernard, of the police. You have seen a white-haired old lady, no?"

Jimmy held up a warning finger and nodded. He was almost too thrilled to speak. This was life roused with excitement. It left Monte Carlo cold.

"I think she is in the second washroom along there," he said.

"Please compose yourself, Madame," said Bernard to Lady Swayne. "Monsieur and I, we watch. In a few minutes we catch him and your jewels. Have I not always said I would catch Carl Hentz?" He turned back to Jimmy, "We must wait until the train stop at Toulon," he said, "in twenty minutes. I do not think we see the nice old lady again, but whoever comes out will descend at Toulon and we follow. When he descend we follow, if you will be so kind as to give me the assistance. I ask the Chief de Gare to keep the train ten, perhaps fifteen minutes. I think he will make an excuse to leave the station, although he must have a ticket for Paris. Yes, we follow close and if I cry 'Jump,' you jump at him and in two seconds I have the handcuffs on."

AS THE Blue Train began to slow down the washroom door opened and a white-haired, hollow-checked old man emerged and walked slowly past Bernard and Jimmy. Halfway along the corridor he paused and peered out of the window, then he went on to the end of the coach.

"Yes, he descends," whispered Bernard. "The

disguise, it is wonderful. I can see no resemblance, but I know, by instinct, that it is Carl Hentz."

The train had stopped and in a few seconds Jimmy and Bernard were following the old man along the platform. Bernard stepped aside for a moment and whispered a few words to an inspector, then he hurried after Jimmy.

"Yes, he will go out. We must follow quicker."

When the old man reached the barrier Jimmy and Bernard were only a few yards behind and they heard him explain to the ticket collector that he had to meet some one outside. The official reminded him that the train only waited for three minutes, and waved him on. Bernard's badge let him and Jimmy through without a word. The old man was walking briskly across the booking hall and as soon as he reached the entrance he dashed toward a large limousine which was waiting in the roadway.

"Jump!" cried Bernard, and at the same time a gunshot echoed through the station building. He had aimed low, but had missed. He aimed again, but before he could fire there came a flash from the front of the car, another report, and he staggered backward and fell.

Station employes came running from all directions and found two men struggling inside the car and within a few seconds a crowd, travelers, taxi drivers, sailors on their way back to their ships, waiters from neighboring cafes and shopkeepers had collected.

"Arrest the old man!" came Bernard's voice from the ground.

The fight inside the car only lasted for a few moments. Hentz knew the art of jujutsu, and with little more than a sudden jerk of his wrist he sent Jimmy sprawling onto the pavement and then leaped from the car by the other door. Unfortunately he leaped into the arms of two gendarmes who had been attracted from a neighboring street by the sound of the shots. Jimmy picked himself up and saw Armand Bernard, half supported by a porter, staggering toward the car. Jimmy went to his assistance.

"You are badly hurt?" he asked. Bernard did not appear to hear the question.

"You have the handcuffs on him?" As he cried out a jet of blood spouted from his mouth. "Search him. Somewhere you will find an emerald necklace."

Bernard's body became limp as if all his strength had drained from him. Jimmy and the porter laid him on the ground. One of the gendarmes approached.

"What is all this about?"

"I am Armand Bernard, of the police." His voice came in feeble jerks. "That man is Carl Hentz—I have waited three months to catch him—and now—at last! Tell—tell me when they find those emeralds."

The gendarme pushed his way back through the crowd. A few minutes later he returned and held up Lady Swayne's necklace.

"Ah!" Bernard's voice rose to a shrill cry of triumph. He attempted to sit up but fell back against the arms which had been supporting him. "Ah!" again. "I—I am happy. Armand Bernard has kept his promise. The emeralds belong to an English lady in the Blue Train. Monsieur Maddock—where is he? he will take you to Madame Swayne—he is a friend. \* \* \*

A quarter of an hour later, as they were covering the dead body of Armand Bernard with a blanket, the Blue Train, forty minutes late, pulled out of Toulon station and continued its journey northward.

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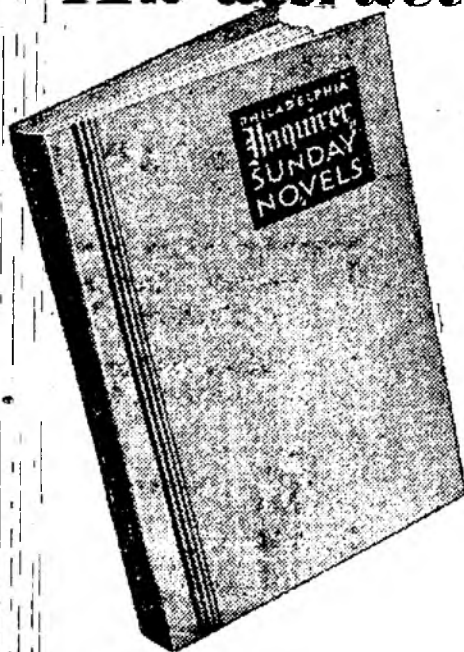
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