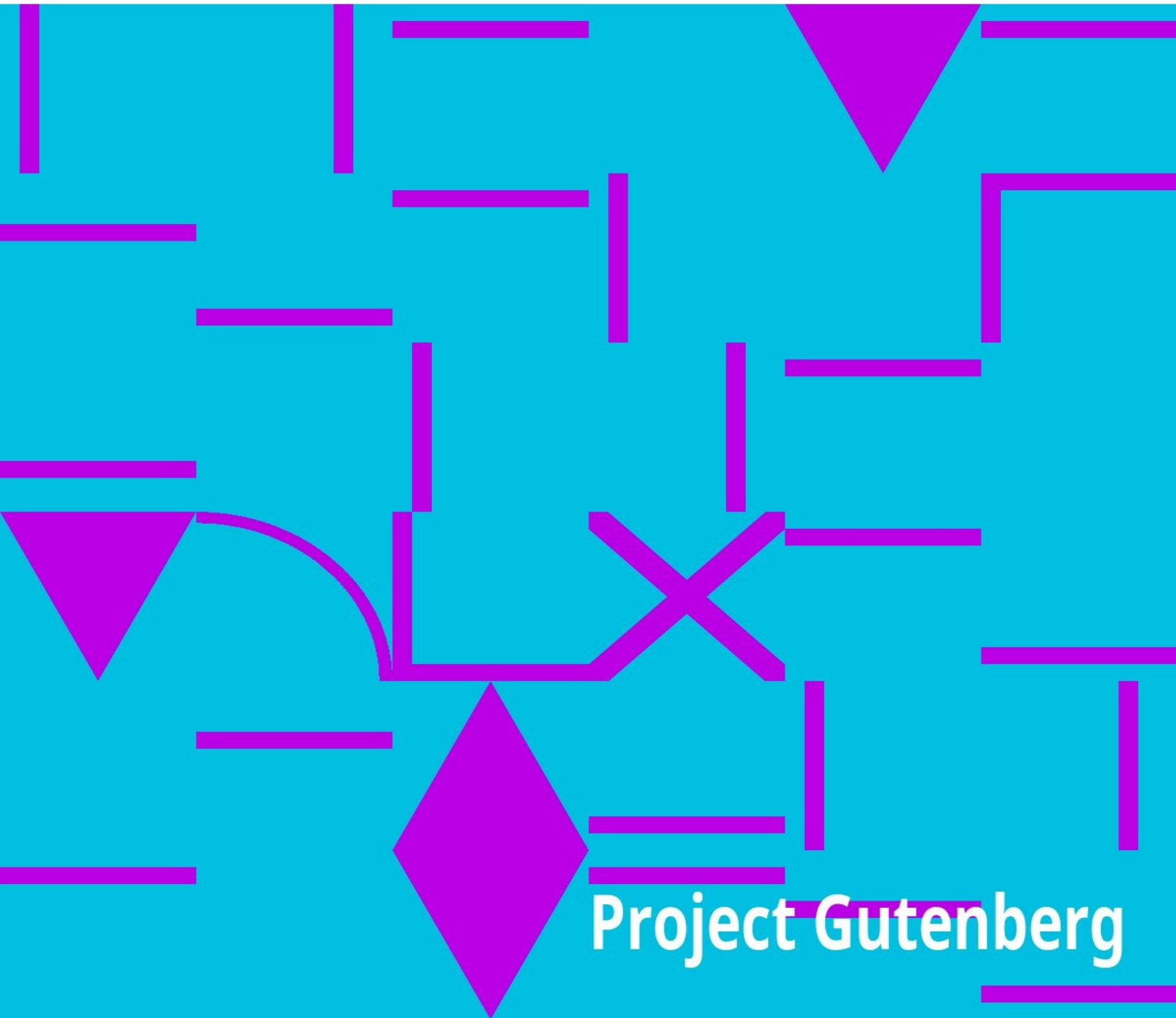
The Secret of the Silver Car

Further Adventures of Anthony Trent, Master Criminal

Wyndham Martyn



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THE SECRET OF

THE SILVER CAR

WYNDHAM MARTYN

IS ALSO THE AUTHOR OF

"ANTHONY TRENT, MASTER CRIMINAL"

"ALL THE WORLD TO NOTHING"

"THE MAN OUTSIDE"

THE SECRET OF

THE SILVER CAR

FURTHER ADVENTURES OF ANTHONY

TRENT, MASTER CRIMINAL

BY

WYNDHAM MARTYN

AUTHOR OF

THE MAN OUTSIDE; ALL THE WORLD TO NOTHING;

ANTHONY TRENT, MASTER CRIMINAL; ETC.

NEW YORK

MOFFAT, YARD AND COMPANY

1920

THEIR FATHER

DEDICATES THESE FURTHER

ADVENTURES OF ANTHONY TRENT TO

PHYLLIS AND CYNTHIA

BUT NOT WITHOUT A GUILTY FEELING THAT THERE

MUST HAVE BEEN SOMETHING

LACKING

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ESTIMABLE CHILDREN

SINCE THEY TAKE SUCH INTEREST IN THE

CAREER

OF A MASTER CRIMINAL

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CHAPTER ONE

THE PUZZLING PASSENGER

"Stop him," the second officer yelled, "he's going to jump overboard!"

The man who dashed past him and through a group of passengers waving hands at friends on the deck below, was too quick for those who sought to stay him. He balanced himself for a moment on the rail and then jumped ten feet down to the pier.

The gangplanks had already been withdrawn and the great liner bound for New York was too mighty a piece of momentum to pause now. Furthermore her commander was going down the river on a favoring tide and nothing short of a signal from the port authorities would have made him put back for a passenger who had chosen such a singular moment for a leap into the dark.

An hour or so later in the smoking room the disappearance was discussed with fervor. A collar manufacturer of Troy, named Colliver, was holding his group for the reason he had been standing by the rail when the young man jumped and had even sought to restrain him.

"He was too quick for me," Colliver declared. "I surely thought he'd hurt himself jumping ten feet down."

"What did he do after he jumped?" a man demanded.

"Picked himself up and looked around as if he expected to see someone. The last I saw of him was going from group to group of people asking something I couldn't hear."

"Very mysterious," another passenger commented. "I don't believe he was crazy. I believe he jumped off just at the right moment—for him. I believe we shall find he took some loot with him. The purser is making an investigation now."

"I've got a theory," another smoker asserted. "I was just going to ask him for a light when he began that run down the deck to the rail and believe me he can sprint. Just as I was about to open my mouth I saw his face suddenly change. Evidently he had seen or heard something that frightened him."

"So he ran away from danger?" Colliver added. "That might be. I tell you on a

big boat like this we are surrounded by crooks, male and female, and they look on us as their lawful prey. He might have been a gambler who spotted a victim he was afraid of."

"Or a murderer," a Harvard theologian replied nervously. "I never feel really safe on a great liner like this. We all have to take one another on trust. I have been introduced to you gentlemen as a professor of pastoral theology. I may be a professional murderer for all you know. Mr. Colliver here isn't known to me personally and he may be a really high class bank robber for all I can tell."

Mr. Colliver took the suggestion sourly.

"Everybody in Troy knows me," he replied with dignity.

"Exactly," the theologian answered. "But Troy is not on the ship's passenger lists to any such extent as to corroborate your statement. There may be Harvard men on board who know me by name but for all they know I may be made up to represent Professor Sedgely so as to gain your confidence and rob you."

"My collars encircle the necks of more men than those of any other maker," said Colliver quoting one of his advertisements. "My name is known everywhere. No man is perfectly dressed without my collars. I presented a swimming pool to Troy and there isn't a man or woman in the city but would resent any slur on me."

"My dear sir," said the professor smiling, "I am not attacking your good name or your city's fame. I am only saying that if you were crossing with the idea of making a killing at games of chance I should not benefit because you assumed the name of one who ornaments the cervical vertebræ of perfectly dressed men. I only meant that anything can take place on a ship such as this is and that this man who escaped tonight may have done so to avoid capture and possible imprisonment or even death."

"The purser had a wireless sent to the company's office and no doubt has a reply by this time," another passenger broke in.

"He is probably in prison now," Professor Sedgely remarked.

"You certainly have a cheerful mind," Colliver commented.

"I read for mental relaxation the lightest forms of fiction," the professor answered, "and I am prepared for anything. I maintain that every passenger on a fast ship like this is regarded as a possible victim by the cleverest criminals in existence. For myself I have nothing of value, being poorly paid, but our friend

there who has so finely benefitted his home city wears a diamond pin of great value. Furthermore there is a sapphire set in platinum on his finger which might well tempt the professional robber."

"Say," said Colliver a little uneasily, "you're observant all right. Anything else you saw?"

"That you have a gold cigar case with initials in emeralds. I have," the professor said modestly, "trained my powers of observation. I do it to protect myself."

He rose from his chair and bowed a courteous goodnight to the immediate group and then went on deck.

"I don't trust that man," said the manufacturer. "I never trust any man on a ship who wears smoked glasses. He wanted to conceal his eyes. I'll bet he never saw Harvard except on a picture postal. Damn it!" Colliver cried peevishly, "Why can't a man wear a passable ring and stickpin without it attracting the attention of other people?"

The Harvard theologian had sown seeds of suspicion. Colliver, as amiable a manufacturer of collars as any in Troy, looked over at Myers Irving who ran an advertising agency in New York and suspected him of being a confidence man.

"It's a pretty good looking ring," Irving said heartily. He wished he had one like it. Now that he knew who Colliver was he thirsted after his account. His overtures were accepted with marked reserve and a gloom fell upon the party until the entrance of the genial purser.

"Who was the mysterious man?" Colliver asked.

"His name was Anthony Trent," said the purser.

A man in the uniform of a captain in the United States army who had been playing solitaire and had taken no part in this talk, looked up with such sudden interest at the name that the purser turned to him.

"Do you know Anthony Trent?" he demanded.

"Yes," said Captain Sutton, "I do."

"Can you think of any reason why he should jump ashore just as we were starting for the Hudson River?"

"He might have been saying goodbye to his best girl and taken no heed of the warning to go ashore."

"That won't do," the purser declared. "All his kit is in his stateroom and he had already seen his table steward and arranged about his seat. He went off on the impulse of the moment and I'd like to know what that impulse was."

"Has anyone missed anything?" Colliver asked.

"Don't know," the purser said. "Haven't heard of anything so far. I wirelessed the office and the pier superintendent and they have lost all trace of him. The last they heard of him was that he was seen offering a taxicab driver double fare to drive fast."

"He saw someone on the ship he was afraid of," Colliver said with the air of one called upon to solve a deep mystery.

The purser was determined not to let Captain Sutton get back to his solitaire.

"I'm afraid I'll have to ask you more about your friend," he said smiling, "the whole thing is so unusual that the old man wants a thorough investigation. In confidence, is there anything fishy about this Anthony Trent?"

"In confidence, I may tell you," Captain Sutton answered, "but my confidence will be in the captain's cabin and not here."

"Do you think we'd say anything to anyone about it?" Colliver demanded. He feared he was to be robbed of interesting details.

"I'm a lawyer by profession," Captain Sutton returned, "and I know how people talk even when they mean to be silent. Anthony Trent is a friend of mine and I shall constitute myself his counsel. He served under me in the war, was recommended for a commission, and won the *Croix de Guerre*. He is an American with enough money to play golf and flyfish for trout all he wants to. He was in a hospital in the Isle of Wight for three months after being wounded and I had a letter from him saying he would come over on this ship. I came by Liverpool just because I wanted to see him; and when I didn't see him at dinner I thought he had changed his plans. I can give no reason why he should have left the boat in the manner he did but as a lawyer I can assure the company that it is his affair and not theirs."

The purser was skilled in the ways of human beings. He had not straightened out difficulties for his company on half a thousand trips across the Atlantic for nothing. He could see plainly enough that Captain Sutton knew something about Anthony Trent that he would not tell the captain or anyone else unless process of law compelled. There had been a quick look of fear on his face when he realized Trent was the man of whom the group about him had been speaking. Whether

Captain Sutton knew the reason why his friend had leapt from the ship's rail was doubtful; but that the act had conjured up sudden fear gave the purser food for thought.

"The company certainly does not want to bring suit against a passenger who has paid for a high priced state room and a number of excellent meals and refuses to benefit by them. The old man was annoyed that everyone was talking about it at his table and he wasn't able to get off his little crop of chestnuts as usual. He'd appreciate it if you would tell him what you know about Mr. Trent."

"If I see him it will be as Mr. Trent's lawyer," Sutton retorted.

The purser looked at him keenly.

"So you admit," he said genially, "that this mysterious Anthony Trent needs a defender?"

"I admit nothing of the sort," Sutton replied quickly. But he felt he had not conducted the affair with his usual skill. "There's been a lot of hot air talked about crimes on board ship and I'm not going to have my friend's name linked with that sort of thing."

"Of course not," the purser agreed. "I can understand why you come to the rescue; still there is bound to be some misunderstanding about a man who leaves all his baggage behind and takes a desperate jump as he did."

"He saw someone on this ship he was afraid of," Colliver insisted. "It might have been you for all I know."

"What do you mean by that?" Sutton demanded and flushed dusky red.

Colliver was amazed at the sudden heat. The purser was more interested than ever. He would have been even more amazed if he had known that Captain Sutton honestly believed that it was because Anthony Trent had seen him face to face that he had escaped. The letter of which he had spoken was non-existent. He had lied because of the man whom he had, for the first time, claimed as his friend.

Sutton had been the officer; Trent the enlisted man and the discipline of the service prevented a friendship that would have been possible in other days and, now war was finished, might again become practicable. The space of an hour was the time the officer had been with the man and yet he was determined to fight for his interests. And he suddenly realized that he had begun his fight by antagonizing a very shrewd purser.

"My dear sir," the purser said gently, "I am sure you are taking this too much to heart. Nobody is accusing your client of anything more serious than risking a broken leg which, after all, is more his affair than even his counsel's. Captain Kingscote will ask you a few questions which you must understand, as a lawyer, a ship's commander ought to ask. There is such a thing as a log and it has to be written correctly. Tomorrow morning perhaps? You will be offered an excellent cigar and a drink that you can't get in all the length and breadth of your native land."

"Any time at all," Sutton answered with an effort to be as genial as the purser. "I only resented the idle chatter that centred around a man who fought very gallantly."

"If you mean me by that reference," Colliver said angrily, "I'd like to say that I have as much right to talk as anyone on board."

"Certainly," said Myers Irving, "and I can't see why anyone wants to get excited about it. It was that professor who began it. Mr. Colliver what do you say to a little smile?"

Colliver looked at the card Irving handed to him. He did not like advertising men as a rule but he felt this debonair head of a big agency was an exception. He had come to the aid of big business.

"It must be the salt in the air," he confessed, "I don't mind if I do."

Left to himself Sutton closed his eyes and lived over again those moments in France when Anthony Trent had been brought before him as adjutant on extraordinary charges.

Once or twice he had seen Private Trent and had been vaguely reminded of a forgotten face. It was only when Anthony Trent had been recommended for promotion and had declined it that he remembered the name. Trent had been the Dartmouth football captain in that historic year when Harvard was humbled. Sutton, a graduate of ten years previously, had shouted himself hoarse at the great run by which Trent had passed the crimson score.

Private Trent had been chosen on very dangerous business and the adjutant had no chance to speak to him as he had determined to do. Anthony Trent was one of those who volunteered to clean up machine gun nests left behind to harass the advancing troops of the Allies. He had done so well that Captain Sutton was proud of him for the sake of the old college in Hanover.

He remembered the shock he had when Lieutenant Devlin, a former detective in

New York and a man to whom he was not drawn, declared that this same Anthony Trent was the most famous criminal of the day, a master craftsman who had never been in police toils.

Sutton laughed at the very suggestion. It was absurd. Devlin's answer to this made the soldier-lawyer less confident. Devlin said that Dr. Trent had left his son but a few hundred dollars and a rambling mortgaged home among New Hampshire hills. Young Trent had come to New York and settled down to writing detective and criminal stories for the lesser magazines. Then, suddenly, an Australian relative had died and left him a fortune. This was a lie, Devlin declared. There was no such relation. It was done to explain his sudden giving up of writing and living in a far better style.

Trent owned, so the detective asserted, a beautiful camp on Kennebago Lake in Maine, two automobiles and sundry other aids to a comfortable existence which his writings would never have gained for him.

Still disbelieving, Captain Sutton was shown the dying depositions of an English soldier who had been butler to a New York millionaire whose house had been robbed. Austin, the butler, had seen Trent and assumed him to be a friend of his employer. He had recognized him when British and American troops were brigaded side by side and had told only Devlin a detective who had worked on the case.

Evidence at last seemed conclusive. Devlin, dying in hospital wished for the downfall of a man who had beaten him in three big cases. The adjutant remembered well one case when the Dangerfield ruby worth almost two hundred thousand dollars was taken.

Private Trent seemed quite calm. He assured his officer that these charges were preposterous. "What else could they be?" he had asked.

"They might be the truth," Sutton had said gravely.

He remembered the visit to the hospital where Devlin lay dying but eager to sign the testimony he had woven about his enemy. The ending of the incident was very curious. It made him like Devlin after all. When Devlin knew his end was come and the last rites of his church had been administered he had given up his plans for revenge. He had looked into the fearless eyes of the master criminal and he had seen there an unconquerable spirit which he admired. And so, with his last effort he had torn up the written evidence and declared that Anthony Trent was not the man; that it was all a mistake.

Sutton remembered the relief with which he had put his hand on the shoulder of the younger man and that he had said, "Trent, you were in luck this time. Don't take a chance again."

After the signing of peace he had determined to look up the old athlete and see if he could not offer him such opportunities that he could go straight. Sutton was a man of immense wealth and had mining properties in South America which needed supervision.

And now to find that Trent was aboard the ship and at the last moment had risked a broken limb in order to escape. It was not likely that a man who feared detection so much dare rely on the generosity of a man who knew his secret. There were probably rewards for his capture which, in the aggregate, offered immense inducement to deliver Anthony Trent to justice. How was Trent to know that Sutton the adjutant was financially secure enough to make the sacrifice? Undoubtedly he had seen Sutton and made the desperate leap.

Sutton determined to safeguard his interests. The baggage for instance, that should not be searched. There might be in it evidence as damaging as that which the brothers of Joseph put into the younger's sack. It would be far better to see the captain and make a friend of him. Why had not Trent been a better reader of character and recognized that in Captain Sutton he had a friend?

Sutton did not know that long ago Trent had seen that in the rich lawyer there was one whom he need not fear. Few were more skilled than the master criminal in the reading of those signs by which men reveal for a second or so the depths of their natures.

Anthony Trent had not jumped from the rails of the big ship because he had seen Sutton. He had no idea his old adjutant was on board. He had not jumped ashore because of any person on the liner. He took his reckless leap because among those who waited on the pier he heard the voice of the one man he feared, the man he had been trying to find since that day in France when death seemed at last to have claimed him.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MAN IN THE DARK

One day late in October when the Allies were moving with such speed against the enemy Private Trent had been struck with a piece of shrapnel. There was the recognized noise of the flying fragments and then a sudden flaming pain in his left arm followed by black unconsciousness.

He came back very slowly to the realization that he was not seriously hurt. His wounded arm was bandaged. He was still rather weak and lay back for some moments before opening his eyes. Then he opened them to meet only a wall of unrelieved night. "I'm blind!" he thought.

Groping about him he felt dank earth, the earth he had been accustomed to in the trenches, slimy, sweating clay. With his undamaged hand he felt the bandages that were about his head. There was no wound near his eyes; but that would not be necessary, for he had seen so many cases of blindness due to the bursting of high explosives. It might be temporary blindness or it might be permanent.

There was a great silence about him. Gone were the myriad sounds of war that had enveloped him before his injury. Perhaps he was deaf, too. "My God!" he groaned thinking of this new infliction and then grew a little less miserable when he recognized the sound of his own voice. Well, blindness was enough! Never again to see the green earth or the morning sun stealing down the lake where his home was. At a little past thirty to see only through the eyes of others. No more golf, no more hunting and fishing trips, and of course no more of those taut-nerved nights when he, a single human being, pitted his strength and intelligence against the forces of organized society—and won. There was small consolation in thinking that now, at all events, Anthony Trent, master criminal would not be caught. He would go down in police history as the most mysterious of those criminals who have set the detectives by the heels.

A little later he told himself he would rather be caught, sentenced to a term of life imprisonment if only he might see a tiny ribbon of blue sky from his cell window, than condemned to this eternal blackness.

Then the miracle happened. A few yards from him came a scratching sound and then a sudden flame. And in that moment he could see the profile of a man

bending over a cigarette. He was not blind!

"Who are you?" Anthony Trent cried not yet able to comprehend this lifting of what he felt was a sentence imposed. "Where am I?"

The man who answered spoke with one of those cultivated English voices which Trent had once believed to be the mark of decadence or effeminacy, a belief the bloody fields of France had swept from him.

"Well," said the man slowly, "I really don't see that it matters much now to anyone what my name may be."

"The only thing that matters to me," Trent cried with almost hysterical fervor, "is that I'm not blind as I thought I was."

The answer of the unknown man was singular; but Trent, who was not far from hysteria on account of bodily pain and the mental anguish through which he had been, did not take note of it.

"I don't think that matters much either," the voice of the man in the dark commented.

"Then where are we?" Trent demanded.

"There again I can't help you much," the unknown answered. "This *was* a common or garden dug-out."

"*Was*," Trent repeated, "What is it now?"

"A tomb," the stranger told him puffing at his cigarette. "I found you bleeding to death and I bandaged your arm. I was knocked out myself and your men and mine had gone on and there was never a Red Cross man or anyone else in sight so I carried you into this dug-out. All of a sudden some damned H. E. blocked up the opening. When the dust settled I explored with my few matches. Our tomb is sealed up—absolutely. I've often heard of it happening before. It looks as if a house had been lifted up and planted right on this dug-out."

"So that's why you said it didn't matter much if I could see or not?"

"Does it?" the man asked shortly.

"Have you another match?" Trent asked presently. "I'd like to explore."

"No good," the other retorted. "I've been all round the damned place and there isn't a chance, except that the thing may collapse and bury us."

"Then we are to starve to death without an effort?"

"We shall asphyxiate, we shan't starve. Don't you notice how heavy the air is? Presently we shall get drowsy. Already I feel light headed and inclined to talk."

"Then talk," Trent said, "Anything is better than sitting here and waiting. The air is heavy; I notice it now. I suppose I'm going to be delirious. Talk, damn you, talk. Why not tell me your name? What difference can it make to you now? Are you afraid? Have you done things you're ashamed of? Why let that worry you since it only proves you're human."

"I'm not ashamed of what I've done," the other drawled, "it's my family which persists in saying I've disgraced it."

Anthony Trent was in a strange mood. Ordinarily secretive to a degree and fearful always of dropping a hint that might draw suspicion to his ways of life, he found himself laughing in a good humored way that this English soldier should imagine he must conceal his name for fear of disgrace. Why the man was a child, a pigmy compared with Anthony Trent. He had perhaps disobeyed an autocrat father or possibly married a chorus girl instead of a blue blooded maiden.

"You've probably done nothing," said Trent. "It may be you were expelled from school or university and that makes you think you are a desperate character."

There was silence for a moment or so.

"As it happens," the unknown said, "I was expelled from Harrow and kicked out of Trinity but it isn't for that. I'm known in the army as Private William Smith of the 78th Battalion, City of London Regiment."

"I thought you were an officer," Trent said. Private Smith had the kind of voice which Trent associated with the aristocracy.

"I'm just a plain private like you," Smith said, "although the lowly rank is mine for probably far different reasons."

"I'm not so sure of that," Trent said, a trifle nettled. "I could have had a commission if I wanted it."

"I did have one," Smith returned, "but I didn't mean what I said offensively. I meant only that I dare not accept a commission."

Anthony Trent waited a moment before he answered.

"I'm not so sure of that," he said again.

The reasons for which Trent declined his commission and thereby endured

certain hardships not unconnected with sleeping quarters and noisy companionship were entirely to his credit. Always with the fear of exposure before his eyes he did not want to place odium on the status of the American officer as he would have done had screaming headlines in the papers spoken of the capture by police authorities of Lieutenant Anthony Trent the cleverest of modern crooks. But he could not bring himself to speak of this even in his present unusual mood.

"It doesn't matter now very much," Smith said laughing a little, "we shall both be called missing and the prison camps will be searched for us. In the end my family may revere my memory and yours call you its chief glory."

"I haven't a family," Trent said. "I used to be sorry for it. I'm glad now." He stopped suddenly. "Do you know," he said later, "you were laughing just now. You're either crazy or else you must have your nerve with you still."

"I may be crazy," returned Private Smith, "but I usually make my living by having my nerve with me as you call it. It has been my downfall. If I had been a good, moral child, amenable to discipline I might have commanded a regiment instead of being a 'tommy' and I might be repenting now. By the way you don't seem as depressed as one might expect. Why?"

"After a year of this war one doesn't easily lose the habit of laughing at death."

"I've had four years of it," Smith said. "I was a ranker when it broke out and saw the whole show from August 1914. On the whole what is coming will be a rest. I don't know how they manage these things in your country but in England when a man has been, well call it unwise, there is always a chance of feeling a heavy hand on one's shoulder and hearing a voice saying in one's ear, 'I arrest you in the King's name!' Very dramatic and impressive and all that sort of thing, but wearing on the nerves—very." Private Smith laughed gently, "I'm afraid you are dying in rather bad company."

"We have something in common perhaps," Trent said. He grinned to himself in the covering blackness as he said it. "Tell me, did you ever hear of Anthony Trent?"

"Never," Private Smith returned quickly. "Sorry! I suppose I ought to know all about him. What has he done?"

"He wrote stories of super-crookdom for one thing."

"That explains it," Smith asserted, "You see those stories rather bore me. I read them when I was young and innocent but now I know how extremely fictional

they are; written for the greater part, I'm informed, by blameless women in boarding houses. I like reading the real thing."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Reports of actual crimes as set forth in the newspapers. Cross-examinations of witnesses and all that, summing up of the judges and coroners' inquests. Was this Trent person really good?"

"You shall judge," said the American. "He wrote of crimes and criminals from what such actual practitioners had told him. He was for a time a police reporter on a big New York paper and had to hang around Mulberry Street. After that he tried the magazines but as editors are so remote as a rule from actual knowledge of the world's play and work, he didn't make much money at it. Finally his pet editor—a man with some human attributes—said in effect, 'I can't raise your rates; the publisher won't stand for it. If I paid decent prices he couldn't buy champagne and entertain his favorites.' This was in the era before prohibition. The human editor went on giving advice and wound up by saying, 'Why don't you do what your super-crook character does and relieve the dishonest rich of their stolen bonds? Conway Parker gets away with it, why shouldn't you?'"

"Of course he was rotting?" Private Smith asked.

"Yes," the American said, "He didn't really mean it but the thought germs fell into the right sort of broth. Anthony Trent wasn't naturally a crook but he hated having to live in a cheap boarding house and eat badly cooked meals and play on a hard-mouthed, hired, upright piano. Some ancestor had dowered him with a love of beautiful things, rugs, pictures, pottery, bronzes, music and a rather secluded life. Also he had dreams about being a great composer. He was a queer mixture. On the whole rather unbalanced I suppose. His father died and left him almost nothing. All he could do was newspaper work at first."

"You mean he actually followed the editor's advice?"

"Yes. He had certain natural gifts to aid him. He was a first rate mimic. It's a sort of gift I suppose. He had gone in for amateur theatricals at his college and done rather well. He pulled off his first job successfully but the butler saw him and did not forget. That was the trouble the butler remembered. It wasn't a big affair. It didn't make any such stir as for example as when he took the Mount Aubyn Ruby."

"I read of that," Smith returned eagerly. "He knocked out a millionaire surrounded with detectives and got away in an airplane."

"He got away but not in an airplane," replied Anthony Trent. "On the whole the unknown aviator was rather useful to him but was absolutely blameless. Then there was the case of the Apthorpe emerald. Did you hear of that?"

"Haven't I told you," Smith returned impatiently, "that I read all about things of that sort? How could I have missed that even though I was in the trenches when it happened. It was the delight of my hospital life to read about it in Reynolds Journal. It was said a woman murdered old Apthorpe for it."

"She did," Trent admitted, "and she took the emerald but Anthony Trent got it from her and fooled them all. His last big job before the United States got into the war was getting the blue-white diamond that was known as the Nizam's Diamond."

"A hundred carat stone," Smith said reverently. "By Jove, what a master! As I never heard of him of course he was never caught. They are all caught in the end, though. His day will come."

For a moment the thought that Anthony Trent's life was coming to an end before many hours had passed took the narrator from his mood of triumph into a state of depression. To have to give up everything and die in the darkness. Exit Anthony Trent for all time! And as he thought of his enemies the police toiling for the rich rewards that they would never get for apprehending him his black mood passed and Smith heard him chuckle.

"They all get caught in the end," Smith repeated, "the best of them. The doctrine of averages is against them. Your Anthony Trent is one lone man fighting against so many. He may have the luck with him so far but there's only one end to it. They got Captain Despard and he was a top-hole marauder. They got our estimable Charles Peace and they electrocuted Regan in your own country only last month and he was clever, God knows. I think I'd back your Trent man against any single opponent, but the odds are too great. The pack will pull him down and break him up some day."

Again Private Smith of the City of London regiment heard the man he had rescued from danger to present him with death, laugh a curious triumphant laugh. He had seen so much of war's terror that he supposed the man was going mad. It would perhaps be a more merciful end.

"No," said the American. "Anthony Trent will never be discovered. He will be the one great criminal who will escape to the confusion of the detectives of New York and London. *I am Anthony Trent.*"

CHAPTER THREE

THE BEGINNING OF THE SEARCH

"You?" cried Private Smith. "Ye Gods! And I haven't even a match left so I can see you before we go. I die in better company than I know." Trent could hear that he raised himself slowly and painfully to his feet. Then he heard the soldier's heels click smartly together. "Ave Cæsar—" he began. But the immortal speech of those gladiators being about to die was not finished.

There broke on Trent's astonished gaze a flash of sunlight that made him blink painfully. And the terrifying noise of high explosive hurt his ears and that swift dreadful sucking of the air that followed such explosions was about him again in its intensity. He had been dug out of his tomb for what?

The doctors thought him a very bad case. Of course he was delirious. He stuck to a ridiculous story that he was imprisoned in a tomb with one William Smith, a private in the 78th Battalion of the City of London Regiment and that H. E. had mysteriously disinterred him. H. E. did perform marvels that were seemingly against known natural laws but Private Trent was obviously suffering from shell shock.

When he was better and had been removed to a hospital far from the area of fighting he still kept to his story. One of the doctors who liked him explained that the delusion must be banished. He spoke very convincingly. He explained by latest methods that the unreal becomes real unless the patient gets a grip on himself. He said that Trent was likely to go through life trying to find a non-existent friend and ruining his prospects in the doing of it. "I'll admit," he said at the end of his harangue, "that you choose your friend's name well."

"Why do you say that?" Trent asked.

"Because the muster roll of the 78th shows no fewer than twenty-seven William Smiths and they're all of 'em dead. That battalion got into the thick of every scrap that started."

Trent said no more but made investigations on his own behalf. Unfortunately there was none to help him. The ambulance that picked him up was shelled and he had been taken from its bloody interior the only living soul of the crew and

passengers. None lived who could tell him what became of his companion, the man to whom he had revealed his identity, the man who possessed his secret to the full.

When he was discharged from the service and was convalescing in Bournemouth he satisfied himself that the unknown Smith had died. Again luck was with Anthony Trent. The one man—with the exception of Sutton whose lips he was sure were sealed—who could make a clear hundred thousand dollars reward for his capture was removed from the chance of doing it even as the knowledge was offered him. The words that he would have spoken, "Hail Cæsar, I, being about to die, salute thee!" had come true in that blinding flash that had brought Anthony Trent back to the world.

But even with this last narrow escape to sober him Trent was not certain whether the old excitement would call and send him out to pit himself against society. He had no grievance against wealthy men as such. What he had wanted of theirs he had taken. He was now well enough off to indulge in the life, as a writer, he had wanted. He had taken his part in the great war as a patriot should and was returning to his native land decorated by two governments. Again and again as he sat at the balcony of his room at the Royal Bath Hotel and looked over the bay to the cliffs of Swanage he asked himself this question—was he through with the old life or not? He could not answer. But he noticed that when he boarded the giant Cunarder he looked about him with the old keenness, the professional scrutiny, the eagerness of other days.

He tipped the head steward heavily and then consulted the passenger list and elected to sit next to a Mrs. Colliver wife of a Troy millionaire. She was a dull lady and one who lived to eat, but he had heard her boasting to a friend on the boat train that her husband had purchased a diamond tiara in Bond Street which would eclipse anything Troy had to offer. Mrs. Colliver dreaded to think of the duty that would have to be paid especially as during the war less collars were used than in normal times.

It was with a feeling of content that Anthony Trent paced the deck as the liner began her voyage home. Two years was a long time to be away and he felt that a long lazy month in his Maine camp would be the nearest thing to the perfect state that he could dream of when he heard, distinctly, without a chance of being mistaken, the voice of Private William Smith shouting a goodbye from the pier.

Trent had a curiously sensitive ear. He had never, for example, failed to recognize a voice even distorted over telephone wires. William Smith had one of

those distinctive voices of the same timbre and inflection of those of his caste but with a certain quality, that Trent could not now stop to analyze, which stamped it as different.

All Trent's old caution returned to him. It was possible that the man whom he had supposed dead had come to see the Cunarder off without knowing Anthony Trent was aboard. But the passenger lists could be inspected and even now the law might have been set in motion that would take him handcuffed from the vessel at quarantine to be locked up in a prison. He was worth a hundred thousand dollars to any informant and he could not doubt that the so-called Smith had gone wrong because of the lust for money to pay his extravagances. It was inevitably the reason in men of the class of Smith and Despard.

He was obsessed with the determination to find out. He would track the man he had known as Smith and find out without letting him be any the wiser. A hundred ideas of disguise flashed across the quick-working brain. He tried to tell himself that it was likely that the voice might have proceeded from an utter stranger. But this was false comfort he knew. It was Smith of the 78th City of London regiment who was on the pier already growing inch by inch farther away.

The second officer tried to stop him and a passenger grasped him by the arm as he climbed the rails but they tried vainly. He dropped as lightly as he could and picked himself up a little dazed and looked around. He could see a hundred faces peering down at him from the moving decks overhead. He could see a crowd of people streaming down the pier to the city. And among them was the man he sought.

"One moment, sir," said a policeman restraining him, "what's the meaning of this?"

"Just come ashore," Trent smiled. The policeman loomed over him huge, stolid, ominous. The man looked from Trent in evening dress and without hat or overcoat, to the shadowy ship now on her thousand league voyage and he shook his head. It was an irregular procedure, he told himself and as such open to grave suspicion. But he was courteous. Trent was a gentleman and no look of fear came to his face when the officer spoke. The man remained close to Trent when he approached the few groups of people still on the pier. To every man in the groups the stranger contrived to ask a question. Of one he asked the time, of another the best hotel in Liverpool.

"It may seem very strange," said Trent pleasantly to the perplexed policeman,

"but I did an unaccountable thing. I thought I saw a man who was in the trenches with me in France during the war and saved my life and I sprang over the side to find him and now he's gone."

The policeman waved a white gloved hand to the people who had already left the landing stage.

"Your friend may be there, sir," he said.

"You don't want to detain me, then?" Trent cried.

"It's dark, sir," said the policeman, "and I could hardly be expected to remember which way you went."

At the end of the short pier was a taxicab stand and a space where private machines might park. Anthony Trent arrived in time to see a huge limousine driven by a liveried chauffeur with a footman by his side begin to climb the step grade to the street. As it passed him he could swear he heard Smith's voice from within, saying, "It's the most rotten luck that I should be a younger son and not get the chances Geoffrey does."

Trent could not see the number plate of the big machine. He could note only a coat of arms on the door surmounted by a coronet. He had no time to ask if any of the dock laborers knew the occupants. He sprang into the sole taxi that occupied the stand and commanded the driver to overtake the larger car. So eager was the man to earn the double fare that he was halted by a policeman outside the Atlantic Riverside Station. The time taken up by explanations permitted the coronetted limousine to escape.

In so big a city as Liverpool a car could be lost easily but the sanguine taxi driver, certain at least of getting his fare, persisted in driving all over the city and its suburbs until he landed his passenger tired and disappointed at the Midland Hotel.

On the whole Anthony Trent had rarely spent such unprofitable hours. He had paid a premium for his state room on a fast boat and was now stranded in a strange city without baggage. And of course he was worried. He had believed himself alone to have been rescued when the high explosive had taken the roof from his tomb. Now it seemed probable that the British soldier, Smith, had also made his escape.

Although it was quite possible Trent was following a stranger whose voice was like that of Private Smith, he had yet to find that stranger and make sure of it. Trent was not one to run away from danger.

As he sat in the easy chair before the window he told himself again and again that it was probable the voice he identified with the unknown Smith was like that of a thousand other men of his class. He had acted stupidly in jumping from a ship's rails and risking his limbs. And how much more unwisely had he acted in that black silence when he was led to cast aside his habitual silence and talk freely to a stranger. In effect he had put himself in the keeping of another man without receiving any confidence in return. He blamed the wound, the shock and a thousand physical causes for it but the fact was not to be banished by that. Smith knew Anthony Trent as a master criminal while Anthony Trent only knew that Smith has enlisted under another name because he had disgraced his own. It might easily be that this unknown Smith was like a hundred other "gentlemen rankers" who could only be accused of idleness and instability. But Anthony Trent stirred uneasily when he recalled the eagerness with which Smith spoke of some of those crimes Anthony Trent had committed. Smith knew about them, admired the man who planned them. Trent on thinking it over for the hundredth time believed Smith was indeed a crook and as such dangerous to him.

Few men believe in intuition, guess work or "hunches" as do those who work outside the law. Again and again Anthony Trent had found his "hunches" were correct. Once or twice he had saved himself by implicitly acting on them in apparent defiance of reason. At the end of many hours during which he tried to tell himself he was mistaken and this voice owned by someone else, he gave it up. He knew it was Smith.

To find out by what name the Smith of the dug-out went by in his own country must be the first step. The second would be to shadow him, observe his way of life and go through his papers. So far all he had to go upon was a quick glance at an automobile of unknown make upon whose panels a coat of arms was emblazoned surmounted by a crown. Had he possessed a knowledge of heraldry he could have told at a glance whether the coronet was that of a baron, viscount, earl, marquis or duke and so narrowed down the search. And had he observed the coat of arms and motto he could have made certain, for all armorial bearings are taxable and registered.

To try to comb the counties of Lancashire and Cheshire for the occupants of an unknown car would take time and might lead to police interest in his activities.

Before he retired to his bed a courteous agent of the Cunard Company had called upon him to inquire at what he was dissatisfied that he left the ship so suddenly. To this agent he told the same story—the true one—that he had told the policeman.

The purser was able to inform the group in the smoking room ere it retired.

"I don't believe that for a moment," Colliver declared.

"Why not?" asked the Harvard professor, "don't you know that truth in the mouth of an habitual liar is often a potent and confounding weapon?"

"Maybe," Colliver said dryly, "but I'm an honest man and I'd like to know why you think that man Trent was an habitual liar."

"I don't know," the professor answered amiably. "I always think in terms of crime on board ship."

"There's no need to on this ship," the purser said testily.

"I hope not," said the professor, "but coming back from the far East last year on another line I made friends with a man much of the build of Mr. Colliver here. I did not like him very much. He had only prejudices and no opinions. A typical successful man of business I presume."

"Thank you," said Mr. Colliver finding one of his own neck adornments growing tight.

"He was murdered," the theologian went on, "because he carried some diamonds for his wife in a pocket. Some thieves found it out."

"What thieves?" Colliver demanded.

"It is one of the undiscovered murders on the high seas," the professor said placidly.

"Mighty awkward for you," Colliver said, still angry.

"Fortunately I had an alibi," said the other, "I was violently ill of *mal de mer*."

"Mighty convenient," Colliver commented.

Later he asked the purser's private opinion of the professor. Myers Irving joined with Colliver in resenting the professor's attack on business men.

"Ordinarily," Colliver said, "I don't like advertising men, but you're different. They're like vultures after my account as a rule."

"You'd have to force your account on me," said Myers Irving seriously. "I'm not an ordinary business or advertising man. Primarily I'm a business builder. I leave nothing to underlings. I direct everything personally. I take few accounts. If my clients don't make good on their end of it I give them up. I make money for my clients. I have no other ambition. I believe in advertising. It might be that fellow

Trent jumped ashore for some publicity stunt. Supposing he said he did it because he forgot to order some special dish at the Adelphi or Midland? Such a dish would get more publicity than you could shake a stick at. But I'm not here to talk shop."

Colliver watched the trim advertising man saunter off.

"A bright boy," commented the Troy magnate, "maybe he'll be surprised before this trip is over. Maybe he'll have to talk shop."

Captain Sutton listened to the purser's explanation as though they were entirely reasonable. But all the time he said to himself, "why need he have been afraid of me?"

Anthony Trent bought himself a suit of clothes in the city and set out for London on the ten o'clock train. An Army List showed him the names of the officers of the City of London Regiment. He decided to call upon the adjutant, a Captain Edgell. It took him little time to find out that Edgell had resumed his former occupation of stock broker and was living with his family at Banstead in Surrey.

Edgell was a golfer of distinction and before the war had been a scratch man at the club on the Downs. Five years absence had sent his handicap up a bit but he was engaged in pulling it down when a golfing stranger from the United States giving the name of Trent who had the club's privileges for the day asked him if he could introduce him to a member for a round of golf. It so happened that most of the men waiting to play were ruddy faced gentlemen with handicaps of from twelve up to twenty-four. They did not excite Edgell.

"Glad to," he said heartily. He had been brigaded with Americans and liked them. "Do you play a strong game?"

"I have a two handicap at Wykasol," Trent said.

"Good business," cried Edgell, "we'll play together."

They played. They became intimate during the game and Edgell learned with regret that Trent was not one of the many American business men engaged in their work in London. Trent beat the stockbroker on the twenty-third hole.

"If I could only putt like that," said Edgell, "I'd have a chance for the open championship."

"I wish I could drive a ball the length you do," Trent said not to be outdone.

"Of course you'll have dinner with us," the stockbroker said. "We don't dress for it any more since the war so you've no excuse. I learned to make cocktails from some of your fellows in France so you ought to feel at home."

"As home used to be," Trent corrected. "I'd love to come if I'm not putting you out."

Edgell's home was a half-timbered house standing in an acre of lawn and flower garden. It was thoroughly comfortable. There seemed to be a number of children but they did not obtrude. Trent could see them playing in different parts of the garden, the little ones with their nurse and the elder playing clock golf on a perfect green in front of the house. Always the quiet secure atmosphere of a home such as this brought to Anthony Trent a vision of what he had lost or rather of what he could never obtain.

Little six-year old Marjorie Edgell liked Trent on sight and liking him announced it openly. She told him what a great man her father was and how he had medals and things. Finally she asked the visitor whether he would not like to have medals. It was the opportunity for which Trent had been looking. Ordinarily averse to talking of himself, he wanted to get on to the subject of the war with the late adjutant of the seventy-eighth.

"I have," he told little Marjorie.

"Daddy," she shrieked in excitement, "Mr. Trent has medals too."

"So you were in the big thing?" Edgell asked. "Honestly wouldn't you rather play golf? I can get all the excitement I want on the Stock Exchange to last me the rest of my life. I enlisted in a city regiment as a private and I left it as adjutant after four years and I'm all for the piping ways of peace. My battalion was the 78th and we always had the luck with us. Whenever we got anywhere something started."

"The seventy-eighth battalion," Trent commented, "I had a pal in your battalion, a pal who saved my life. I'm going to look him up next week. Curious that I should be talking to his adjutant. William Smith was his name. I wonder if you knew him?"

"I wonder if you know how many William Smiths and John Smiths are lying in France and Flanders with little wooden crosses over them?"

"This one came through all right," Trent said.

"At least ten William Smiths came through," Edgell asserted. "I think I remember them all. Which was your man? Describe him."

Trent lighted his cigarette very deliberately. To be asked to describe a man he had claimed as a pal and yet had never seen face to face was not easy.

"I think you would recognize my William Smith," Trent answered, "if I told you he was not really William Smith at all but a man who had assumed that name as a disguise."

"I understand," Edgell exclaimed, "a slight blond man very erect and rather supercilious with what the other men called a lah-de-dah voice. I remember him well. I had him up before me for punishment many times. Little infractions of discipline which he constantly committed. Used to rile me by his superior airs. Quite a mysterious person. Saved your life did he? Well, he had all the pluck a man need have."

"I want to thank him for it," Trent said, "but I've only known him as William Smith. The War Office people tell me he was demobilized three months back and they have no address. If you'll tell me, in confidence, his real name I can find him out."

"But my dear chap," said Captain Edgell, "I don't know it. None of us knew it. My sergeant-major swore he'd been a regular and an officer but that's mere conjecture. He *was* a regular now I come to think of it and sent to us when his own regiment was wiped out in the Autumn of 1914."

"Who would be able to tell me?" Trent asked eagerly.

"The colonel knew," Edgell declared, "I sent him up to the old man for punishment once. The colonel looked at him as if he could not believe his eyes. 'You are down here as William Smith,' he said."

"'That is my name, sir,' said Smith."

"Then the colonel knew him?" Trent asked.

"Undoubtedly. I was told to leave them alone. I should like to have asked Colonel Langley but he is one of those men it's hard to approach. Doesn't mean to be standoffish but gives that impression. One of those very tall men who seem to be looking through you and taking no interest whatsoever in the proceeding."

"I want to find out," Trent said, "could you give me a letter of introduction?"

"Glad to," Edgell replied, "but he's like that native song bird of yours, the clam.

He is a silent fighter. The men respected him and went to their deaths for him but they would have felt it disrespectful to love him. He lives at a place called Dereham Old Hall in Norfolk. A great county swell with magnificent shooting. One of those places royalty stays every year for a week at the partridges. Always thought it a funny thing he was given the command of a lot of cockneys considering he was Sandhurst and Tenth Hussars till he married and chucked the service, but he made good as you fellows say."

While Captain Edgell was writing the letter Trent had leisure to reflect that the identity of Private William Smith might remain permanently veiled in obscurity if Colonel Langley refused to talk. If the colonel was not to be lured to disclose what Trent needed to know, the American would be left in a very unpleasant position. Until he knew whether his "hunch" was right or wrong he could never again sleep in peace with the name Anthony Trent as his own. He was in danger every minute. Smith might have tracked him to the liner to have him arrested in America. That he had left the boat might easily be known. Therefore in order to win twenty thousand sovereigns English money, or a half million francs in the coinage of the country where the two had spent weary months, Smith had only to start the hue and cry in England. The ports would be watched. In the end they would get him.

There was no escape over the borders to Mexico or dash to safety over the Canadian frontier as he had planned to do under similar conditions of peril in his own country. Here on an island they had got him. He was weaving evidence that could be used against him by making this display of interest in Private Smith. Captain Edgell could give testimony that would not help his case.

"Here you are," said Edgell genially, "I've taken the liberty of calling you an old golfing pal. I've done all I could but Colonel Langley is not easy of approach. I'm not at all hopeful."

"It isn't really serious," Trent explained after thanking him, "but I'd like to see him again. He did undoubtedly save my life and carried me into safety. Quite a physical feat for one of his weight. What do you suppose he weighs?"

"About ten stone seven," the other answered.

That was one hundred and forty-seven pounds. Trent was gradually building up a portrait of the man he feared.

"And about five feet seven in height?" he hinted.

"That's the man," Edgell asserted. "Quite a good looking chap, too, if you care

for the type. Rather too effeminate for me although, God knows, he is a man."

It was not easy to see Colonel Langley, D.S.O. Trent knew that county magnates such as he was did not see everyone who desired an interview. He stayed at a good hotel in Norwich and enclosed Captain Edgell's letter in one of his own.

The answer came back in the third person. It was favorable and punctiliously polite. Colonel Langley would be happy to see Mr. Anthony Trent at eleven o'clock on a certain morning. Dereham Old Hall was a dozen miles from Norwich, city of gardens, city of Norman cathedrals and many quaintly named parish churches. Trent hired a motor car and drove through the leafy Norfolk lanes.

Colonel Langley's residence was the work of Inigo Jones and a perfect example of the Renaissance style. It stood at least a mile from the high road. The lodge keeper telephoned to the house and Trent's driver was permitted to drive through the deer park and pull up before the great front doors.

The room in which Anthony Trent waited for the colonel was evidently a sort of smoking room. Trophies of the chase adorned the walls. It was evident Langley was a hunter of great game and had shot in all parts of the globe from Alaska to Africa.

He was a man of six feet four in height, grizzled and wore a small clipped military moustache. It was not a hard face, Trent noted, but that of a man who had always been removed from pursuits or people who wearied him. There was a sense of power in the face and that inevitable keenness of eye which a man who commanded a regiment could not fail to have acquired.

He bowed his visitor to a seat. He did not offer to shake hands.

"You have come," he said politely, "from my former adjutant to ask a question concerning the regiment which he writes he could not tell you. I can think of nothing to which this would apply. He had every thread of the business in his hands."

"Captain Edgell could not tell me the real name of one of his men who enlisted under the name of William Smith."

There was no change of expression on the rather cold face of the lord of broad acres.

"And what made Captain Edgell assume I could help you, sir?"

"I don't know all the particulars but he was certain you knew his real identity."

"If I do," Colonel Langley returned, "I shall keep that knowledge to myself. I regret that you have had this trouble for nothing."

"William Smith," Trent told the other, "saved my life. I want to thank him for it. Is there anything odd in that? You alone can help me so I come to you. I want to help William Smith. I have money which I should not have been able to enjoy but for him."

"You imagine, then, that William Smith is penniless, is that it?"

"He told me he was," Trent answered promptly. "I can offer him an opportunity to make good money in New York."

He looked at Colonel Langley as he said it. If Smith was indeed of a great family the idea of being offered money and a job must amuse the one who knew his real name and estate. Sure enough a flicker of a smile passed over the landowner's face.

"I am happy to inform you," he said, "that Mr. Smith is living at home with his family financially secure enough not to need your aid."

"That," said Trent deliberately, "is more than you can say."

"I am not in the habit of hearing my word doubted," the older man said acidly.

"I am not doubting it," Trent said suavely, "I mean merely to remind you that he may need my aid although it may not be monetary aid. You will remember that there have been passages in Mr. Smith's life which have not been entirely creditable."

"Are you claiming to be friend or accomplice?" Langley snapped.

"Let us say friend and confidant," Trent smiled. "Perhaps he made certain confessions to me—"

"To you also?" Langley cried.

In that moment he had said too much. During that hour when Edgell left the private alone with his commanding officer the officer had obtained his confidence and very likely a confession. He saw the soldier throw a quick glance at one of those old safes which disguised themselves as necessary articles of furniture. Trent's eyes dwelt on it no longer than the owner's did, but he saw enough. Colonel Langley had told him plainly that the confession was locked in the safe which looked like a black oak sideboard on which decanters and a humidor were arranged.

"To me also," Trent repeated, "and it is because of it that I knew he did what he did for the reason he needed more money than a younger son could expect. Colonel Langley, I only want his real name. I want to help him. That's why I spoke of offering him money."

"You will be glad to know," the colonel answered, "that Mr. Smith is at present in no need of money."

"You mean," Trent said sharply, "that you will not give me his real name and address?"

"I cannot tell you," Colonel Langley answered. "If you like I will write and say you have called and give him the opportunity to do as he pleases."

Trent reflected for a moment. If Smith were not already aware of his presence in England it would be very unwise to advertise it. He was beginning to see he had been less than cautious in calling upon Edgell and Colonel Langley under his own name.

"I need not trouble you to do that," he said, "if you wish to conceal his name it is no doubt your privilege and he will do well enough without my thanks."

He made his chauffeur drive home at a temperate speed. The man knew all about the Langleys and was glad to tell the affable stranger. As they passed through the gates several carriages laden with men and some station carts filled with baggage passed into the gravelled drive.

"Gentlemen come for the shooting," the chauffeur volunteered. "Tomorrow is September the first when partridge shooting commences. The colonel is a great

shot and the King comes here often and the German Emperor has shot over those turnips in the old days. This is supposed to be the best partridge shoot in the kingdom and the birds are fine and strong this year—not too much rain in the Spring."

"I suppose there'll be a regular banquet tonight," said Trent.

"Tomorrow night's the night," said the chauffeur grinning, "tonight they all go to bed early so as to be up to an early breakfast and have their shooting eyes. The colonel's terrible man if any of the guns only wound their birds. They've got to shoot well tomorrow if they want to come here again. I know because my uncle is one of the keepers."

The man was surprised at the tip his American passenger handed him when they reached the Maids' Head Hotel, and charmed with his affability. He told his fellows that Trent was a real gentleman. He did not know that his unsolicited confidence had given the American a hint upon which he would be quick to act.

As Trent had been driven along the Dereham Road approach to Norwich he had seen a little cycle shop where gasoline was sold and repairs made. The war had sent English people of moderate circumstances back to the bicycle again and only the wealthy could keep cars or buy petrol at seventy-five cents a gallon. In his drive he had seen several people of seemingly good position pedalling cheerfully through the lanes. The chauffeur had touched his hat to one and spoken of him as rector of a nearby parish. Cycles were to be hired everywhere and the prevailing rate seemed to be sixpence an hour or three and six for the day.

After dinner Anthony Trent found his way back to the little shop in the Dereham Road. "The Wensum Garage" it proudly called itself. Here he said he wished to hire a bicycle for a day. As dusk fell he was pedalling along to Dereham Old Hall. Few people were about and those he passed evinced no curiosity. Avoiding the main road which passed in front of the lodge and gates by which he had entered, he hid his wheel between two hay stacks which almost touched. Then he made his way through the kitchen gardens to the rear of the house. It was now ten o'clock and the servants' part of the big house seemed deserted. Already the lights in the upper stories were evidence that some guests were retiring to rest well before the "glorious first."

From the shelter of the rose garden he could see a half score of men and women on the great terrace in front of the splendid house. He could see that they were all in evening dress. In a mosquitoless country this habit of walking up and down

the long stone terraces was a common practice after dinner. Trent came so near to the guests that he could hear them talking. The conversation was mainly about to-morrow's prospects. He learned there was little disease among the birds, that they were phenomenally strong on the wing and hadn't been shot over to any extent since 1914. Some guests deplored the fact that dancing was taboo on this night of nights but it was the Langley tradition and they must bend to it.

"Think of it," he heard a woman say, laughing, "lights out at twelve! How primitive and delightful." She yawned a little. "I'm looking forward to it; we all stay up too late."

"Good night, Duchess," he heard the man say. "Sleep well and pray I may be in form."

"Duchess!" In the old days Anthony Trent would have thrilled at the title for it meant invariably jewels of price and the gathering of the very rich. But he was waiting outside the masterpiece of Inigo Jones not for any of those precious glittering stones for which he had sacrificed all his prospects of fame and honor but for the documents which he believed were hidden in the iron box, that ridiculous "pete" covered with black English oak. It was another of the "hunches" which had come to him. He had never been more excited about any of the many jobs he had undertaken.

As he sat among the roses waiting for time to pass he reflected that the few failures that had been his had not been attended by any danger. He had lost the pearls that were wont to encircle the throat of a great opera singer because her maid had chosen an awkward hour to prosecute her amour with a chauffeur. The diamonds of the Mexican millionaire's lady were lost to him because the house took fire while he was examining the combination of the safe. But they would wait. He would yet have them both. The booty for which he had come tonight was more precious than anything he had ever tried for. It was probably the key to safety that he sought. Trent did not doubt that there was a document in the safe which would enable him to hold something over the head of Private William Smith.

He waited until twelve had struck from the stable clock and the terrace had been deserted a half-hour. To open the doors leading from the terrace was simple. Anthony Trent always carried with him on business bent two strips of tool steel with a key-blade at each end. With these two "T" and "V" patterns he could open the world's locks. A nine inch jimmy was easy to secrete. This was of the highest quality of steel and looked to the uninitiated very much like a chisel. But it

differed from a chisel by having at its other end two brass plates set at right angles to one another. These could be adjusted to what angles were needed by turning countersunk screw bolts. It was the ideal tool for yale spring locks.

He did not need it here. The doors opened at will with the "V" pattern skeleton key. Great oriental rugs deadened sound and the boards of the house were old, seasoned and silent. He found his way to the room in which the colonel had received him with little difficulty. First of all he opened the window and saw that he could spring clear out of it at a bound and land in a bed of flowers only three feet below. Then he came to the antiquated safe. The combinations were ridiculously easy. His trained ear caught the faint sounds as he turned the lever easily. These told him exactly the secret of the combination. It was not two minutes work to open the doors. An inner sheeting of steel confronted him but was opened by his jimmy. It was not safe to turn on the electric lights. In so big an establishment with so many outdoor servants there might be many to remark an unexpected illumination. His little torch showed him all he wanted to know.

Colonel Langley had the soldiers' neatness. There were few valuables in the safe. They would be presumably in his banker's strong boxes. There were packets of letters tied up and one long envelope. On it was inscribed, "Not to be Opened. In case of my death this must be destroyed by my heir, Reginald Langley." On the envelope was the date, July 27, 1918, and the single word, "Ladigny."

Ladigny was a little village in France forever memorable by the heroic stand of the City of London regiment when it lost so terribly and refused to retreat. Trent opened the envelope in such a way that no trace of the operation was seen. Then for ten minutes he read steadily. Almost a half hour was expended in copying part of it in a note book. Then the envelope was resealed and the safe closed. As he had worn gloves there was no fear of incriminating finger prints. He did not think anyone would notice that a jimmy had been used. Then he closed the safe and its outer doors of black oak.

He permitted himself the luxury of a cigarette. He had done a good night's work. If Private William Smith had sufficient evidence to place Anthony Trent behind the bars the master criminal had sufficient certain knowledge now to shut the mouth of the man he was tracking. Who would have thought a man reared in such a family would have fallen so low! It is a human failure to make comparisons whereby others invariably shine with a very weak light, but Anthony Trent was saying no more than the truth when he told himself that with Smith's opportunities he would never have taken to his present calling.

With Smith's opportunities he would be sitting in a big room like this and sitting in it without fear of interruption. The strain of the last few days had not been agreeable and this strain must grow in intensity as he grew older. It was always in such peaceful surroundings as these that Trent felt the bitterness of crime even when successful.

He stopped suddenly short in his musing and crushed the bright tip of his cigarette into blackness beneath his foot. Someone was fumbling with the doorhandle, very quietly as though anxious not to disturb him. He cursed the carelessness that had allowed him to leave it unlocked. He had not behaved in a professional way at all. Very cautiously he rose to his feet, meaning to leave by the open window when the door opened. Trent sank back into the shadow of the big chair. To make a dash for the window would mean certain detection. To stay motionless might mean he could escape later. Similar immobility had saved him ere this.

The intruder closed the door and his sharp ears told him it was locked. Then a soft-treading form moved slowly through the dim light and closed the window, shut off his avenue of escape, and pulled across it two curtains which shut out all light. There were two other high windows in the room and across each one was pulled the light-excluding curtains. Then there was a click and the room sprang into brilliance.

Anthony Trent saw the intruder at the same moment the intruder stared into his face.

It was a girl in evening dress, a beautiful girl with chestnut hair and a delicious profile. She wore an elaborate evening gown of a delicate blue and carried in her hand a fan made of a single long ostrich plume. Her hair was elaborately coiffured. She was, in fine, a woman of the *beau monde*, a fitting guest in such a house as this. But what was she doing in this room at one o'clock at night when the rest of the household had long been abed?

The girl saw a slender but strongly built man of something over thirty with a pale, clean-shaven face, shrewd almost hard eyes and a masterful nose. He looked like a rising English barrister certain at some time to be a judge or at the least a King's Counsel. He was dressed in a well cut suit of dark blue with a pin stripe. He wore brown shoes and silk socks. She noted he had long slender hands perfectly kept.

He rose to his feet and smiled at her a little quizzically.

"Really," he said, "you almost frightened me. I was sitting in the dark making

plans for the glorious 'first,' which has been here almost an hour, when I heard you trying to open the door."

There was no doubt in her mind but that he was one of the guests who had arrived from London on the late train and had not changed to evening dress. There was a train due at Thorpe station at half past ten and the motor trip would take forty minutes more.

"I had no idea anyone was here," she said truthfully, "or I shouldn't have come. You see one can't sleep early even if one is sent to bed as we all were tonight." She glanced at the clock. "I'm not shooting tomorrow but if you are why don't you turn in? You know Colonel Langley is a fearful martinet where the shooting is concerned and insists that every bird is killed cleanly."

It was plain that she wished to get rid of him. Trent was frankly puzzled. The girl had shown no fear or nervousness. Ordinarily the conventions would have had their innings and she would have hesitated at the possibility of being found alone with a good looking man at such an hour. She would have excused herself and left him in the belief that he was a guest she would meet tomorrow at dinner and dance with after it. But she showed no such intention. He knew enough about women to see that she had no intention of waiting for the pleasure of a friendly chat. She had rather a haughty type of face and spoke with that quick imperious manner which he had observed in British women of rank or social importance.

"I have neuralgia," he said amiably, "and I prefer to sit here than go to bed. Perhaps you left something here? Can I help you to find it?"

"I came for a book. Colonel Langley was talking about some African hunting story your Mr. Roosevelt wrote."

So she knew him for an American. Well, she would find the American not easily to be gulled. There came to him the memory of another night in Fifth Avenue when a woman who seemed to be of fashion and position had so completely fooled him and had been left in possession of a large sum of currency.

He moved toward a bookcase in which were a collection of books on fishing and shooting.

"'African Game Trails,'" he said, "here it is."

There was no doubt in his mind that the look she threw at him was not one of complete amiability. She wanted him to go. He asked himself why. It would have been easy for her to go and leave him, and the best way out of the difficulty, unless she had come for one specific purpose. If she had come for something

concealed in the room and needed it badly enough she would try and wait until he went. Trent was certain she had no suspicion as to his own mission. In so big a house as Dereham Old Hall fifty guests could be entertained easily and it was unlikely she should know even half of them. He had observed that it was not the fashion in England to introduce indiscriminately as in his own country. Guests were introduced to their immediate neighbors; but that appalling custom whereby one unfortunate is expected to memorize the names of all present at a gulp was not popular. Because she did not know him would not lead to suspicion. He was in no danger. Even a servant coming in would see in him only a friend of his employer.

"Thank you," she said, taking the book with an appearance of interest. "Do you know I never thought to see Americans at Dereham Old Hall with the single exception of Reginald's old friend Conington Warren. Colonel Langley is so conservative but the war has broadened everyone hasn't it and stupid national prejudices are breaking down."

"Conington Warren here?" he asked.

"He lives in England now," she told him, "his physicians warned him that prohibition would kill him so they simply prescribed a country where he could still take this cocktail. You know him of course?"

"A little," he said; she wondered why he smiled so curiously. He wondered what this beautiful girl would say if she knew it was at Conington Warren's mansion in Fifth avenue that he had started his career as a criminal. So that great sportsman, owner of thoroughbreds and undeniable shot, was in this very house! After all it was not a strange coincidence. The well known Americans who love horse and hound with the passion of the true sportsman are to be seen in the great houses of England more readily than the mushroom financier.

"What other people are there here you know?" she demanded.

"I can't tell you till tomorrow," he returned, "I only said a word or two to the Duchess. She deplored having to go to bed so early and was disappointed at not being able to dance."

"She is one of my dearest friends," the girl answered.

"Which means you see her every fault," he laughed.

"Isn't your neuralgia better?" she asked after a pause.

Anthony Trent shook his head.

"I shan't sleep all night," he said despondently. "Going to bed would only make it worse."

She was obviously put out at this statement.

"Then you'll stop here all night?"

"At all events until it gets light. It's only two o'clock now. If you are keen on big game hunting you won't sleep if you begin that book."

"You'll frighten the servants in the morning," she said later.

"I'll tip them into confidence," he assured her.

The girl was growing nervous. There were a hundred symptoms from the tapping of her little feet on the rug to the fidgeting with the book and the meaningless play with her fan. She started when a distant dog bayed the moon and dropped her book. It rolled under a table and Trent picked it up. But when he handed it back to her there was an air of excitement about him, an atmosphere of triumph which puzzled her.

"You look as though you enjoyed hunting for books under tables."

"I enjoy any hunting when I get a reward for my trouble."

"And what did you find?" she asked "a little mouse under the chair?"

"I found a key," he said.

"Someone must have dropped it," she said idly.

"Not a door key," he returned, "but the key to a mystery. Being a woman you are interested in mysteries that have a beautiful society girl as their heroine of course?"

"I really must disappoint you," she said rather coldly, "and I don't quite understand why you are not quick to take the many hints I have dropped. Can't you see I want to sit here alone and think? Your own room will be just as comfortably furnished. In a sense this is a sort of second home to me. Mrs. Langley and I are related and this room is an old and favorite haunt when I'm depressed. Is it asking very much that you leave me here alone?"

"Under ordinary conditions no," he said suavely.

"These are ordinary conditions," she persisted.

"I'm not sure," he retorted. "Tell me this if you dare. Why have you the combination to a safe written on a little piece of mauve paper and concealed in

the book on your lap?"

She turned very pale and the look she gave him turned his suspicion into a desire to protect her. The woman of the world air dropped from her and she looked a frightened pathetic and extraordinarily lovely child.

"What shall I do?" she cried helplessly. "You are a detective?"

"Not yet," he said smiling, "although later I intend to be. But I'm not here even as a great amateur. Consider me merely a notoriously good shot suffering equally from neuralgia and curiosity. You have the combination of a safe concealed in this room and you want me to go to bed so that you may take out wads of bank notes and pay your bridge debts. Is that right so far?"

"You are absolutely wrong," she cried with spirit. "I need no money and have no debts. There are no jewels in the safe."

"Letters of course," he said easily.

She did not speak for a moment. He could see she was wondering what she dare tell him. She could not guess that he knew of the three packages of letters each tied with green ribbon. It was, he supposed, the old story of compromising letters. Innocent enough, but letters that would spell evil tidings to the jealous fiancé. They might have been written to Colonel Langley. Men of that heroic stamp often appealed to sentimental school girls and the colonel was undeniably handsome in his cold superior way. His heart ached for her. She was suffering. What had seemed so easy was now become a task of the greatest difficulty.

"Yes," she said deliberately, "letters. Letters I must have."

"Do you suppose I can stand by and see my host robbed?"

"If you have any generosity about you you can in this instance. I only want to destroy one letter because if it should ever be discovered it will hurt the man I love most in the world."

Anthony Trent groaned. He had guessed aright. There was some man of her own class and station who did not love her well enough to overlook some little silly affectionate note sent to the *beau sabreur* Langley perhaps a half dozen years before. It was a rotten thing to keep such letters. He looked at the girl again and cursed his luck that she was already engaged. Then he sighed and remembered that even were she free it could never be his lot to marry unless he confessed all. And he knew that to a woman of the type he wanted to marry this confession would mean the end of confidence the beginning of despair.

"I shall not stop you," he said.

She looked at him eagerly.

"And you'll never tell?"

"Not if they put me through the third degree."

"But ... oughtn't you to tell?" she asked.

"Of course," he admitted, "but I won't. I can see you are wondering why. I'll tell you. I've been in just such a position—and I did what you are going to do."

Without another word she went swiftly to the concealed safe and began to manipulate the lock. For five minutes she tried and then turned to him miserably.

"It won't open," she wailed.

"I'll have a shot at it," he said gaily, and went down on his knees by her side. He soon found out why it remained immovable. It was an old combination. She did not understand his moves as he went through the same procedure which had opened it before. She only saw that the doors swung back. She did not see him pry the iron sheathing back with the jimmy. It was miraculously easy.

Then he crossed the room to his chair and lighted another cigarette. "Help yourself," he cried and picked up the book which had held the combination.

The girl's back was to him and he could not see what she was doing. He heard the scratch of a match being lighted and saw her stooping over the stone fireplace. She was burning her past. Then he heard her sigh with relief.

"I shall never forget what you have done for me," she said holding out her hand.

"It was little enough," he said earnestly.

"You don't know just how much it was," the girl returned, "or how grateful I shall always be to you. If I hadn't got that letter! I shouldn't have got it but for you. And to think that tomorrow we shall be introduced as one stranger to another. I'm rather glad I don't know your name or you mine. It will be rather fun won't it, being introduced and pretending we've never met before. If you are not very careful the Duchess will suspect we share some dreadful secret."

"The Duchess is rather that way inclined, isn't she?" he said.

He held the hand she offered him almost uncomfortably long a time. She would look for him tomorrow in vain. He supposed she would begin by asking if there were any other Americans there except Conington Warren. After a time she

would find he was not a guest of the Langleys. She would come at last to know what he was. And with this knowledge there would come contempt and a deliberate wiping his image from her mind. Anthony Trent had no sentimental excuses to offer. He had chosen his own line of country.

He looked at her again. It would be the last time. Perhaps there was a dangerously magnetic quality about his glance for the girl dropped her eyes.

"Faustus," he said abruptly, "sold his soul for a future. I think I'd be willing to barter mine for a past."

"*Au revoir*," she said softly.

When she had closed the door he walked across the room to shut the safe. What secrets of hers, he wondered, had been shut up there so long. He found himself in a new and strange frame of mind. Why should he be jealous of what she might have written in the letter that was now ashes? She had probably thought hero-worship was love. She had a splendid face he told himself. High courage, loyalty and breeding were mirrored in it. He wondered what sort of a man it was who had won her.

He looked at the neatly-tied bundle of letters. It seemed as though they had hardly been touched. Suddenly he turned to the compartment where the long letter had lain, the letter from which he had made so many extracts, the letter it was imperative Colonel Langley should believe to be intact.

It was gone. In the hearth there were still some burned pages. He could recognize the watermark.

Anthony Trent had amiably assisted an unknown girl to destroy a letter whose safety meant a great deal to him. If Colonel Langley were to discover the loss it would be easy enough to put the blame upon the bicycle-riding American who had pretended to be a friend of Private William Smith.

As he thought it over Anthony Trent saw that the girl in blue had not lied to him, had not sought to entrap him by gaining his sympathy as the "Countess" had succeeded in doing before another open safe in New York. He had assumed one thing and she had meant another.

What was William Smith to this unknown beauty? Trent gritted his teeth. He was going to find out. At all events he now knew the real name of the private soldier who had shared the dug-out with him. The next thing was to find out where he lived.

CHAPTER FOUR

A LADY INTERRUPTS

Anthony Trent told the obliging manager of the Maids' Head Hotel that he was interested mainly in the study of cathedral churches and since he had now studied the magnificent Norwich cathedral would push on to Ely.

He found England an exceedingly easy place to shake off pursuers despite its small size. There were always junctions where he could change from one line to another without incurring suspicion. He started for Ely but was soon lost among the summer crowds which thronged the university city of Cambridge. The convenient system of merely claiming one's baggage and ordering a porter to take it to car or taxi rendered the tracking of it by baggage checks almost impossible.

While it was true he was not pursued, so far as he knew, he wanted to be careful. It was not likely Langley would charge him with the theft of the Ladigny confession but it was quite probable that the Colonel might suspect the writer of the confession. He might think that Smith had hired a clever American safe breaker to win for him what was very necessary for his freedom of action. And Smith, if he did not already know it, would find the man over whom he held many years in American prisons almost within his clutches.

It was necessary that Anthony Trent should see Smith first and make a bargain with him. It was imperative that he meet the man alone and where he could place the cards on the table and talk freely.

In a room of the quaint half-timbered hostelry in Norwich Trent had come across some useful books of reference. There were, for example, such guides to knowledge as "Crockford's Clerical Directory"; "Hart's Army List"; the "Court Directory of London" and "Lodge's Peerage and Baronetage." The name for which Trent sought diligently was that of Arthur Spencer Jerningham Grenvil. By these names Private William Smith had the legal right to be known. By these names he had signed a confession.

A. S. J. Grenvil had admitted forging a check for two hundred pounds. The signature he had skilfully imitated was that of Reginald Langley of Dereham Old Hall in the county of Norfolk.

There was a copy of a letter written by Colonel Langley to Grenvil dated six years before. On the whole it was a letter which impressed Trent favorably. It was written from rather a lofty altitude by a man to whom family honor and the motto *noblesse oblige* meant a whole code of chivalry.

"Until you went to Sandhurst you were a credit to your name and the great family from which you spring," he read. "Suddenly, without any warning, your habits altered and you became a gambler. Well, many of your race have gambled, but at least they played fair and paid what they owed. You did not even do that. It was with great difficulty that your father was able to get you your commission in my old regiment. We hoped you would feel that in the presence of so many men of birth and breeding that you must alter your habits and wear with credit your sovereign's uniform. And now you are a common forger. Of course the signature you forged will be honored. But I require this of you: that you will confess to me your guilt; that you will leave the regiment; that you will do some honest work and re-establish yourself in my eyes. I will see to it that work of a not unpleasing kind is found for you in Australia. On my part I will undertake to keep your secret so long as you keep away from England. Remember, Arthur, there are other discreditable things I could bring to your notice if I chose. I am anxious that my kinsman, your father, should not suffer any more from your escapades. On receipt of this letter proceed to my lawyers whose address you know. They have instructions what to do."

It was plain that the father of the man he had known as William Smith was of rank. The fact that he was a kinsman of Colonel Langley might be explained by reference to the fifth book on the shelf at the Maids' Head—"Debrett's Landed Gentry of Gt. Britain."

He turned to Langley of Dereham Old Hall. Langley's mother, it seemed, was the Lady Dorothea Grenvil daughter of the ninth, and sister of the present Earl of Rosecarrel. Grenvil, therefore, was the family name of the Earls of Rosecarrel.

In the peerage all the particulars concerning the Grenvils were laid bare. The tenth earl, who had been British Ambassador to Turkey, was a Knight of the Garter, etc., etc., had married Elizabeth only daughter of Admiral, Lord Arthur Jerningham and had issue:

First the heir, Viscount St. Just, major in the Royal Horse Guards, V.C.G.C.B. Second and third, two sons killed in the great war. Fourth, Arthur Spencer Jerningham Grenvil of whom no particulars were given. Fifth came the Lady Rhona Elizabeth Onslow married to the Duke of Ontarlier in the peerage of

France and last the Lady Daphne Villiers Grenvil, unmarried. Trent reckoned out that she would be a girl of twenty-one. Private Smith would be twenty-six.

The town house of the Earls of Rosecarrel was in Grosvenor Place and their country seats were Alderwood Hall in Cambridgeshire and Rosecarrel Castle in Cornwall.

Alderwood Hall was six miles from the university city and the house could be seen on one of the small hills to the west of the town. A guide book informed Trent that the house was thrown open to visitors on Thursdays at a small fee which went to the local hospital. There were to be seen some notable examples of the "Norwich School" works by Crome, Cotman, Vincent and Stark.

The butler was distressed by the heat of early September and dismissed the visitors as soon as possible. But he regarded the American tourist in a different light for Trent had slipped him a half sovereign.

"I want to take my time," said Trent, "I like pictures and I want to examine these more closely."

"Certainly, sir," said the butler. "Anything I can do to help you I shall be proud to do."

Anthony Trent, who had a wide knowledge of paintings of the outdoors and possessed one of the world's missing masterpieces, none other than *The Venetian Masque* of Giorgione which he had taken from a vulgar and unappreciative millionaire, looked at the fresh, simple landscapes with joy.

"Is the family in residence?" he asked when he had finished.

"The Earl always spends the summer at Rosecarrel," the man answered. "He keeps his yacht in Fowey Harbour. I'm afraid his lordship is failing. You see the loss of Master Gervase and Master Bevil was a terrible shock. We lost seven out of our twelve gardeners here and two of them that came back won't ever be much good."

"What about Mr. Arthur Grenvil?" Trent asked idly. "I used to know him."

"He's back," the butler said. But the look of affection which the old family servant had shown when he spoke of the two who had fallen was gone. "I'll say this for Master Arthur, he fought too and got wounded. There's none that can say aught against his pluck."

"He is cool enough," Trent said, and thought of the scene in the dug-out when he and Arthur Grenvil waited for death and did not give way to terror. "He's down

in Cornwall with the Earl, I suppose?"

"And Lady Daphne," the butler added. "Since the death of the Countess she looks after everything."

Trent visualized one of those managing domineering young women who rule tenants relentlessly but after all exercise benevolent despotism in bucolic matters.

"Was he badly hurt?" Trent asked before he left.

"I hardly knew him," the butler said. "I give you my word I was fair shocked at the difference; isn't for the likes of me to question the ways of Providence but why Mr. Arthur was left and the others taken I don't understand."

Anthony Trent wondered, too. It would have saved him a great deal of worry if things had been reversed. On the whole this *mauvais sujet*, of an ancient family was a consistent trouble maker.

A Bradshaw's time table showed Trent that as Lord Rosecarrel's yacht was at Fowey he would be wise to make a trip to the Delectable Duchy, as a Fowey author has termed Cornwall, and disguise himself as a tourist and thus pave the way for a meeting with Private William Smith.

He purchased a large scale automobile map of Cornwall and when he reached the quaint seaport had a fair idea of the locality. Rosecarrel Castle lay some ten miles away on the moorland. The local guidebook told him all about it. It was the great house of the neighbourhood, a granite built fastness which had suffered siege many times. The Grenvils were a Cornish family of distinction and happier in their own West Countree than on the Cambridge estates.

Trent had always found the consultation of local newspapers a great help toward knowledge of a community and he immediately solaced himself with what Fowey had to offer. A perusal of the advertising columns gave him a good idea of what he could do to pass his time in a manner that would seem logical to the countryfolk. Since he was not a painter, and Fowey had no golf links, his occupation in the absence of a sailing or power boat was merely that of a sightseer and he felt out of his element in this innocent guise.

The local paper showed him that there were several "rough shootings" that he

might rent for the season. These were tracts of farm and moorland where partridges, hares, woodcock and an occasional pheasant might be found. One in the parish of St. Breward on the moors particularly attracted him. The local agent commended him on his wisdom. He did not know Anthony Trent had selected this desolate tract of granite strewn moor because Rosecarrel Castle was but a half dozen miles distant.

Trent had been less than a week in Cornwall when he was installed in a farmhouse, the owner of a spaniel of great local repute, and regarded simply as one of those sportsmen who took the shooting every year and as such was above suspicion. Mr. Nicholls, the loquacious agent who had rented him the shooting and had driven him over to view it, talked a great deal of the great Earl of Rosecarrel. He regretted that since the death of the Countess few guests stayed within the castle. There had been brave days a few years back when Lord St. Just the son and heir had been master of the North Cornwall Foxhounds.

"But there's only the Honourable Arthur Grenvil there now," said Nicholls, "and Lady Daphne. Lord St. Just is military attaché at Washington."

"Since when?" Trent demanded.

"Within a few weeks," said the agent.

That was the reason why the younger brother had been to see him off at Liverpool. It was quite likely that Private Smith assumed Anthony Trent to be dead. Or he might have thought him boasting of another's deeds. But Trent was going to find out if possible. This time he had materials for a compromise. Suddenly Nicholls pointed out a figure on horseback fully a half mile distant.

"Like enough," said the agent, "that's the Honourable Arthur. He rides about on the moors a lot. All this land as far as you can see belongs to the Earl."

Trent could see that the rider was cantering along narrow paths inaccessible to vehicles. Well, the meeting would wait. Some morning he would rein in his horse beside that of Private Smith and see recognition dawn in the eye of the man when the visitor announced himself as Anthony Trent. Then covetousness would follow and the thought of rich reward hearten the ex-private. Trent chuckled to himself as he thought of how the man's face would fall when he outlined his past history and showed him he was in possession of secrets which, once public, must bring him into the clutches of the inexorable, passionless law of the realm.

"Where can I get a horse?" he asked Nicholls.

"John Treleaven over to St. Kew has a good hunting horse he wants to sell. It will be a bargain at sixty pounds Mr. Trent. I'll tell him to ride it over tomorrow if you like."

"All right," Trent said, "and I want saddle and bridle and so on."

So Anthony Trent added Treleaven's stout horse to his possessions and when he was not shooting, rode over the moorlands purple with Cornish heather and yellow with gorse.

Nearly always he rode near the castle of Rosecarrel and was often annoyed to find his pilgrimage shared by archæologists and other visitors. Rosecarrel Castle had begun as a fortress; when cannon rendered masonry useless it had become a castellated mansion and now it showed the slow changes of the long centuries and was a delightful residence. The moat was a flower garden and the keeps were now green with grass and bright with roses.

Admission was by presentation of a visiting card on a certain day. It was no part of Trent's purpose to send the name in which might remind Arthur Grenvil of that memorable talk in the dark. When he disclosed himself it would be man to man and he was not able yet to satisfy his curiosity about the great building.

He was gratified to find that the river Camel running through part of the shooting he rented was a notable salmon and trout stream. The trout were small but the sea-run salmon went as high as thirty pounds. In Kennebago where his Maine camp was the land-locked variety seldom went to more than seven pounds. Directly he had secured his license, and the equipment he wired to London for had arrived, he clambered down the steep hill side to the river. But he fished very little that afternoon for as he climbed over one of the granite stiles he came face to face with two other anglers, a man and girl.

The girl was none other than the mysterious lady in blue for whom he had opened Colonel Langley's safe. She came forward hand outstretched when she saw him.

That she was a little confused he was certain, and perhaps a trifle fearful that he might make some allusion to the oddity of the circumstances under which they had first met. The man was almost a hundred feet from her. He was casting and too interested to look at anything but the deep pool in which salmon were wont to lie.

"I was never able to thank you for that, that night at Dereham," she began, "but my father had one of his attacks and I had to leave the very next day just before

luncheon. I hope you had good sport."

"Unusually good," he said. It was a great piece of luck that she still assumed him to be of the house party. But what was she doing here? When he asked she said, "We live near here." She looked around to see her companion coming toward her and the stranger.

"This is my brother," she said, "Arthur Grenvil. Arthur this gentleman was staying at Dereham Old Hall when I was there. Mr.?" She looked at him pleadingly, "I'm so stupid about names."

The stranger seemed to be looking at her when he answered, but his eyes were upon Arthur Grenvil.

"Anthony Trent," he said urbanely.

"How do you do," Grenvil said without betraying any emotion. "Had any luck?"

"Not yet," Anthony Trent said still looking hard at him. Things were happening rather more quickly than he liked. Too many discoveries were disconcerting. First this girl was of course Lady Daphne Grenvil. And she had not any other motive in view in abstracting the confession than of helping her renegade brother. Anthony Trent felt himself absurdly pleased to know that. He had thought of her constantly and pitied her because he assumed her to be under the domination of a handsome heartless scamp like the Honourable Arthur.

It was Grenvil's attitude which puzzled the American. The name had apparently aroused no suspicion. It proved the man was more dangerous than he supposed if he were able to master his emotions with such ease. As they stood there chatting about flies and the size of the salmon Anthony Trent had time to study Grenvil's appearance. Assuredly he differed from the mental picture he had formed of him.

To begin with there seemed nothing vicious about him. He was a very handsome man with small regular features, finely formed nose and engaging blue eyes. Anthony Trent thought of the confession he had seen and remembered the talk in the dug-out. He called to mind the hints that the Alderbrook butler had let drop and the lack of enthusiasm the agent Nicholls had shown in speaking of him. From all accounts Arthur Spencer Jerningham Grenvil should be a very highly polished scoundrel but coarsened somewhat from his experiences in the ranks for so many years.

And here he was with a sister he plainly adored, looking with a sort of shy good nature at the stranger.

"It's so jolly to meet another keen fisherman," he said amiably, "I know the Camel so well that I can show you the best pools if you'd care about it."

"That would be very kind of you," Anthony Trent returned. He did not know what to make of the man he had first known as Private Smith. There might be a mistake and yet, if there had been, why should Lady Daphne have risked disgrace in breaking open a safe for his sake. And the voice, the unmistakable voice, was that of the man to whom he had confided all his dangerous, deadly secrets. "I haven't fished the river for almost seven years," the younger man went on.

"My brother has been in the army for more than five years," the girl said, "and he hadn't much chance then. He was badly wounded and we are making him well again."

"I'm being horribly spoiled, Mr. Trent," Grenvil smiled, "and I rather like it. Did you get in the big show by any chance?"

"As long as I could be after my country declared war," Trent said looking at him hard. "We must exchange experiences."

"Please don't," the girl begged, "Arthur's nerves can't stand it. The doctors say he must live outdoors and forget everything."

"And are you able to forget—everything?" Trent asked him.

Arthur Grenvil frowned a little. It was as though the memory of something unpleasing had lingered for a moment.

"Most things," said the other.

"Is it wise?" Trent demanded. This refusing even by a look or a smile to acknowledge that he remembered the memorable talk was disturbing.

"Perhaps not," Grenvil admitted, "but wisdom and I never got on very well together."

The sound of a motor horn broke the silence.

"The car," said Arthur Grenvil to his sister. "We have to run away because people are coming over from the barracks to lunch. I hope I shall meet you again Mr. Trent." He nodded pleasantly. "Come on Daphne."

"Goodbye, Mr. Trent," she said brightly. "I hope you'll land a monster fish."

Anthony Trent flung himself on the grass at the edge of the pool and lighted his

pipe. Lordly salmon were no temptation to him at the moment. Private William Smith had beaten him so far. Private Smith had looked as innocent as a babe. He had been polite and gracious but had refused to acknowledge any former acquaintance. Again and again in the few minutes Trent had telegraphed to him plainly, "Well, here I am, the master criminal you were proud to know, what are you going to do?" And every time Private Smith had said, "I do not know you. I never saw you before." It was well enough to postpone the conversation until they were alone, but Trent resented the utter indifference of the younger man to his appeal. A man dare only do that who had no fear. That must be the reason. Grenvil had made only general statements in his half confession, statements which could not convict him. He felt he held the whip hand over the master. There would be a different expression on his face when Trent dropped a hint as to the dangers of forging.

At the farm house where he was living Trent had little difficulty in getting side lights on the Grenvil family. He had never heard such disapprobation showered on a single member of any family as was the case with the farmer and his wife when they spoke of Arthur Grenvil.

They said his scandalous life had killed his mother. It was all bad companionship and drink, Mrs. Bassett the farmer's wife contended. He was all right till he left school to go into the army. He was cruel to animals and false to his friends.

"He doesn't look it," Trent said slowly.

"The devil gives his own a mask to fool the righteous," Mrs. Bassett contended. She was a pious soul. "I ought to know. I was a nursemaid at the castle before I married John Bassett."

Never in all his career as a breaker of laws and an abstractor of the valuable property of others had Trent been so apprehensive as he was in quiet, beautiful Cornwall far from cities. In New York he had schooled himself to look unconcerned at the police he met on every corner. Here there seemed to be no police and yet he looked anxiously at every stranger who passed by the moorland farm. He told himself it was the effect of his war hardships, his wounds and shell shock. But he knew his nerves were steady, his muscles strong as ever and his health magnificent. He was forced to admit that he was on edge because of this meeting with Arthur Grenvil.

"This has got to end," he said after breakfast next morning, "I've had enough uncertainty."

A few minutes later he was on horseback and on his way to Rosecarrel Castle. It

might not be easy to see Grenvil in his home surrounded by servants but he would make the attempt. He had no reasonable excuse for infringing the etiquette of the occasion. He had not been invited to call and he knew no common friends of the family. It would be a business call. He would send in his card and say he desired to see Mr. Arthur Grenvil on a matter of importance.

He was within two miles of the castle when he saw the man he had come to see mounted on a chestnut polo pony cantering along and driving a white polo ball over the stretch of firm turf.

Grenvil pulled up as he saw the American.

"Trying to get my eye back," he said smiling. "Corking game, polo, ever play it, Mr. Trent?"

"I've had to work too hard," Trent snapped.

"Much better for you I've no doubt," said Grenvil idly, "If one may ask it, what sort of work did you do?"

"You've no idea I suppose?"

Grenvil looked at him mildly.

"How can I have any idea?" he asked.

Anthony Trent from his bigger horse looked down at the man on the polo pony sourly. There was that bland look of irritating innocence that would have convinced any judge and jury. But it did not sway him.

In just such a pleasantly modulated voice, and with no doubt just such an ingratiating smile Private Smith had feared Anthony Trent was dying in very bad company.

"You said you were not able to forget everything. I supposed that my work might be one of the things you still remembered."

At length Trent was able to observe that Arthur Grenvil looked less confident.

"I'm afraid I don't quite understand what you mean, Mr. Trent."

"The name Anthony Trent calls nothing to mind?"

"Sorry," Grenvil retorted, "I suppose I ought to know all about you."

"That's what you said before!" Trent exclaimed.

"Before?" There was no doubt now as to Grenvil's perturbation.

"Cut that out," Trent commanded angrily. "You did it very well, but I'm sick and tired of fencing. What are you going to do about it?"

He was sure now that the other was frightened. That the emotion of fear did not bring anger in its train amazed Trent.

"Leave you to realize your mistake," Grenvil said after a pause. Then with a sharp stroke he sent the willow root ball spinning in the direction of the castle, and followed it on his swift mount.

The horse that Trent had bought from John Treleaven the farmer was a half bred, a good, weight-carrying nag, a fine jumper, but not equal to the task of overtaking the chestnut thoroughbred. There was nothing to do but pursue Grenvil into the castle grounds or give up the chase. Angry because he could not judge in what degree of peril if any, he stood, Anthony Trent rode back to the farm.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE MAN WHO DENIED

Thinking things over that night as he walked along the Camel banks and disturbed the otters at play, Anthony Trent determined to call upon Arthur Grenvil and force him to acknowledge that he had not forgotten the conversation, the confidence that was so fully given, in the dug-out.

Footmen and a butler barred his ingress. They were polite and filled with regrets but the facts remained that Mr. Arthur Grenvil by doctor's orders saw none. The Lady Daphne was engaged. The men-servants could offer him no hope. He was able to see at close range some advantages of the many servants the rich were able to employ to hedge them about with privacy. The Rosecarrel butler was less urbane than his brother at Alderwood and the opportunity for private conversation was lacking. Trent saw in this rebuff another move in the subtle game Private Arthur Smith was playing.

The next two days were spent in riding over the moors but not a glimpse of Lady Daphne or her brother did he get. He was certain they were avoiding him deliberately. The idea possessed Trent that Arthur Grenvil was not satisfied to obtain merely the rewards that were offered for his apprehension. If he followed the great thefts of the world he would know that four of its most famous stones were still missing. And from Trent's confession he would guess the master criminal still held them. They were even now in Trent's Maine camp ornamenting a brass Benares lamp as though they were merely the original pieces of glass that had occupied the spaces when Trent purchased it. Trent could sell through discreet sources the loot that was hidden in Kennebago for not less than half a million dollars. If Arthur Grenvil chose to command him to do so and share the proceeds what could he do? The hold he had on the other man was slight. Langley might have extorted the confession more as a warning than an instrument to use against a relative. In the two other cases to which Arthur Grenvil had confessed his creditors were those who had been his friends. He had embezzled the mess funds of his regiment. It was unlikely that a cavalry regiment which had fought from Dettingen to Mons would like a story of that sort to get abroad.

On the morning of the third day after his rebuff at the hands of the footmen Trent made up his mind. He would see Arthur Grenvil and see him at once. "If he thinks he can keep me out," said Trent his mouth tightening to a narrow line, "he holds me too cheap."

It happened that Arthur Grenvil knew nothing of the attempt of Anthony Trent to see him. The doctors had indeed ordered him rest. Lady Daphne when she heard of Trent's insistence said nothing but wondered why it was that he should make the attempt. She still thought uneasily of that night at Dereham when he had discovered her with the combination to her host's safe. There was such a thing as blackmail and, after all what did she know of the American except that he had been a guest of the Langleys. In itself this should have been enough to vouch for his position in life.

She found herself more interested in Anthony Trent than in any man she had ever met. And it was because of this concern that in a letter to Alicia Langley she asked about him.

Alicia's letter was astonishing. "I can't imagine, my dear Daphne to whom you refer. There was no Anthony Trent here on the first. The only American was Mr. Conington Warren who was wafted to our shores permanently on the waves of prohibition. I think you knew personally every other man except the Duke of Valladolida. He is, of course, a grandee of Spain, short, slight and bald, but a first rate shot, Reginald says, and plays polo for the Madrid team. Certainly there was no tall, clean-shaven, good-looking man here whom you don't know quite well." Alicia Langley invariably added postscripts. This time it interested the reader more than the letter. "I showed your letter to Reginald and he was almost excited. He said an Anthony Trent had motored over from Norwich and wanted to learn particulars of a private in his regiment. As the private in question was Arthur you may draw your own inferences if you can. Reginald refused to speak so this Trent man of yours doesn't know Arthur's *nom de guerre* from anything he has learned here. Reginald wants you to tell him where you met the man. Please do as he seems to think it very serious."

While Lady Daphne read this communication, not without agitation, her brother was dressing for dinner. Some people were coming over from Pencarrow. He occupied two splendid rooms facing west and was looking over the moorland to the sea when the handle of the room leading to a large upper hall was opened

noiselessly and admitted Anthony Trent. When Grenvil remembered he had not long to make the change from flannels into evening dress, he turned about to see the American sitting in a comfortable chair.

"Please don't try and ring for the servants," Trent advised smoothly, "because I am nearest to the bell and I shall not permit it."

If he expected an outbreak of anger he was disappointed. Instead there was that puzzled expression which could only arise from innocence of Trent's identity or the most finished art.

"Don't think I am a housebreaker," Trent went on equably, "I am not. This is visitors day if you remember and after paying my shilling I looked at the state rooms, pictures and autograph letters and fell asleep. When I woke up I entered this room by mistake."

"And you want to find your way out?" Grenvil returned. "If you will ring the bell I will have you shown."

"Not until I have had the opportunity of talking a little to you. In our first conversation I was indiscreet. You will admit that, won't you?"

"Were you?" Grenvil answered vaguely. "I really don't remember Mr. Trent."

"Then you deny ever having seen me until we met by the salmon pool a few days ago?" Trent looked at him like a hawk.

"I do," Grenvil retorted.

"Then if you do, why don't you resent my butting in like this? Why don't you call some men-servants and have me flung out for a damned nuisance? Say I threatened you, say anything an innocent man could and would say. Your attitude doesn't fool me in the least. You are playing a deep game but I can play a deeper."

Grenvil shrugged his shoulders with a gesture of weariness. "There are many things I cannot explain," he said.

"You are going to begin right now," Trent said. He was not in a mood to be trifled with. He firmly believed that this man was planning to send him to gaol for a period of years so long that he would come out a whitehaired broken man.

He looked round frowning as steps sounded along the corridor and a tap came on the door.

"Let me in Arthur," he heard Lady Daphne say, "I've had a most extraordinary

letter from Aunt Alicia. I must see you about it."

She rattled the locked door impatiently. Her brother walked over to it. Trent could offer no objection. He was confused and annoyed that at a moment such as this the girl must interrupt. To Anthony Trent she was as one above and apart. There was no use in concealing that he himself was a crook no matter how differently he pursued the profession from the lesser lights whom he despised. And Arthur Grenvil was as crooked as he with less excuse for it.

Lady Daphne stopped short when she saw Trent rise from his chair and bow. Her greeting was so wholly different from the friendly manner she had shown ere this, that he was at loss to understand it. He did not know that Mrs. Langley was the Aunt Alicia. He could only suppose her brother had hinted that he was not what he seemed.

"I was not told you were here," she said.

"I'm glad you've come," Arthur Grenvil said. Trent could see that he only spoke the truth. From what did he expect his sister to protect him. "Mr. Trent here has an idea I'm deliberately pretending not to know who he is."

"I assure Mr. Trent," she said haughtily, "that at all events I know what *he* is."

Trent looked at her a little quizzically.

"I wonder if you really do," he commented.

"I shall be very glad to prove it," she answered, "but I am not anxious that my brother should have to listen. I hoped you understood that he is under the doctors' orders and must not be worried. As dinner is almost ready and I have several things to do will you be kind enough to put this discussion off until tomorrow morning?"

"Just as you please," he said. "When and where?"

"You are staying at the Bassetts I think. Very well I will drive over there tomorrow at half past ten."

He flushed. The inference was plain. He was not permitted to meet her within the castle. The servant who showed him out seemed to feel differently today. He felt outcast.

There was a little apple orchard behind the Bassetts' stone built barns where each day Anthony Trent used to practise short approaches with a favorite mashie. He held it as an axiom that if a golfer kept his hand in with short mashie practise he would never be off his game. He was industriously trying to approach over a tall spreading tree when he heard the sound of wheels outside. It was not yet time for his appointment with Lady Daphne but he could see from the higher ground of the orchard that it was she. She was driving a dashing pair of chestnuts to a mail phaeton. By her side sat a man with a powerful unscrupulous face who was evidently amusing her by his conversation. Trent supposed he was a guest at the castle, some man who had the right to meet her by reason of being on the right side of the law.

Almost jealously Anthony Trent saw him help her to alight. He was a heavily built man but not an ungraceful one and he was exceedingly well dressed. Trent judged him to be five and forty and used to dominating men. He had noticed often that men most ruthless with their fellows have the most charming ways with women.

"I shan't be very long," Lady Daphne said laughing, "You will be able to smoke just two cigarettes, Mr. Castoon."

Castoon. Of course it was Rudolph Castoon the banker, the English born member of the great continental firm of bankers and financiers. One of the brothers was a leader among New York capitalists. It was said that each Castoon was loyal to the country where it had been arranged he should be born.

It was in the sweet smelling sitting room of the Bassetts that Trent found her. She was standing up and refused to be seated. Her enmity now was hardly concealed.

"I find," she began, "that you have deceived me. You claimed to be one of the guns at Colonel Langley's shoot."

"I permitted you to assume it," he corrected, "but that is not an excuse."

"Colonel Langley is very anxious to know where it was I saw you and under what circumstances."

"You will hardly inform him as to that," said Trent smiling.

"If it becomes necessary I shall," she replied. "At all events I was in the house of a relative while you were there—"

"As a thief in the night. Thank you."

"You were there as a detective."

She had never seen him lose his calm before. He flushed red and a look of hatred came over his face.

"A detective! I? If you knew how I loathed them you would never suspect me of being that."

"If not why are you down here hounding my brother?"

"Hasn't he told you?"

"He says you persist in pretending to know him."

"Lady Daphne," Trent said earnestly. "Was your brother a Private William Smith, a gentleman ranker in the seventy-eighth battalion of the City of London Regiment?"

"Yes," she answered.

"And wasn't this same man under his own name expelled from Harrow School and Trinity College, Cambridge."

"Then you are a detective!" she cried.

"On my honor, no," he exclaimed. "Lady Daphne, your brother saved my life, and when I wanted to speak about the very terrible and unusual experience he denied knowing me."

"You are not telling me everything," she said after a pause, "I am glad you are not a detective even though you may be not what I thought you, but is it reasonable you should try to force yourself on a man who quite evidently wants to be alone with his thoughts just to thank him for doing something every soldier was glad to do for any other allied soldier?"

"There was something else," he admitted. "I may as well tell you what. We were, as we had every reason to think, dying. We told each other part of our past lives. Why I don't pretend to understand. Nerves I suppose and the feeling that nothing mattered in the least. I told him part of my past which in effect put a club in his hand to use over me. When I got better I assumed he was killed. I found he wasn't and followed him here to ask what he was going to do with his knowledge. You wondered what errand I had at Dereham Old Hall. It was to read through the confession which you burned. I had read it and replaced it before you came in."

"Then you know all about him?" she gasped.

"I know what was written there," he answered. "I wanted to know so that I could

tell him I, too, had a weapon with which to fight. I am not his enemy, far from it."

"You mean you don't want to threaten him or hold your knowledge of what he did over us?"

He looked at her gloomily. To think that this was the impression she had of him hurt.

"So that's what you think of me," he said slowly.

"Indeed it isn't," she answered quickly. "I didn't think it in the beginning and I don't want to do so now, but what was one to think?"

"It was your brother's behaviour that puzzled me," he said, "and still puzzles me. Don't you see I only want to be sure that he won't use what I told him?"

Lady Daphne looked at him curiously. Here was a man whose manners were perfect, who seemed to have the same sports and occupation of the kind of men she knew hinting that he had done things of whose consequence he was afraid. She supposed there were many temptations into which a man might fall, lapses of which he might repent and still go in fear of discovery.

"I don't wonder you were bewildered," she said presently, "and I understand far better than you how it was. Mr. Trent you need never be afraid that the man who was Private Smith will ever say a word to any living souls of what you said to him."

"How can I be certain?" he demanded. "You don't know the rewards that a man might gain for speaking the truth about me."

"Private William Smith and my brother Arthur are two different people."

He looked at her in astonishment. Was the weary chase, the long uncertainty to begin again? There was never a doubt in his mind but that what she told him was true even if it was hard to be believed.

"Then where is Private Smith?" he asked. "Where is the man who knows the real me?"

"At the castle," she said.

He made a gesture of despair.

"It is incomprehensible."

"I am going to tell you about them—about the two utterly different men." She

said nothing for a full minute. Then she went to the door and called Mrs. Bassett into the room. "Please tell Mr. Castoon I shall have to keep him waiting rather longer than I thought."

"Certainly, my Lady," Mrs. Bassett said. Later she told her husband that Mr. Castoon looked very black at the news. "He's not the kind to like being kept waiting," she explained.

"Princes of the Blood ought to be glad to wait for Lady Daphne," the tenant farmer cried.

"You learned somehow that Arthur was expelled from Harrow. It is true. He managed to get into Trinity but lasted only a term. Then came Sandhurst and a commission finally and black disgrace. Mr. Rudolph Castoon who is a friend of my eldest brother took pity on him and made him one of his secretaries—he's in Parliament you know—but even he couldn't do anything. Then a little while in Australia and failure there. The last thing he did was to enlist just before the war broke out. Colonel Langley was given the command of a London regiment and found Arthur under the name you knew."

"But you said he wasn't Private Smith," Trent broke in eagerly.

"You will see later what I mean. How did you meet him?"

Trent explained in a few words. But what confessions or boasts he had been betrayed into making he said nothing about.

"My brother was expelled from Harrow when he was eighteen. Until he was seventeen he was one of the sweetest natured boys you could imagine. He was full of fun and mischief but all his tutors loved him and there wasn't a particle of vice in him. Suddenly he seemed possessed of devils. He drank, he gambled—and cheated—he was insolent to his teachers. It broke my mother's heart. It helped to make my father the silent broken man he is today. It was the same when he went up to Trinity and the same when he was at Sandhurst...." There was a long pause. Trent could see she was struggling against tears. There welled up in him an almost divine pity. He wanted to soothe her, comfort her and let her cry on his shoulder.

It was in this moment that Anthony Trent knew he loved her and would always love her. Those passing affections of adolescence were pale, wan emotions compared with this. And it was an hour of grief to him. He realized that his ways of life had cut him off irremediably from marriage with such a woman as this.

"What happened," she said at last, "when you came to after being blown from that dug-out?"

"I was badly hurt," he answered, wonderingly, "those high explosives play the strangest tricks with one."

"This is what happened to my brother. He was unconscious for a very long time and his head was fearfully mangled. When he came out of ether he said very distinctly. 'Oh Bingo, how rottenly clumsy of you.'"

"Who was Bingo?" Trent asked.

"At the time nobody knew. Arthur's uniform was torn off in the explosion and his regiment unknown."

"He could have told them," Trent asserted.

She shook her head.

"You are mistaken. He could not tell them. They thought he was, what's the word, malingering. They thought he wanted to be sent back and get out of the fighting. Then he complained of the dreadful noise. By degrees they found that

he did not even know of the war. They thought of course he was pretending. My father heard of the wound and although he had disowned him he had him brought to our house in Grosvenor Place. We had specialists, those new sorts of doctors who don't depend on medicines. Arthur thought he was still at Harrow eight years or more ago. Then I remembered a boy who shared a study with him there, a boy who had stayed here, a son of Sir Willoughby Hosken who has a place near Penzance. Bingo was somewhere in the Struma valley with his battery and in answer to a letter said that the only act of clumsiness he could call to mind was when he accidentally hit Arthur with an Indian club in the gym at school.

"One of the doctors went over to Harrow and found Arthur had been hit like this and was in the infirmary for three days. Mr. Trent, it was after that accident he altered entirely."

"I've heard of such cases," Trent said quickly. "Pressure of some sort on the brain they call it. There was quite an epidemic of such incidents in America a few years ago. It was supposed to be a cure for bad boys. Then you think—"

"I know," she said emphatically. "He is now exactly as he was when he was a boy, gentle, thoughtful and clean. Our specialists saw the army surgeons and they supposed that in dressing his dreadful wounds they removed the portions of depressed bone and so made this extraordinary cure. They say the war has proved this sort of thing again and again."

The news which spelled salvation to Anthony Trent seemed too tremendous to believe. There was no miracle about it. It was a simple fact demonstrated by surgery and accepted now by the laity. The years in which Arthur Grenvil had sown wild oats and disrupted friendships and relationships was wiped from his consciousness. Trent now understood the half diffident, almost shy manner so inexplicable in a man of the type William Smith had been.

"My father thinks," the girl went on, "that as he will have to find out some of the things he did it will be as well to prepare him for it and shield him against consequences."

"Consequences?" he hazarded.

"I'm afraid," she said gravely, "that it will not be easy. His creditors for example have learned that my father has forgiven him and they are coming down on him. Fortunately my father can afford to pay but there is always the dread of some adventurer turning up and letting us into some dreadful secrets."

"Men like me," he asked.

"You know I didn't mean that," she said. "I think it most wonderful that you are here, because you will be able to tell him something about the good part of his life you know. He is always hoping that his memory will come back but the doctors say it won't." She hesitated a little. "Poor Arthur is very much depressed at times. Could you try and remember as much about him as possible?"

"Surely," said Anthony Trent. "As it happens I met a man out there who knew him well and said he was a good soldier."

"I wish my father could know that," she said. "I'm going to ask you to luncheon tomorrow and to meet a man whose life Arthur saved would cheer him enormously. We shall be alone." She frowned. "I'd forgotten Mr. Castoon who is probably furious at being kept waiting. I promised him I'd be back in two cigarettes time. I was going to drive in to Camelford but I don't think I will. I feel almost that I want to cry." She held out her hand impulsively. "Forgive me for what I thought about you and come to luncheon at one tomorrow."

"You don't know how I'd like to," he said wistfully, "but you have forgotten about my past; and I had no such excuse as your brother."

"You are exaggerating it," she said more brightly. "Anyhow it's all over."

Exaggerating! And even were it all over, which he doubted, a blacker past remained than ever she dreamed of.

"I don't want Mr. Castoon to see that I've got tears in my eyes. Please tell him to wait a little longer while I talk to Mrs. Bassett. *Au revoir.*"

Anthony Trent watched her go and then sighed. And he told himself that had he met her ten years before he would have had the strength to win a fortune honestly and not take the lower road.

He went outside to where Rudolph Castoon was sitting in the phaeton. The two horses were champing at their bits, a little groom at their heads trying to soothe their high tempers. He approached the financier with no personal feeling of any sort. In the beginning he expected to admire the man as he did all such forceful characters. He often suspected there was more kinship between him and the ruthless financier type that Castoon represented than the world comprehended.

Rudolph Castoon looked at him sourly.

"Well?" he snapped.

Anthony Trent looked at him and knew instantly that he would always share the hate he saw in the capitalist's face. For a moment he was at a loss to understand the reason. Then he saw that it was jealousy, furious, dynamic jealousy. Lady Daphne had come to see Mrs. Bassett. Instead Castoon found she had come to see a younger and better looking man. Trent did not fall into the error of underrating Castoon. In the event of a contest of any kind between them he would walk warily. But he never expected to see the man again and his peremptory way of speaking angered him.

"Well?" Castoon demanded again.

"Thank you," said Trent urbanely, "I find the air of these moorlands of great benefit to me. Formerly I slept poorly but now I sleep as soon as my head touches the pillow. And my appetite is better. I eat three eggs for breakfast every morning. Do you sleep well?"

"I did not come here to sleep," Castoon frowned.

"But if you are here for long you must," Trent said pleasantly.

"I am not in the least interested in your health or how many eggs you can eat for breakfast." Castoon's manner was frankly rude. "I want to know where Lady Daphne Grenvil is."

"She said she had forgotten you," Trent answered, "she also said you would probably be furious at being kept waiting."

"I am," Castoon asserted. "Would it be too much to ask the reason?"

"I expected you to," Trent said affably. The time he took to select a cigarette from his case and the meticulous manner in which he lighted it added to the other man's ill temper just as Anthony Trent intended it should.

"If you are quite finished, sir," Castoon cried, "I should be glad to hear."

"As an American," Trent began airily, "I like the old family servant tradition. Lady Daphne is talking over her childhood days with Mrs. Bassett. My mother was from the Southern states and I suppose I inherit a liking for that sort of thing."

"Will you come to the point, sir?" Castoon exclaimed.

"I thought I told you that Lady Daphne was talking over nursery reminisences with an old servant."

"She may be doing that now, but what was she doing before? I'll tell you; she

was talking to you. Do you deny it?"

"My dear man," Trent cried in apparent surprise, "Deny it? I boast about it! It is the only thing I hope will be printed in my obituary notices."

"I'm not sure I should be desolated at reading your obituary notices," Castoon said keeping his temper back. He could say no more for Lady Daphne came hurrying along the hydrangea-bordered path to the gate.

"I'm dreadfully sorry, Mr. Castoon," she cried.

"I can forget everything now that you are here," he returned gallantly, "even the humour of this young man whose name I don't know."

"Mr. Anthony Trent of New York," she told him. "You'll meet him at luncheon tomorrow."

"That will make it a very pleasant function," the financier said grimly. He could say no more because the horses reared impatiently and for a moment there was danger.

"That off horse nearly came over backward," Castoon said when the team had settled down a little and the farm was a half mile behind.

"But it didn't," Lady Daphne said calmly, "so why worry?"

"It would have been his fault," Castoon said venomously.

"You don't seem to like him," she said smiling.

"I hate any man who looks at you as he does."

"How does he look?" she asked with an air of innocence.

"He looks at you as if he was in love with you, and I hate any man to do that."

"You have no right to resent it Mr. Castoon," she said coldly. "I have told you a hundred times that you concern yourself far too much with my affairs."

"I'm going to marry you," he said doggedly. "I never fail. Look at my life history and see where I have been beaten. I know you don't care for me yet. You'll have to later."

"My father doesn't care for you either."

Rudolph Castoon sniffed impatiently.

"His type is dying out. He still remains ignorant that money has displaced birth."

"It's the one thing money won't buy, though," she reminded him.

"Birth can't buy power," the financier said quickly, "and money means power. Your father has had both. It would have been easier for me to marry Daphne, daughter of the Earl of Rosecarrel, Viscount St. Just, Baron Wadebridge, Knight of the Garter, and Ambassador to Turkey, and all the rest of it, than it will be to marry you now your father has abandoned his career."

"That sounds merely silly to me," she exclaimed.

"Someday I will explain to you how very sensible it is. You will understand exactly."

"Do you mean you are so inordinately vain you would rather marry an ambassador's daughter than the daughter of a man who isn't a power politically any more?"

"At least I can say I don't mean that. I am vain, that's true, but I wish you were one of the daughters of a tenant farmer on these purple moors instead of being an earl's daughter." He sighed a little. Then the recollection of Anthony Trent came back. "Who is this man Trent?" he demanded.

"A delightful man," she said, "an American who knows how to behave. I met him at a houseparty somewhere or other. He used to know Arthur."

Castoon could not keep back a sneer.

"That vouches for him of course."

"At least he wouldn't say anything as underbred as that," she cried angrily, and touched one of her high-mettled chestnuts with a lash. Castoon hung on to the seat as the pair tried to get away.

"You'll kill yourself some day driving such horses as these," he said later. He was not a coward; but unnecessary risk always seemed a childish thing to create and he believed himself heir to a great destiny.

CHAPTER SIX

FRESH FIELDS

If Anthony Trent thought he was to be the guest at a small luncheon party where he could meet Arthur under friendlier circumstances and talk to Daphne intimately, he was mistaken.

Castoon was staying at the castle and a number of people motored over from Falmouth as well as the owner of a big yacht lying for the time in the Fowey river.

Lord Rosecarrel was very amiable. He seemed intensely grateful that Trent gave up a morning's shooting to attend a luncheon. There was no trace of suspicion about him. He had been told that Mr. Trent, an American of means, had been a guest at Dereham Old Hall. His daughter had not informed him of Alicia Langley's letter.

But he was most interested to know that his son had saved the visitor's life. It was the one good act in the black years which had given him so much sorrow.

Also Daphne had told him that Arthur liked Trent and would be a good companion. The physicians who were watching Arthur's case recommended that he should be kept interested. They desired that the apathy which threatened to take hold on him should be banished. The Earl was growing more and more to leave things to the girl. The death of his two sons had been a terrible blow and he was beginning to find in solitary yachting and fishing trips a certain refreshing solace.

From the deference that most of the people paid to Rudolph Castoon it was evident that he was a man of great influence and promise.

Trent sat next to a rather pretty dark girl, a Miss Barham, who had come over from her father's yacht.

"Everybody seems to hang on his words," he said. "Why?"

"He's phenomenally rich," she answered, "and he has a career. He'll probably be Chancellor of the Exchequer in the next cabinet. Finance is bred in the bone of his sort. Hasn't he a brother in your country?"

"A great power in Wall Street," Trent told her, "but we suspect a capitalist; and while Rudolph may get a title and much honor, Alfred in America couldn't get a job as dog catcher."

"Of course you've seen he's simply mad about Daphne?" Miss Barham said later.

"I've seen his side of it," Trent said frowning a little, "but what about Lady Daphne?"

"Power is always attractive," Miss Barham said wisely, "and we English women love politics. One can never tell. I think the earl would be furious but Daphne always gets her way and after all Mr. Castoon is a great catch whichever way you look at it. There's nothing financially shady about him and if Daphne should ever get bitten with the idea of making a *salon*, he's the man to marry."

"What a brutal way to look at it," he said gloomily.

"Are you young enough to believe in those delightful love matches, Mr. Trent?" the girl asked. "I did till I was almost fifteen."

Anthony Trent should have been amused to find himself on the side of the angels. As a rule life had provoked cynicism in him and here he was fighting for ideals.

"I talked like that until I was fifteen," he smiled, "and I meant it."

Ada Barham turned her dark brilliant eyes on him. She rather envied the girl who had captured him. She felt it was a lover talking.

"Of course you are in love," she retorted. "I always meet the really nice men too late. Dare you confess it?"

"I admit it," he said a little confused.

"American girls are very charming," Miss Barham declared. "I stayed at Newport a month last year. Of course you know Newport?"

"Fairly well," he admitted.

Oddly enough the recollection of his Newport triumphs was not as pleasing as usual. He had made some of his richest hauls in the Rhode Island city.

What an amazing thing, he reflected, that he was here as a guests among people on whom, as a class, he had looked as his lawful prey. Castoon with his millions was the sort of man he would like to measure his wit against. When Castoon looked across the table at him with a kind of innocent stare he decided that it

would be a delightful duel.

He knew English women wore little jewelry during the day so he could not estimate the value of what they owned at a luncheon, but he was certain Miss Barham's mother, who was addressed as Lady Harriet, had family jewels worth the risk of seeking to get. A woman whose husband owned a two-hundred feet steam yacht was distinctly among those whom in former days he had been professionally eager to meet.

Before the luncheon Lady Daphne had explained that her brother would not be at the table. The family was anxious that he should not be subjected to the confusion of professing ignorance of some man or event which he ought to know. By degrees he was getting his bearings and reading through files of old newspapers the main events of the years that had been wiped from his mind.

Anthony Trent was taken to the big room by a footman, the same room he had entered unannounced.

"You must have thought me awfully rude," Arthur Grenvil said cordially, "but my sister had told you the reason. She says I used to know you." Grenvil looked at him wistfully, "I think she said I had saved your life."

"You did," Trent answered promptly. And then, because he was sorry for the ex-"Tommy" but more because he loved the other's sister, he plunged into a stirring account of the incident omitting the part of the exchange of confidences.

"Apparently," said Grenvil, "it was the only decent thing I did during those dreadful forgotten years. If you knew the agony of not knowing what I did and dreading every day to learn something more of my career you'd pity me. I couldn't meet Castoon. They say I was a sort of secretary to him for six months and he had to send me away. All I remember of him is that he was my father's private secretary when I was a small boy of ten and my father ambassador at Constantinople. I'm afraid to see any of the people who come here."

"That will pass," Trent said reassuringly, "you'll get a grip on yourself as your health improves."

"That's what Daphne says," Arthur answered, "Isn't she splendid?"

"Indeed she is," Trent said not daring to put the fervor in his voice that he felt. There was almost an uncanny feeling in talking with this new Arthur Grenvil. As a judge of men, and as a man who had met a great number of criminals and could estimate them accurately, Trent had known even in the darkness of the dug-out that Private William Smith was bad.

Despite the absence of coarseness from the speech of the unseen man Trent had felt that he was evil and dangerous, a man to watch carefully. And this same man stripped of his mantle of black deeds was now sitting talking to him with the deferential air of the junior listening with respect to his superior in years and his superior in knowledge.

What a *rôle* for Anthony Trent, master criminal! But he played it as well as any of the parts he had set himself to enact. He became the elder brother, the sage counsellor, the arbiter, the physical trainer and the constant companion. In the beginning he cheerfully set out to play the part in order to win Daphne's approval. Later he really liked Arthur. He taught him to drive the high powered Lion car that was seldom used by the earl's chauffeurs and discovered in him an aptitude for mechanics which delighted his father.

"You have done more for my son than I imagined could be done by anyone," Lord Rosecarrel said gratefully.

"I owe him no small debt," Anthony Trent retorted, "and it's a very pleasant way of trying to pay it."

It was not often that he saw the earl. Occasionally they played a game of billiards after dinner but the elder man was constantly occupied with reading when he was not aboard his boat. Since he had come to Cornwall, Trent had discovered what an important personage Lord Rosecarrel had been in the political life of his country until his sudden resignation a year before the war. Every now and then Trent would see regret expressed in a London paper or weekly review that he would not place his vast knowledge of the near East at his country's disposal.

There was still considerable trouble centering about the Balkans; and since the earl had been minister or ambassador at Belgrade, Bucharest and Constantinople he knew the country as few could hope to do without his experience.

The prime minister himself, snatching a few days of golf at Newquay, motored over to the castle to lunch and asked his host personally to come from his retirement. It happened that Trent was lunching at the castle and heard the earl's decision not to leave private life. There was an incident in connection with this which made a curious impression on the American.

When he had declined to represent his country finally, Lord Rosecarrel looked over the table at his son who was talking gaily and did not observe the glance. It was a look almost of hate that the earl flashed at him. Then it passed and was succeeded by the melancholy which the old aristocrat's face habitually wore.

Trent was certain none had seen but he and he had never seen an evidence of it before.

He reflected that Arthur was never wholly at ease in his father's company. Again and again he had caught a certain shamed look when the earl was speaking. Of course it was the knowledge of how in the forgotten years he had disgraced an honored name. That was understandable. But why should the father who knew all and had forgiven suddenly throw this look of hate over the table at the unconscious son?

"Arthur," said Trent one day to Lady Daphne, "looks as if he were still begging forgiveness. Why?"

"It must be fancy on your part," she said and changed the subject instantly.

He supposed it was some other skeleton, from that full closet, whose rattling bones had not been buried yet. There was something which still rankled in the earl's memory. He knew he would never find its origin from Daphne.

His intimacy with the Grenvils began to alarm him. It was a fellowship which must sooner or later come to an end. He was utterly without vanity when it came to his relationship with Lady Daphne; but his love for her gave him such an insight and sympathy with her that he could not but be conscious that of late a softer mood had come to her when they were alone together.

He knew that she looked for his presence where before she had been indifferent. Sometimes when they touched hands at parting there was the faint, lingering hold which said more than looks or spoken words. It distressed him to hear that she had defended him valiantly when the wife of a nearby landowner had referred to him as an American adventurer and fortune hunter. Daphne had sprung to his rescue in a flash. Half the country gossiped about it. It was very loyal of her, he felt, but also very unwise.

The earl had heard of it and was displeased. But he trusted his daughter and Trent was working amazing changes with Arthur. It was only when the prime minister spoke of the American that Lord Rosecarrel knew he must not ignore the thing any longer.

"And who is the good looking lad upon whose words your daughter hangs?"

"A delightful fellow," the earl said, "I don't know what Arthur would have done without him. He is reconstructing the poor boy."

And indeed the earl was fond of the stranger. But his daughter must marry into

her own station in life. His other girl's home was in France and he wanted Daphne to remain in England. It occurred to him as very strange that he had made so few inquiries into Trent's antecedents. He supposed it was the man's personal charm and the fact that he was himself not in good health that had allowed him to be careless. One day at a dinner that came in the week after the prime minister's visit, a dinner to which Trent alone was bidden, he said:

"We shall miss you very much when you have to go, Mr. Trent, but I suppose your affairs in America call you imperatively."

Anthony Trent made no answer for the moment. It was as though sentence of death had been passed upon him. He could only admit that this was the logical if long-delayed end to the pleasantest days of his life. He had brought it on himself by his own weakness. For all his strength he was in some ways deplorably weak. He had been weak to leave the ways of honest men. Primarily he had none of those grudges against organized society which drive some men to crime. He had fallen because he was tired of narrow ways of life and a toil which offered few high rewards.

And, more than all, he had been weak in that he had encouraged an intimacy with a family of this type. The Lady Daphne was not for him. He called to mind a phrase that Miss Barham had said about Castoon at this very table. She had said there was nothing financially shady about him which might prevent marriage between him and Daphne. No matter how much Anthony Trent sought to deceive himself about his way of crime and comfort himself with the reflection he never despoiled the poor or worthy but inevitably set himself against the rich and undeserving, he knew he stood condemned in the eyes of decent men and women. He was aware that Daphne and Arthur were listening for his answer. Daphne's face was white.

"I shall miss you all, sir," he said, "more than I can say."

"You are not really going?" Arthur cried.

"I must," he said. "My affairs at home need looking after and I have lingered on here forgetting everything."

Lady Daphne said nothing. He did not dare to look at her. He knew she was thinking that but for her father's mention of his leaving she might not have known until he chose to tell; and he had told another first.

Because he was grateful that Trent had been quick to take the hint the Earl of Rosecarrel was particularly gracious to his guest and proposed a game of

billiards.

It was while the old nobleman was making a break that Daphne dropped into a chair at Trent's side.

"Are you really going?" she asked.

"I ought never to have stayed so long," he answered.

"Do you want to go?"

"You know I don't," he said passionately.

"And is your business so important?"

"Wait," he said rising to his feet when his opponent had finished a break of fifty-three. "It's my turn."

"I have never," said the earl, chalking his cue, "seen you miss that particular shot before."

Anthony Trent came to the girl's side.

"We can't talk here," he whispered. "The hounds meet at Michaelstowe tomorrow and draw the Trenewth covers. Will you be out?"

"Yes," she said, "but what chance shall we have to talk there?"

"We can lose the field," he said, "and ride back over the moors alone."

Arthur Grenvil had taken the mastership of the North Cornwall Foxhounds and persuaded Trent to follow them. The American had added a couple of better-bred faster horses to his hack and now enjoyed the gallop after a fox as much as any hardened foxhunter of them all.

A fox was discovered almost immediately when the Trenewth covers were drawn and got well away making in a westerly direction for the Wadebridge road. Daphne and Trent made a pretense of following but soon drew apart from the rest. The music of hounds became fainter and they turned back to the moors.

"You might have told me," she said reproachfully.

"I didn't know," he answered, "I only realized when your father spoke that it was more or less a command."

"My father may be the lord-lieutenant of the county," she said, "but he has no power to send a man away if the man doesn't want to go."

"Can you think I want to go?" he demanded.

"I only know you are not going to stay."

She touched her horse lightly on the shoulder and put him to a canter. Trent saw that she was heading for Rough Tor, one of the two mountains guarding the moorlands. Once or twice they had ridden to its rocky top and looked at the hamlets through whose chimneys the peat smoke rose, and those strange hut circles of a prehistoric people. The path along which she went was too narrow to permit him to ride by her side and he was forced to ride in silence for almost an hour.

When she dismounted at Rough Tor and he tethered the horses to a short wind shorn tree he could see she was not the same cheerful girl of yesterday.

"Why did you stay here so long?" she asked presently.

"Because I love you," he answered.

"Why do you go away?"

"Because I love you better than I knew."

She looked at him with a faint smile.

"That is very hard to understand, Tony."

It was the first time she had ever called him by the name her brother used. He took one of her gauntleted hands and kissed it.

"My dear," he said tenderly, "it is crucifixion for me."

She looked at him still with the little wistful smile on her face.

"And are you the only one to suffer?"

The knowledge that she cared as much as he did brought a look of misery to his face where only triumph should have reigned.

"Ada Barham told me about the girl in America," she continued. "Of course I imagined there would be a girl somewhere whom you cared for but I think you might have confided in me. Weren't we good friends enough for that?"

"There is no girl anywhere," he said. "I told Miss Barham that because I didn't want her to suspect it was you."

"Then why must you go away?" There was almost a wail in her voice.

"I have told you," he answered, trying desperately to keep his voice even, "I must go because I love you better than anything else in life."

She laughed a little bitterly.

"And so that is how men behave when they are in love!"

"When a man really loves a girl he should think first of her happiness."

She looked at him simply. There was none of the false shame that lesser natures might feel in avowing love.

"Don't you understand," she said in a low voice, "that you are my happiness?"

For a moment the devil tempted him even as the Son of Man had been tempted upon a mountain top. Why should he think of the future when today was so sweet? In the big Lion car in the castle garage he could make Southampton in time enough for the White Star liner which went out tomorrow. They could be married on board or at any rate directly they reached America. Then with the money he had saved they could be happy. She was the woman he wanted, the woman he worshipped.

Then the other side of the picture presented itself. He saw them married on board and radiantly happy as they approached the land that was to be her home. Then the hard-faced men who showed official badges and informed him he was wanted for a series of crimes which would keep him away from wife and home and liberty until she was an old woman. One ending to the trip was just as likely as the other. Situated as he was he could never be certain of safety. This period in quiet Cornwall was the first time since he had taken to crime that he had become almost careless. He would break Daphne's heart for she was of the kind who would never love another man. And the disgrace he would bring upon this kindly family of hers which had suffered enough already. The screeching headlines in the press of the earl's daughter who married a crook. It was not to be thought of.

"Dear," he said softly, "if there were any obstacles which could be removed by human effort I should not say goodbye like this. Please don't ask me to tell you anything more."

"You said at Dereham that you felt you could sell your soul for a past. Is that it?"

"That is the irrevocable thing," he told her.

"Pasts can be lived down," she whispered.

"Not mine," he said dismally. "Daphne I have not been here all this time without knowing you and the sort of people from whom you spring. It is because of your tradition of honor that you felt Arthur's misfortunes so much. I can bring upon you and yours a greater disgrace than he could."

"I won't believe it," she cried.

"I don't want you to," he said gratefully. "I remember the thing said about your family, 'the Grenvils for Loyalty' and I love you for it, but Lady Polruan was right when she called me an unknown adventurer from America. The other countrymen of mine you meet here, like Conington Warren for instance, have their place at home. I haven't. I am without the pale. They don't know me and I can't know them. There is that great gulf fixed which you can never understand. I want to go away leaving you still my friend. If you ask me questions about myself and I answer them truly I may have to carry away with me the picture of your scorn. Be kind, Daphne and don't ask any more."

"I should never scorn you," she cried.

He put his arms about her and kissed her.

"My dear," he whispered, "my sweet, believe always that there is something God himself could not alter or I would never give you up like this."

"It is very hard," she said presently, "to have found love and then to know it must only be a little dream that passes."

"It is my just punishment," he answered.

"When do you go?"

"Tomorrow."

She put her arms about his neck and looked him full in the eyes.

"Darling," she said, "I shall never love anybody but you. Girls always say that, I know, but I have always been a little afraid of love and its exactions and the sorrow it brings. You see I was right in being afraid for directly I find you I must lose you." She leaned forward, one elbow on her knee, and looked at the countryside spread out at her feet. "I shall probably live here to be an old woman and look after other old women and see they have tea and warm wraps for the bad weather, and give the old men tobacco. That's all I look forward to. Tony, Tony, why is it one can't die on the day when one is killed?"

He sat in silence. Bitterly as he regretted his past which had risen to prevent

happiness, he regretted his staying here in Cornwall even more. If he alone had suffered it were well enough, part indeed of the punishment he merited. But to have dragged this girl into it and to have made her love a man who could never marry her was the blackest of all. Perhaps she suspected it for she turned to him and put her hand on his.

"Poor Tony," she said caressingly, "it's no good blaming yourself. It had to be. I think I've always loved you. Before it is too late and you are gone away, are you sure this thing that stands between us cannot be banished or atoned or paid for in money? You know I have a large fortune of my own and it is all yours if you need it. Don't let any little thing stand between us. Where one loves wholly one can forgive all. I shall not ask you again; but, my dear, if any human agency can give you to me let me know."

Anthony Trent thought of the view he once had of a great penitentiary in which a man he used to know was serving a life sentence. The prison was set among arid country in sandy plains. Along the top of the stone walls sentries were placed at intervals, men with sawed-off shot guns waiting the opportunity to kill such as sought to escape the dreary days and dreadful nights. His friend made the desperate attempt and died as warders crowded about him and congratulated the guard on his markmanship. It was this place which might at any moment receive the person of Anthony Trent.

He could not think of the law as a human agency. That was one of the differences between the Anthony Trent, writer and Anthony Trent, crook. The writer regarded the law and its officers with a certain meed of respect but the criminal hated them.

"There is nothing that can help me," he said.

There was silence for a little; then she rose to her feet and pointed out scarlet coated men in the distance and galloping horses. Arthur's hounds had lost their fox in Tregenna woods and had found another stout dog fox headed for his earth on the moors.

"We can follow after all," she said, with an attempt to be cheerful.

They kissed silently and then remounted the impatient hunters. By devious ways they joined the field again. The moorland was a dangerous country to ride. Great stone walls divided small fields and there were sunken roads and paths by which, thousands of years before, the Phœnicians had taken their way.

It was observed with what recklessness the American rode.

"He'll break his neck if he isn't careful," said a rosy faced old "hunting parson," as Trent set his horse at a great granite barrier.

He was not to know that Anthony Trent would have welcomed just such an end.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SENTENCE OF BANISHMENT

Lord Rosecarrel who was out with the hounds that day was riding ahead of his daughter when she and her escort joined the field. He was a finely built man and looked exceedingly well in hunting costume. He wore a closely trimmed beard, now almost white, and seemed, so Trent thought, more than his sixty-five years. It was a fine, sensitive face, and the earl had all his days until this strange retirement mixed with the great of the earth and taken part in the councils of nations. This mystery connected with his withdrawal from public affairs intrigued the American. He believed Daphne knew. He was wondering what it was when the earl reined in his horse.

"I am told you leave no later than tomorrow, Mr. Trent, I hope you will dine with us tonight."

Anthony Trent hesitated a moment before answering.

"Thank you," he said, "I should like to."

He knew it would only reopen old wounds but the temptation to see Daphne again was not to be resisted.

It would have been a dull dinner but for the earl. Whether or not he saw Daphne's depression, the disappointment of his son and the disinclination of the visitor to talk, he was entertaining and witty. He asked a number of questions about the United States where his son and heir was. While he played billiards with Arthur, Trent and the girl watched them. In truth they paid little attention to the scores or strokes.

It was not easy to get back to the intimacy of the morning. There was a certain reserve in the girl's manner, and a look of sadness that immeasurably distressed Trent.

"Ours is a tragic family," she said, when he tried to bring her to a brighter mood. "We used to be so happy. My mother was wonderful. She is gone, my two brothers are dead, St. Just is away and my father simply pining away of a dreadful thing that wasn't his fault."

"I wish you would tell me what it is," he said.

"Impossible," she said decisively. "It poisons his whole life."

"It was Arthur's fault, wasn't it?" he demanded.

"What makes you say that?" she returned.

"I know it," he said emphatically, "and whatever he did can be undone and if it's humanly possible I can do it. Is someone blackmailing him?"

He could see she was startled. He must have hit on something not far removed from the truth.

"Not that," she said, looking at where her father was standing apprehensively. "And I'm sure you could do nothing."

"I can try," he said earnestly. "Listen to me, Daphne. I feel that there is nothing in life for me but the memory of you. I want more than anything else to do something for you to prove my love. I have nothing in all life to lose. I have no relations, no friends to speak of. My life has been made up of," he hesitated, "of adventures where I pitted myself against the world and won."

She thought of that night in Dereham. Was that one of his adventures? Certainly he had given her the impression of great strength and resolution. Of all the men she met Rudolph Castoon and Anthony Trent most radiated this uncommon quality.

She looked across the big room to her father. Arthur was making a big break and the earl was not watching him; she knew he was not thinking of the game. He was thinking of that insuperable obstacle which barred him from the work he loved, the work in which he was needed. He looked a sad, broken man and reminded Trent of the portrait of Julius the second, by Raphael, which he had seen in Florence.

"I dare not tell," she said. "It touches big things and would involve many names and would lead you into great peril."

"It would not be the peril for me that you think," he insisted. "I shall know when my hour is to strike. Darling, let me try to do something for the woman I love, for the family where I found such happiness and such sorrow. I have brought so much trouble on you that I want to feel I did something to atone."

He felt for a fleeting moment the warm clasp of her hand.

"You have often been in danger?" she asked.

"It has been my life," he said simply.

"I am afraid to tell my father," she confessed.

"Must he know?" Trent asked.

"Yes. I know the whole hideous thing only in the barest outline."

"I shall broach the subject," he said confidently, "after all I have nothing to lose. I go tomorrow anyway."

She hesitated a moment.

"My father may think you are doing it at a price."

"Instead of which I am offering to help you as atonement."

The light died from her eyes and the hope left her heart. Nothing could alter his decision, nothing apparently blot out the past that held them asunder.

The Earl of Rosecarrel heard Anthony Trent's request for a private interview with a rather troubled mind. He had no doubt it had to do with his daughter. He told himself he had been very careless.

"By all means my dear fellow," he said cordially, "come to my library where we shall be quite alone."

Never had Trent been bidden to this great book lined chamber. It was open neither to those who came on visitors' day nor to the casual guest. It was here the earl and the prime minister were closeted for several hours.

"My lord," Trent began, "I am going to say something that will first of all astonish you and then probably make you angry at what seems presumption."

"I hardly think you will do that," the other said urbanely. He was sure now it had to do with Lady Daphne.

"You have said," Trent went on, "that you are grateful to me for my help to your son, Arthur."

"I am profoundly grateful," the earl said quickly, "you have made a new man of him."

"Then promise me you will not interrupt me by ringing for a servant to show me out."

"I will promise that blindly," smiled the nobleman.

"I owe a debt to your family. Arthur saved my life and I am still a debtor. Since I

have been here I have found out a great deal about your life work. I found out also that at a moment when the Empire most needed you you retired. I know at the present moment your name is being mentioned everywhere as the most suitable for one of the highest offices under the crown. I know the prime minister made a golfing trip to Newquay the excuse to call on you personally. I know that in this very room you refused a request from your sovereign."

There was no doubting the agitation this statement produced in the ex-ambassador. But he was mindful of his promise.

"I know," the inexorable Trent went on, "that your refusal has something to do with what your son did when he was irresponsible. I saw you throw a terrible glance at him during the prime minister's talk over the luncheon table. It told me plainly that remotely or not it was because of something he did that you remain here eating your heart out. Afterwards you were especially kind to him. It was as though you repented your momentary anger. My lord, am I right so far?"

"I do not pretend to understand how you have learned these facts," the earl said slowly, "but you have made no error. What happened is over, dead and done with."

"I'm not so sure," Trent cried. "Perhaps because there was a day when I wrote stories of a rather lurid type I can think of half a hundred things that might seem final to you but which would yield to my type of mind. Nothing is final to us Americans."

Lord Rosecarrel looked at him shrewdly.

"What you say is preposterous, Mr. Trent, but nevertheless it interests me. What causes could this fertile mind of yours suggest?"

"Blackmail first of all," Trent said. Lord Rosecarrel did not give any indication whether the shot told or not. "Blackmail can be sub-divided into many heads."

"And is there a remedy for blackmail, then?" the earl asked blandly.

"A remedy can always be found for things," Trent said confidently.

"It amounts to this," the diplomat continued calmly as though he were discussing an interesting phase in another man's life, "that you suppose I am held inactive here because of the hold some man or government has on me. Admitting for a moment that this is true, do you not suppose that I should have strained every nerve, called upon my every resource to remove the obstacle which you admit has a remedy?"

"I think you have tried and failed," Trent said.

"It is curious," said the earl still impersonally, "how fiction of the type you used to write has taken possession of the public mind."

"I should not fail," Trent said steadily.

"You still persist in making the imaginary real," the earl said good humouredly.

"Why do you fence with me at a time like this?" Trent said making a gesture of despair. "Can't you see I am in earnest?"

"You rate your powers so highly then?"

"You employed amateurs, my lord, I am a professional adventurer."

"What are you doing in my house?"

"Living honest hours and learning that a past can't be undone. I know very well that you thought I wanted to see you because I love your daughter. It is true. I do love her. And it is because I love her that I am going. And it is because I want to prove that I am only truthful when I say that, I offer to undertake anything that may help you."

"But the reward?"

"To have done something for her is the reward."

The earl was silent for a minute. Then he paced the room. Trent watched his tall, bent form wondering what was to be the outcome.

"Mr. Trent," said the earl pausing before him, "you are either a scoundrel or else the most chivalrous gentleman I have ever known. For the moment I hardly know what to think, or say, or do. If I give you my confidence and you abuse it the public will share the knowledge of a disgrace which now only my enemy knows. If you set me free from my bondage you put me under an obligation that I can never pay. If I let you make the attempt in which two men have given their lives and you fail I shall never forgive myself."

"But my lord," Trent reminded him, "I am a professional. I have never failed. I detest a brawl but I love danger, and life means less to me than you might suppose. If I fail you will never be compromised. I shall want no help nor send any plea for assistance. I work alone—always."

The earl did not answer him directly.

"The hounds met at Michaelstowe this morning," he said, "and I took the

opportunity of sending off a wire in reply to this post card which came last night."

Trent looked at it. It was in a language unknown to him.

"It is in Hungarian," Lord Rosecarrel told him, "and it says, 'Please let me know that the report in today's Times that you have accepted office is incorrect.' The telegram I sent to the writer said: 'The report is wrong. I have refused.' There you have my secret. The man who sent the post card, in effect, threatened me with exposure if I came out of retirement."

"Then it is blackmail," Trent breathed.

"I am going to trust you," the earl said suddenly. "I am going to think of you as the chivalrous gentleman. The man who wrote the post card is a very big figure in the politics of what used to be called *mittel Europa*. Our interests clashed. He was on one side and I on the other. It happened that I was usually able to out manœuvre him because my training had been such that no man in public life knew the Balkans as I did, and do still, the wheels within wheels, the inner hidden things that make national sentiment so dangerous at times or so valuable as the case may be. In time he came to think me the one man who could comprehend his activities and check them. He set out to ruin me. He believed his ends justified other methods than I used. I was shot at on the *Ferencz Jozsef rakpart* for example and a companion killed."

"Do you still seem a menace to him?" Trent asked.

"More than ever if I take the position offered me in the near East. You see the rumour in the Times brings instant recognition. I knew he was in London."

Trent looked at the speaker and wondered what it could be which kept him from the work his country demanded of him. Assuredly it was not lack of courage.

"He was in London when he obtained the hold over me that keeps me buried here. Arthur was at the moment a secretary of Rudolph Castoon. One night he opened a strong box of mine and took some bank notes to pay a racing debt. It was a terrible blow to think he had fallen so low, but I was more alarmed to find a tentative draft of a treaty which was never made effective, a document in my own writing, had disappeared. At the time it might have incensed a country since allied with us almost to the point of a declaration of war. Arthur told me it was gibberish to him and he had thrown it on the fire. A month later I was summoned to a cabinet meeting. A friend told me I was to be asked to produce the treaty draft. I called Arthur to see me. I told him my honor was involved and that if he

had not destroyed it or was holding it to sell another power I must know. He gave me his solemn word of honor, uttered in the most convincing manner, that he had thrown it into the open fire.

"When the prime minister asked for the draft I told him I had destroyed it thinking its value gone and fearful of the danger of having it at my house in Grosvenor Place. At the moment I was absolutely convinced that my son had been honest with me. It was obvious I could not tell the cabinet I had caught him stealing money or that he had torn up the draft. I gave the cabinet my word of honor that it was destroyed and I allowed them to assume that I did it. It was a lie and I do not justify its use, but first and foremost my son's protection seemed necessary. It was less than three months later that I received a visit from the man who wrote that post card.

"It was in Paris where I was staying with my daughter. He said that at last he had a weapon which would wound me. Arthur had sold him the draft. He had it concealed where none could get it. Unless I retired from public life and activities he would show it to the same cabinet which had heard me swear I had destroyed it with my own hands. The inference would be that I had sold it. It was known that I had lost money through the failure of a London bank. No matter what the cabinet thought my honor was smirched and I should rightly be considered unfit for high office. There, Mr. Trent, is the real reason."

"Do you know where the draft of the treaty is hidden?"

"In his almost inaccessible castle in Croatia."

"You are certain?"

"Two men have died so that the knowledge might be mine."

"I should imagine he would keep it in the deposit box of a bank where he could get at it quickly."

"Banks can be broken into easier far than his strong room. He lives, despite the changes wrought by the war, in a style almost feudal. He owns and controls twenty square miles of the country where his home is. What chance, I ask you, has a stranger of getting near without incurring suspicion. There are many men who can speak German or French like natives but Hungarian is a different matter, a non-Aryan tongue."

"It should be done from the inside," Trent mused.

"One of them was," the earl told him, "the man who tried was skillful, adroit and

courageous. He had flirted with death a hundred times, just as you have done Mr. Trent, but they set a trap for him there which a fool would have passed by; a trap so skillfully baited that only a clever man would have tried to use it to further his cause. Yet he failed. You have no idea of the household at that fantastic castle in the mountains. You have no idea of the imperious temper and power of the man who owns it, the multitude of servitors who would kill did he but suggest it, the motley company he entertains there."

This mention of many visitors interested Trent.

"He entertains a great deal then?"

"Only those he knows, men and women. The life there as reported to me reads like a chronicle of medieval days."

"The other man who failed—what did he go as?"

"A steeple chase jockey. The count kept a great stud and raced all over Continental Europe. He owned Daliborka the great horse which won the *Grand Prix*."

"The horse that was stolen?"

"Exactly. Daliborka and three other thoroughbreds were missing from the stables. The man who pretended to be a jockey and was instead a man of lineage and wealth secreted the horses at intervals along the forest road that runs from the castle to the coast. It was his idea when he had obtained the draft to make his way by relays to the nearest harbour. The poor fellows never had the opportunity to throw a leg across any of them. You see, Mr. Trent, there is no chance at all."

"I will make one," the American said confidently, "I am going to enjoy this."

"After what I have said you still persist?"

"Because of it," laughed Anthony Trent. He had forgotten everything but the prospect of coming danger, the duel that was to be fought between him and this fabulous magnate. It was characteristic of Trent that he swept aside all other possible inmates of the lonely castle as beneath his notice. His business was with the superior.

"How do you know he is still in London?" Trent demanded.

"I keep myself informed," the earl said. "A newspaper clipping concern sends me every notice of him."

"I want them," the younger man observed, "I want everything that will help me."

He read through the brief notices eagerly and wished English papers discussed personalities with the detail American periodicals employed. The only item that interested him deeply was a notice that Count Michæl Temesvar had visited the automobile show at the Crystal Palace and seemed interested in the new twelve cylinder Lion car.

"Rather humorous in its way," the earl said smiling, "since I own a great deal of stock in that company. That's why I have that inordinately high powered car in the garage which you and Arthur seem to like."

"Humorous!" Trent repeated, "I don't know that it isn't more humorous than you know. Do you think he has any idea you are interested in the company?"

"Few know it," the earl said, "and I don't see why he should when even my friends are ignorant."

"How much of it do you own?" Trent asked eagerly.

"More probably than any one stockholder."

"And a letter from you to the manager would make me solid." He explained the slang, "I mean if you wrote a letter to the manager asking that I be given certain powers would he honor it?"

"Most certainly," the earl answered. "There can be no doubt about it."

CHAPTER EIGHT

COUNT MICHÆL TEMESVAR

Count Michæl Temesvar, when he left behind him the great estate where he ruled as absolute and tyrannical master and came to the fashionable, pleasure-loving London, was a different man.

In London he paid due regard to the conventions and was entertained at great houses and in return offered very splendid receptions to his hosts. Meanwhile he kept a skilled finger on the hardening arteries of new international affairs.

He knew very well that he was suspected of intriguing for monarchial restoration and the confusion of the country where he was so pleasantly entertained, by such men as the Earl of Rosecarrel. But for the main part England still clung to her habit of disbelieving that a man who could be so charming in society would commit the *betise* of plotting where he had played.

He was particularly interested in the Spring Automobile Show at the Crystal Palace. He had heard a great deal of late of the Lion motor and he wanted one. On his first visit to the show he told the manager that the silver model there exhibited was the one that he would buy. He was annoyed that the firm's representative would not allow it to be taken away until the show finished.

On his second visit he was irritated to find that the manager raised objections about selling it at all.

"You see, sir," said the manager, "a car like this demands careful driving and constant attention. Our ordinary model would suit you better."

"I want this because it is said to be the fastest car in the world," Count Michæl returned. "To me the price is nothing."

"It isn't that at all, sir," the manager said. "In confidence it wouldn't do us any good if your own mechanics got it in such a condition it couldn't do its best work. Bad advertisement you understand."

"You think I should have a special chauffeur then? Good. Send me one. Send three if necessary but send me a man who has the nerve to drive along my mountain roads by day or night at any speed I choose."

"That's a tall order, sir," the manager returned.

"But I pay. I always pay better than others because I want better work."

Count Michæl Temesvar beheld a blue-clad mechanic working under a car. He struck him a sharp blow on the leg with his cane. A grimy-faced man emerged rubbing the bruised limb.

"You," said the count peremptorily, "can you drive a car like this Lion?"

The man grinned. The idea seemed to tickle him. He spoke with the cockney accent of his kind.

"Me drive a Lion?" he said. "Ask Mr. King 'ere what I can do."

"I couldn't let him go," said Mr. King quickly. "He is my best demonstrator and a wonder at tuning up an engine."

Count Michæl ignored the protesting manager.

"What is your wage?"

"I get five pound a week."

"I give you ten. You are my man. You leave for my place in Croatia when the show is over. My secretary will see you are looked after. Serve me well and you will never regret it. I am generous, when I am pleased." He turned to his companion. "See that all arrangements are made. If he has a wife and children bring them if he desires it. If he will be happier without them let them remain here. I must have him. He has intelligence and industry. Look you, he has gone back to his work. He loves his engine as a good groom does his horse."

The mechanic had indeed crawled again under the huge car. The count could have added that he was cautious for he drew his legs well into cover.

The count and the secretary went off. The secretary was to call at the office next day and arrange things. The manager was deferential, but when they had left the glass-roofed hall he permitted himself to laugh. Then he crossed to the car and bent down.

"It's all right, Mr. Trent," he said, "they've gone now; you can come out."

Anthony Trent looked up at him and grinned.

"You can always get a job as an actor," he said.

"Your accent is a bit of all right," the manager returned, gratified.

"If it's etiquette for a manager to have a drink with a mere oil-stained mechanic as I am, lead on to the nearest place."

"Well," said the manager later, "what do you think of him?"

Anthony Trent rubbed his leg.

"He struck me," said Trent in a curious, musing way. There was something in his tone which made the manager look at him quickly. Anthony Trent's face was grim and set.

"I don't think he meant it that way," Mr. King replied. He had visions of assault and battery.

"Some day I shall give him the opportunity to apologize," said the American.

Mr. King had received personal instructions from the chairman of the Lion Motor, Ltd., to obey Mr. Anthony Trent in every particular. Mr. Trent was to be allowed to have the run of the shops and the most expert mechanics in the firm were to put all they knew at his disposal.

Anthony Trent started by giving the manager the best dinner he had ever eaten. Then he coached him in the *rôle* of a manager anxious not to lose his best demonstrator. King was delighted that Count Michæl walked into the trap set for him eagerly. He liked Trent but thought poorly of his chances in a tussle with this big girthed foreigner.

"Must be fifty inches round the chest," he observed, sipping his drink delicately, "and most of it muscle. One of the most powerful men I've ever laid eyes on, Mr. Trent. Built like a wrestler. About five feet ten I judge, a couple of inches less than you but five stone heavier."

"What was the big car on the aisle opposite us at the show?" Trent asked, as King thought, irrelevantly.

"The 'Amazon,'" King answered scornfully. "All varnish and silver plate and upholstery with a motor that isn't worth a tinker's dam."

"That's like the count," Trent smiled, "champagne, high living and general dissipation have made a shell of him. He looks well enough to the eye, like that Amazon car, but call on the motor and you'll see 'em both hang out distress signals."

"Maybe," King conceded, "I'll put my bet on the Lion," he smiled in a friendly fashion at the other, "and the Eagle."

They fell to talking technicalities and kept it up till the hour when Michæl, Count Temesvar went to dine at a house in Bruton street. He told his host that as a compliment to this country, his second home, he had just bought an English car and engaged an English chauffeur. The other guests thought it so broad-minded of him. He further endeared himself to his company by deploring the retirement of his old adversary, that eminent diplomat, the Earl of Rosecarrel.

His old adversary's occupation at the moment would have surprised him. The earl was devising an ingenious cipher code having, it would seem to the uninitiated, the various parts of a Lion motor which might need replacing by telegram to the London factory. Anthony Trent would take a copy with him, carefully concealed, and any telegram sent by him to the works would instantly be forwarded to the code's inventor.

"What makes you so cheerful?" his daughter asked as she bade him goodnight.

"That amazing American of yours," he answered.

"'Of mine,'" she repeated. But even in the grip of her unhappiness she was not sure that the dim future did not hold some alleviation.

Few people were more careful of appearances than Anthony Trent. He was always dressed with quiet distinction. In the early days of a profession where it is not well to be too prominent, he chafed at this restraint. Later he saw that it was the sign of sartorial eminence.

On assuming the name and characteristics of Alfred Anthony he also had to dress the part and talk the part. From the men in the Lion shop he had, with his mimic's cleverness, taken on their peculiar intonations and slang until he certainly could deceive a foreigner. And since he was thorough he forced himself to smoke the part.

He accompanied his great silver car across the channel to Ostend dressed as the men in the shop dressed. And he moved with their brisk, perky quickness and he alternated between shag in a bull-dog pipe and Woodbine cigarettes. He was glad that Mr. Hentzi, the count's secretary observed his altercation at the Belgian port with a customs official who made him pay duty on an excess number of cigarettes.

"Ah," said Mr. Hentzi with condescension, "the cigarette of the Briteesh

Tommee!"

At Ostend, Trent superintended the despatch of his charge by fast freight and then took the trans-continental express to Budapest. He was to wait for the car and drive it to its new home. During the few days he was forced to idle in the Hungarian capital he deplored the fact that new status prevented him from going to the Bristol or the Grand Hotel Royal. He stayed, instead, at an hotel of the second class and encountered little friendliness. English or Americans, it seemed, were still regarded as enemies.

He was saved from any violence by Hentzi's announcement that he must be fitted for the Temesvar livery. It was no use to rebel. With incredible swiftness the tailor turned it out. Trent looked at himself in the glass with the utmost distaste. The color scheme was maroon and canary yellow. He likened himself to those who stood before the fashionable stores on Fifth avenue and opened limousine doors.

"With that livery," Hentzi said impressively, "you will be safe; you will be respected."

Anthony Trent was too much overwhelmed to answer him. Certainly the Anthony Trent who stared back at him from the mirror was a stranger. He was wearing his hair longer than usual and a small moustache was already sprouting. The hawklike look was not evident. He wore, instead, an air of innocence that was Chaplinesque. Hentzi took this look of scrutiny to be one of pride.

"You must have your photograph taken and send it to your best girl," he laughed, "she will make all the other ones jealous."

"Yes," said the man who suddenly remembered he was Alfred Anthony of Vauxhall Bridge Road, "she'll be fair crazy about it. Just like me."

But he did not wear it much. He preferred the chance of a row with the populace to his unwished for splendor. The days of delay gave him leisure to think over coming difficulties. He conceded he had been led away by emotion and enthusiasm when he was betrayed into boasting of his prowess. The two men who had failed had been good men no doubt and they were dead.

Such a man as Temesvar must know that the brain who originated the attempt at recovery of the draft was still scheming. The count must constantly be on the watch. And if so, why had he engaged Alfred Anthony with so little investigation? Like most high grade criminals, Anthony Trent was apt to suspect simple actions when performed by men of the Temesvar type and impute to them

subtle motives. He wished he had been able to take a longer look at the count instead of his momentary talk.

He reminded Trent very much of the celebrated painting of Francis the First, that sensual monarch who was devoted to the chase, masquerades, jewelry and the pursuit of the fair. But Francis, for all his accomplishments, was weak and frivolous while Temesvar was ruthless and a power, if Lord Rosecarrel was to be believed.

Before he left London Trent had secured what road maps he could of Hungary and particularly the Adriatic coast of Dalmatia and Croatia. At his hotel he spread them out on the table and spent hours poring over them.

He ventured to ask Mr. Hentzi some particulars of the place, and why Count Michæl had gone to the expense of importing the chauffeur and the car when he had many machines in his garage and so many men at his command.

Hentzi told him the count needed a clear-eyed, temperate man who could make great speed and make it safely.

"Most of our men," Hentzi declared, "drink *shlivovitza*, a brandy made of plums, and there are people who visit the count whose lives must not be imperilled by recklessness."

"What about the roads?" Trent asked thinking of the weight of the Lion and its tremendous wheel-base.

"From Karlstadt to Fiume runs the Maria Louise road which is superb. It is one over which you will pass many times. Then there is the Josephina road from Zengg and many fine highways built not for the Croatian peasants but for strategic purposes. You have seen in this war which is passed what good roads mean, eh?"

"You 'it it on the 'ed, Guv'ner," Trent said cheerfully. "What do I go down to Fiume for?"

"To meet passengers from the steamers or from the count's yacht. It is one hundred and twenty miles from Fiume to Radna Castle. What could you do that distance in? The road down the mountain to Karlstadt is good but narrow."

Alfred Anthony spat meditatively.

"The old girl will do it in three hours," he said, "she'll shake 'em up a bit inside but if there aren't no traffic cops or big towns I can do it in three hours or bit more."

"No. No," Hentzi cried nervously, "that is suicide. We have been satisfied to take six hours."

"With 'orses?" Alfred Anthony demanded, "pretty good time with 'orses, but this is a Lion."

Hentzi sat on the front seat during the long drive and pointed out the path. On the whole he was a good natured man but he did not permit the count's chauffeur to forget that he was talking to the count's secretary. Hentzi had formerly been a clerk in the estate office of the Temesvar family and had been promoted to his present position because he was faithful and a good linguist.

He was afraid of the count. Trent could detect a fear of him whenever the name was mentioned. When Hentzi warned the new chauffeur to be careful if his employer was in an angry mood the American demanded the reason.

"If I do my duty," said the pseudo mechanic, "he can't hurt me."

"You talk as a child talks," Hentzi laughed. "He will do as he likes and as the devils that are in him at the moment. He fears neither God, man, nor devil. Pauline only may mock when he rages."

"Who is Pauline?" Trent asked, "the missus?"

"The Countess," Hentzi said with dignity, "is in perpetual retreat with the Ursuline sisters near Vienna."

"Is Pauline the daughter?"

"His daughters are married." Hentzi laughed, "Castle Radna is not a place where it is wise to ask questions. You think because his excellency was cheerful when you last saw him he is like that always? I tell you if Pauline has been unkind he may visit it on you. I prefer that he does. I am tired of his humours and you are younger and stronger."

"You don't mean he might hit me?" Trent cried.

Hentzi seemed to find Trent's anxious manner amusing.

"Most certainly he will," the secretary assured him, "but you need not be alarmed. He will fling you gold when his temper has spent itself."

"I'm not going to let any man strike me," Trent said doggedly. "It would raise the devil in me and I might be sorry for it."

"You would," Hentzi said thinking that the chauffeur meant he might lose his

job.

Anthony Trent, instead, was thinking that he might, in order to succeed in his venture, have to submit to indignities that would be torture to one of his temperament. It would not be wise to let the secretary know this so he turned the subject to the woman who dare laugh when the count was angry.

"Who is Pauline?" he asked.

"She was a skater from the Winter Palace in Berlin. She is beautiful or she would not be at Castle Radna; she is clever or she could not control Count Michæl who has broken many women's hearts. She is bad or she would not have driven the countess from her home. For myself I hate her and the men and women with whom she fills the place."

"So they keep a lot of company up there?"

"Company!" Hentzi replied, "there is no such castle in Europe. I have seen life in Buda and Vienna but up there! You may be sure when the master drinks champagne the servants will drink *shlivovitza*. But do not think they are all Pauline's friends. No. No. The great of the world come there too and Pauline's friends are banished. You will drive great personages up from Fiume and you will not know who they are or what their errand."

"Is the count a politician?"

Hentzi laughed with good natured contempt at such a naïve query. Not to know Michæl, Count Temesvar's reputation in the field of world politics was to admit ignorance of all the troubled currents which worried kings and presidents.

He was rudely brought back from his lofty attitude by the sudden stopping of the car. He was almost thrown from his seat.

"Look!" Trent cried, pointing to a piece of close cropped turf, "a golf green as I live."

"What of it?" Hentzi snapped, "what do you know of golf?"

"I used to be a caddie," Trent lied glibly. "Who plays there?"

"The count because his doctor tells him to. I because I hate it, and Pauline that her figure may remain seductive. Thank God there are but nine holes! It encourages our master to have one man who always plays worse than he. Look, that is the castle."

Almost under the shadows of Mount Sljeme the rugged building lay. Around it,

nestling at its gates were many other lesser stone buildings which Hentzi told him were stables, dwellings and out-houses. It was situated in the *Zagorje* or land beyond the hills and had, despite its fine gardens and the green turf of the links a forbidding air.

When the Lion was run into its garage Hentzi introduced the new chauffeur to the man with whom he was to live, a man who with his wife had one of the cottages outside the castle wall. Peter Sissek, the man, was unfriendly from the start. He resented the importation of a chauffeur with the new car as a slight to his own skill. But as he spoke only Croatian and Hungarian, and Trent understood neither tongue, his grievances were not voluble.

CHAPTER NINE

PAULINE

Anthony Trent met Pauline in rather a curious way. He had been a week at Castle Radna and had not been commanded to drive the count. Then Hentzi had informed him Count Michæl was sick of a bad cold. Sissek by virtue of being senior in the Temesvar service tried to get the new man to help him with his own cars but Trent absolutely declined.

He had assumed a certain post in order to carry out a design but his duties lay with the Lion car and he left the Croatian grumbling and set out for a tour of inspection. Naturally his steps led him to the little golf course a mile distant. There were no long holes and the course was hardly trapped at all. It was just the kind of place elderly men, who played a weak game, would revel in.

By the first tee was a little rustic pavilion. Through the windows Trent could see three or four golf bags. The temptation was too strong to resist. He picked the locks with the blade of a pocket knife and found himself in a comfortable room. The count's golf bag contained excellent clubs and plenty of balls. He looked at the balls and knew the count's game instantly. They were bitten into by the irons of a strong man. Trent shuddered at the gashes and then, selecting a new ball and a putter and driver went out on the nearby green. It was sheltered from all observation and he putted for a few minutes.

In the distance he could see the first green. It looked to be a little under three hundred yards distant; and it lay beneath, sweetly tempting to a long driver.

Anthony Trent had for some years now lived a life in which he denied himself nothing. He had reached out for such treasures as only a millionaire may buy. The question of right or wrong in the matter of using his employer's clubs bothered him little. He did not want to be observed in case the privilege were denied him.

He teed up his ball, made a few preliminary swings and then struck the white sphere with perfectly timed strength. He watched it rise, fall and roll almost to the edge of the green. He would certainly make it in three.

Then he turned round to look into the astonished face of a very beautiful woman.

There was something in the general effect, quickly seen, which reminded him of Lady Daphne; but as he looked he saw this girl was older. He doubted the genuineness of the golden hair and he saw that art had aided nature in the facial make-up. But she was no more than eight and twenty and her figure differed from Daphne's slim, almost boyish slightness. She was dressed in a curious shade of green. It was a tint he thought he had never seen before until he looked into her eyes and saw it there reflected.

Pauline had known the count had engaged a chauffeur from London but she assumed him to be of the usual type. She had no idea that the man who had just made such a superb drive was he. Pauline had been used to much social enjoyment of a sort and while Count Michæl had been away she had to behave circumspectly. She was dull and she was bored; and now, as though an answer to prayer, Fate had sent her a handsome young man who stood like a bronze statue as he followed the flight of the ball.

Since the count had given permission for the families of the neighbouring landowners to use his course she imagined it to be one of these or perhaps a guest at some local mansion.

Anthony Trent was never one who made a habit of the pursuit of the fair. His profession had taught him caution. Almost always the feminine element had brought the great criminals to peril. There had been one or two harmless flirtations but his love for Daphne was the great affair of his life. He groaned when he looked into Pauline's bold eyes and saw admiration looking from them. Other women had looked at him like that. Pauline was absolute at Castle Radna. Her enmity might be very harmful. Her friendship might be ruinous.

He assumed the bearing of Alfred Anthony which he had abandoned unconsciously. He even touched his cap to the lady as a servant who habitually wears livery should do. She frowned as he did so.

"Who are you?" she said in German.

"I'm the new chauffeur, miss," he returned in English.

"What are you doing here, then?"

"Having a bit of a game," he said with an air of timidity. "I hope you won't tell the guv'nor."

"The guv'nor?" she repeated.

"The count," he said, "the old toff with the beard."

Trent produced a Woodbine and lighted it luxuriously. He had all the quick nervous gestures of the cockney.

"Where did you learn to play golf like that?" she asked, looking at the white speck almost three hundred yards distant.

"Anyone can make a fluky drive," he said, "one drive doesn't make a golfer, Miss. I used to be a caddie at the Royal Surrey Club."

"Then you can carry my clubs," she said. She looked at him with a frown. "How is it the door is open?"

"Someone must have forgot to shut it," Trent said simply. "I just walked in."

All his excuses to get back to his garage were ineffectual.

"You will understand later," she said imperiously, "that if I order a servant to obey me he must do so. I wish you to teach me to play better golf. I shall pay you."

"I'll be glad to have a little extra money to send the mis'sus," said Trent cheerfully.

"That means you are married, eh?" she said.

"You've 'it it," he smiled.

He misjudged Pauline if he thought this would have any effect upon her. She was a specialist in husbands, an expert in emotional reactions.

Pauline played a very fair game. She had not been properly taught. But she was strong and lithe and although she had begun the game in order to keep her figure she played it now because she liked it. When she had performed professionally in London and big provincial cities she had seen that efficiency in some sport or another was *de rigueur* among women of importance and she hankered after the social recognition that unusual skill at sports often brought with it.

"Make another such drive," she commanded after she had driven only a hundred yards. "Not like mine, but like your first."

Trent having committed himself to a term of caddiedom at a great club where caddies have risen to the heights as professionals, he was not compelled to play a bad game. Pauline had never seen such golf and she worshipped bodily skill at games or sports more than any mental attainments. His short approaches amazed her. The skill with which at a hundred yards he could drop on a green and remain there with the back spin on the ball seemed miraculous.

"I shall play every day," she decided, "and you shall tell me how to become a great player."

"What about me and my motor?" he objected, "I came to drive a car and not a golf ball."

"I shall arrange it," she said, "Peter Sissek can drive."

"Not my car," he cried, "I'm not going to have no blooming mucker like him drive my Lion."

Her green eyes were narrowed when she looked at him.

"There are a hundred men who would give all they had for such an opportunity," she said slowly.

"Let 'em," he said quickly, "I'm a chauffeur and mechanic."

At the last hole she made a poor topped drive and the ball landed in a bad lie. It was an awkward stroke and he corrected her stance and even showed her how to grip the club when suddenly he was struck a tremendous blow on the back of the head. He was thrown off his balance but was up like a cat, dazed a little but anxious to see what had hit him. He thought it was a golf ball. It was Count Michæl instead. He looked more like Francis the First than ever. His eyes were blazing with anger. He had stolen upon them unaware at a moment when Trent's hand was holding the white hand of Pauline as he tried to explain the grip.

The count was too angry to understand the look that Trent threw at him or to realize how nearly the pseudo-chauffeur lost control of himself. But Trent pulled himself together, dissembled his wrath, remembered his mission, and even presented a rueful but free from resentment appearance.

"'Ere guv'nor," he cried, "steady on! I 'aven't done anythink."

"It is you I blame," the count said to Pauline. He spoke in German and ignored Alfred Anthony. "Why is it unknown to me you bring my servant to play with you?"

Certainly Pauline had no fear of the magnate.

"Because he has been a professional caddie and plays so well I can learn the game. Since your game is contemptible with whom can I play here?"

"I beat Hentzi every time," stormed the Count.

"Hentzi," she laughed, "he is afraid of you. I am not. This man is useful. I have

told him he is to carry my clubs when I play. Do you object to that?"

"By no means," the count said becoming more amiable. "I see no objection; but as he has two arms he can carry mine also. He is a *beau garçon* Pauline and I do not permit his filthy fingers to touch the hand I kiss." He turned to Trent. "How is it you are here and not at your work?"

"I took a bit of a walk," Trent answered.

"And finding him near the pavilion I told him to carry my clubs," Pauline added in English. "What is strange in that?"

Sissek with a Fiat car was waiting by the pavilion. He had driven his master down and took Pauline back as well. He did not understand why the new man was carrying golf clubs. He brightened when the count spoke to him in rapid Croatian.

"I am telling him," the count said, "that there is plenty of work for you to do. He will find it if you cannot. And as Peter is very strong and as short tempered as his lord I bid you be careful."

Trent's temper was not sufficiently under control to keep a sneer from his face.

His grin was superbly insolent. He forgot his cockney accent and his acquired vocabulary.

"I'm afraid," he said, "you are not as good a judge of men as you are of women."

"What is this you say?" the count demanded frowning.

"I mean that if your fool-faced Peter there can make me do anything against my will he shall have *my* salary as well as his own. You came behind me when I wasn't looking and hit me. I can't resent that—yet, but warn him if he tries anything on me like that I'll—" He paused conscious of having said too much and aware that Pauline was gazing at him with vivid interest. "I'll make him sorry." Trent felt it was a weak ending.

"He is funny, this new chauffeur from London is he not Pauline?"

But Pauline had a mischievous idea. She spoke to Peter Sissek, that powerful and jealous servant, and he flashed a look of hatred at Trent. He thoroughly believed that the new man had indeed made the insulting remarks Pauline ascribed to him.

"Michæl," said Pauline caressingly, "let us see what this bold man would do if Peter threatened him. We will not let Peter hurt him but it will be a lesson."

Pauline knew men and she saw in Trent one who could not easily be forced to do anything.

Poor Peter Sissek urged by his master to avenge himself upon this hated alien rushed to his fate. In a way Trent was sorry. He had no real grievance against the man. But Peter was immensely strong and spurred on by a lively hatred. It was his idea to get his long arms about the slenderer man and throw him to the ground and there beat his sneering face in. He was stopped in his rush by a stinging left jab which caught him square on an eye. While he stood still in amazement another blow fell, this time on his nose.

The big man paused in angry amazement that one built so much more slenderly than he could hit with this terrific force. Pauline leaned forward her lips parted and the red flush of excitement victor over art's rouge. She was a woman of violent loves and hates and had urged many a love sick swain into unequal contest for amusement's sake. Although Trent had attracted her she was not sure that she did not want to see Sissek punish him. He had paid as little attention to her charms as though he thought she was old and ugly.

As she looked at the foreigner she noted that his face had changed. He looked keen, hawklike, dangerous. It would have been wiser for Anthony Trent had he allowed Peter Sissek to triumph.

Then, suddenly, Peter made a rush. He put down his bullet head and jumped at his man. Anthony Trent saw the opportunity for as pretty an upper-cut as one might need. For Peter Sissek it was the whole starry firmament in its splendor that showed itself, and then the night came down.

"He has killed Peter!" the count roared.

"That is not death," Pauline said clapping her hands.

For an uneasy moment the count remembered that not many minutes earlier he had buffetted this quiet, grim fighter, this same man who hit his opponent at will and evaded his enemy's blows with practised ease. These English speaking peoples with their odd notions of independence and their skill with their brutal fists were dangerous. It might well be that even he, Michæl Temesvar had best remember his new chauffeur was not docile like Peter Sissek and the others.

"This is murder!" the count said still angrily.

"He'll come to," Trent said carelessly. "Shall I drive you back?"

"No," said the count. He looked coldly at the man who had charge of the Lion.

But Trent knew very well that the anger in his face was not from any sympathy with Peter Sissek. It was the thought that Pauline had deceived him and that this young man was too skillful in too many ways that annoyed the aristocrat.

"I will send a car back," Count Michæl asserted, "meanwhile stay with the man you have so cruelly assaulted."

Peter Sissek awoke to consciousness a few seconds later and looked with difficulty on the world. His nose was cut, an eye was closed and his car was gone. He made strange outcries and became so excited that Trent with a black look bade him be silent. Sissek knew what was meant and started at a run along the road.

Trent was not so sure he had done well that morning. He had angered the count. Well, such anger would probably pass under ordinary conditions. He had interested that magnificent animal Pauline, reigning favorite, and autocrat, and Pauline was not discreet. Sooner or later the count would see the way she looked at his chauffeur and then the game would be up. He would be sent back to London his mission a failure. To get Pauline's enmity would be fatal, too. She would not hesitate to ruin a man she hated and the count would always believe her word against that of Alfred Anthony. The American sat on the edge of the first tee and cursed all irregularly run establishments. He looked up presently to see the car returning. It was driven by Hentzi.

"What is this I hear?" Hentzi said severely.

"I don't give a damn what you have heard," Trent said crossly.

"What? You talk like this to me?"

"To you or anyone else," Trent retorted. "Look here, my little man, I came here to look after a high powered car and risk my neck on mountain passes. All right. I'm agreeable. But if you or anyone else thinks I'm a golf caddie or a footman or a servile beast like Sissek you're all mistaken. I'm a good mechanic and I can drive a car against almost anyone but I'm not going to stand for oppression. The count hit me." Anthony Trent patted himself on the chest as the enormity of the offence grew larger, "he hit *me*!"

"You talk as though you were a gentleman," Hentzi said coldly. "My friend you are of the people and you have read too much. You probably think you are my equal. It is an honor to serve a Temesvar but if you are anxious to go to your own country I have no doubt your company can send another man."

"There's no need for that," Trent said less irascibly, "but what makes Pauline

think I'm going to carry her clubs around when I've got my own work to do?"

"So that was it," Hentzi commented. "That was why Count Michæl stormed at me so. My good Alfred, you are young and life is sweet. I counsel you to remember that always while you are at Radna. The Temesvars have always been hot headed. You see that steep cliff yonder?"

Trent looked above him to where the side of a mountain was cut so sharply that a drop of four hundred feet would be the lot of one stepping from the edge.

"That has been the scene of many tragedies," Hentzi said, "many men have stepped into space."

"Murdered?" Trent demanded.

"Accidents," Hentzi assured him, "unfortunate accidents. There was one lamentable occurrence not many years ago and he was a fellow countryman of yours by the way. A man of great personal distinction. But these are not for you, these reminiscences of high life. What will interest you is that the count says you can no longer live with the Sisseks. He does not want two valuable servants to kill one another. Room will be made for you at the Castle. That pleases you, eh?"

"Yes," Trent said, conscious that his look of triumph had puzzled Hentzi. "I do not like Mrs. Sissek's cooking."

In reality he was delighted. Here he was to be taken into the Castle without having to make an effort. It was the first step. It would be strange if one as skilled and silent as he could not soon have every detail of the house at his command. He knew the servants drank their native spirits, brandies, made of cherries, apricots and plums. This assured sound sleep and unlimited opportunities. The count was a great drinker, too, and his guests feasted well.

As if in conspiracy against him the major domo, chief of the indoor servants, put him in the least desirable of rooms, a rat-ridden chamber away from the sleeping apartments of the rest of the help. In the heat of summer it would be unbearable. There was fortunately a great bolt which barred the door from intruders. The one long, deep window opened inwards. An old square copper pipe used to drain the roof far above passed his window. He took hold of it and found it immovable. It would easily support his weight. The ground lay twenty feet below. It was the windows that this copper pipe passed which most interested Trent. If they had catches similar to his own he could open them with a hair pin. He was eager for night to fall. And because he was now assured of action he became much more docile. He allowed Hentzi to lecture him severely on his brutal behaviour.

During the next week he was worked so hard that he had little opportunity, apart from his long journeys to Fiume, to do aught else than make a mental plan of the windows on his side of the castle. There were four apertures similar to that which gave light and air to his room. The heavy copper pipe passed by them all. To a gymnast with a clear head they were all within reach. The climb was probably less difficult than it would seem to an observer looking up from the ground. There was risk, of course, but Anthony Trent was always ready to take it.

In the daily life of the servants' hall he noticed that the place had an enormous number of retainers, young and old, many more than seemed necessary. They were with a few exceptions sons and daughters of the Temesvar family, servants proud of their caste and the man they served. The major domo spoke German and French. He was a pompous person who ruled absolutely below stairs. He did not like the stranger but he had been commanded not to allow any brawls and he saw to it the chauffeur was let alone. There was much to eat and to drink. Count Michæl owned herds of swine which grazed in the miles of oak and beech forests surrounding Castle Radna and the heady drinks that abounded were made from his own fruits by his own people.

As a rule the lower servants went early to bed. Those who remained up later were the major domo and such of his men as waited upon the count's table. There came a dark cloudy night when Anthony Trent wearing black sneakers and a dark suit free from white collar or cuffs crawled out of his dungeon-like window and up the twelve feet of piping that intervened between his own and the next window above. He found himself looking down into what he supposed was the great entrance hall of the castle. Just below him was a great seat raised above the hall level on a platform of stone at the base of the fine sweep of stairway.

It was the official seat of the major domo. He could see the portly servant in a sort of antique evening dress, white gloves on podgy hands and a gilt chain of office about his thick neck. Below were three or four footmen in the maroon and canary of the Temesvars. They were yawning as though weary of inactivity. Plainly Trent could not emerge a few feet above the major domo's head and in full view of the footmen.

A climb to the next embrasure revealed what at first seemed a checkmate to observation. He found on investigation that some great article of furniture was backed against the window. It was immovable. Another climb and he was able to step through the easily opened window to a dark corridor. Anthony Trent in a

great silent house where danger and disgrace would attend his discovery was in his element. He moved silently, surely, and seemed possessed of a seventh sense. He had never before professionally worked in such a vast rambling place as Castle Radna. It was not easy even for one trained as he to keep the plan of the place in mind. He found himself on a floor of bedrooms few of which were occupied.

He bent over one slumberer whose breath was strong with plum brandy and found he had discovered Hentzi's bedroom. He, did not need to be very quiet here. Underneath him was the floor where the main bedrooms would be and he had an idea the count might keep his valuables there. It was necessary that he should be able to enter from the outside since the stairway leading down was brilliantly lighted from the main hall and stone stairway where the men servants seemed permanently stationed.

Trent had the ability to snatch sleep when he desired it. It was now only eleven o'clock. He crawled under Hentzi's bed and slumbered until one. There was no danger of discovery. He did not snore and the man in the upper berth would not wake till morning. Anthony Trent had made a profound study of the value of snores in the determination of the tenacity with which the snorer clung to sleep.

When he shut Hentzi's door and stepped out into the corridor he saw that the lights had been extinguished below and he was free now to make his way to the floor beneath. He tried no doors but went at once to the aperture covered by the article of furniture. It was a huge ebony *armoire* inlaid with panels of tortoise-shell and ornamented by intricate designs of brass and ormolu. It was probably put in this spot for the purposes of decoration and he picked the lock to prove himself right. It was empty and there was space enough to stand upright in.

He felt it vandalism to break the back panel and feared once the loud cracking of wood might arouse the house. But there were few in Castle Radna who went without a nightcap. It took him almost two hours to hack an aperture that would admit him easily.

Then he slid down the pipe and went to bed. It was not easy to sleep. He had done very well so far. He was free of the house. With luck he could come and go at will during the still night hours. But the first step was easy. Next to find where the count kept Lord Rosecarrel's treaty and then to take it. And finally to get away with his treasure. He was not so much inclined to belittle the abilities of those other two who had planned and failed as he had been when he talked to the earl. He had taken due notice of Hentzi's reference to the death of an Englishman

a few years ago who had met his fate at the base of the steep cliff-side. He felt almost certain that this was one of the men the earl had spoken of.

Lord Rosecarrel had said they set a trap for him into which none but a clever man would fall. He wished now he had asked particulars of it. So far Anthony Trent had escaped snares and the nets of hunters because he had outguessed his opponents. Sometimes he told himself that in the end the deadly law of averages would make him its victim. The pitcher would go once too often to the well. These reflections while they made him more than ever cautious did not lessen his zeal. Plainly it would be easier to work a remote castle in Croatia than a New York mansion protected by burglar alarms, night watchmen and detectives. Yet he had always succeeded so far in the face of these obstacles. But the address and nerve which had carried him through many a tight pinch in New York would not avail him here.

More than once, clad in evening dress, he had joined excited groups of guests and tried to capture himself. He had calmly taken his hat and cane from a footman and been bowed out of a house he had pillaged and once Inspector McWalsh had carried to the door some priceless antiques he had taken from the very collection the Inspector and his men were guarding.

Reflection showed him that Count Michæl Temesvar was far too shrewd to trust the document that meant so much to him to insecure shelter. Despite the fact that the castle seemed filled with idle, drinking, overfed lackeys and he himself was unwatched, there must be some precaution taken which would defeat him unless he trod warily.

It was his experience that rich men knew little of the vulnerability of the safes to which they entrusted their valuables. Again and again he had been able to open such with ludicrous ease. Count Michæl probably had an antique which would send a "peteman" into ecstacies of mirth. Trent's job was to locate it.

Next day he was commanded to accompany Pauline and the count to the golf links. Pauline hardly looked at him but Count Michæl watched him continually. He was relieved at the girl's attitude. She was beaten by her opponent and angry at it. The count was not a sportsman. He putted over the easy bunkers and more than once he lifted his ball to a better lie. The victory made him good humoured. His heavy bearded face was wreathed with smiles. Trent had the opportunity to observe him more closely than ever before. It was a bad, crafty face but it was not merely the face of a pleasure loving fool. If rumor spoke rightly he was, more than any other man, the prime mover in activities aimed against the

English speaking peoples. From this same Castle of Radna had issued many plots and subtle schemes all directed by this man who moved a golf ball with his foot when he thought none was looking.

Hentzi had told him that every European and American newspaper of note was to be found in the count's library. It was odd that such a man would not make some great city his home. He mentioned this once to Hentzi who made the astonishing answer that the count dreaded assassination by political enemies. Fearing perhaps he had said too much the secretary added that Count Michæl had long ago abandoned politics for the life of a great landowner and that such a fear was without foundation.

"It wouldn't be easy for a stranger to get in here, would it?" Trent demanded carelessly.

The question seemed a most provoking one.

"Let such a one try," he returned smiling, "and he will see how we welcome him here in Radna. You who are of another world would not understand."

"I suppose not," Trent said and talked of other things. But he was not reassured. He set himself to master the roads that led to safety. There might be the need to know them. He had not yet been down to Fiume alone. He wanted to find several places in the big port. There might be a time when he would have to send an order to the Lion works for spare parts. His code was elaborate and framed to meet all contingencies.

When he asked Hentzi why so few people stayed at the castle the secretary's reply amazed him. Hentzi rather liked to impress this amiable cockney. He was not without a sense of the melodramatic.

"My friend," he said with condescension, "there are more who take their dinner in the big dining hall than you know. If it were your lot to be an indoor servant you would know what I mean. Castle Radna is at one time a prison, a sanctuary and the abode of hospitality."

"I never understand what you're driving at Mr. Hentzi," Trent told him. "I don't get your meaning half the time."

"I do not intend that you shall," Hentzi remarked. "And I do not advise you to seem curious. As it is you have displeased your master."

"Sissek started it," Trent reminded him.

"Sissek is a clod, a peasant, a man of no importance. I am not thinking of Peter

Sissek. I am thinking of Madame Pauline."

"That blond woman," Trent said with assumed carelessness. "What about her?"

"She has praised your face and figure before one who, when he is jealous, kills."

"Me?" cried Trent with an air of astonishment, "why I only told her she was a rotten golfer."

He groaned in spirit. His stay at Castle Radna was going to be very difficult. Hentzi watching him closely only saw a face which expressed little interest. He was used now to sudden questioning by this volatile cockney.

"What do you mean by the castle being a prison?"

"I should have said that it has held many prisoners in bygone years, and sheltered many of the great. This is not like your English castles where the lord has no power. Look you, not a year ago we stayed, the count and I, at such a place. The owner struck a careless servant and was obliged to pay a fine before a judge. Think of it! An English lord haled into court by his own footman and fined. There is nothing like that here so when you are struck again do not think of an English policeman and a fine. I wish you to stay. When Sissek drives down the mountain I am always alarmed. You go twice as fast and I have no fear. Count Michæl desires you to stay."

"I haven't said anything about going have I?" Trent retorted. He supposed Hentzi was trying to warn him not to look covetously at the handsome Pauline. The warning troubled him. He was of a physical type to which blonds of the Pauline type were invariably attracted.

"Many have died for her," Hentzi went on, "the young officers who flocked to see her skate. There were scandals. She was sent away from Berlin. She was in America, in England and Petrograd. She is cruel. I am afraid of her."

"I'm only a blooming chauffeur," Trent said carelessly, "and I wish I had never carried clubs at the Royal Surrey."

"You are also good looking," Hentzi said, "and of a superior type. Furthermore you are young and she has seen you play better than any man she has met and she has seen you fight. I warn you."

"I've got a girl of my own in London," Trent said confidentially, "who is a fair knock out. My girl has the real gold on her sweet little head and the roses on her cheeks owe nothing to a bottle and her eyes are sometimes violet and sometimes dark blue and she is slim and has those long white hands one wants to kiss."

"Love has made you a poet," Hentzi said affably. It was well that he did not notice that the cockney accent was for the moment abandoned. Hentzi was not a very close observer. He had only two profound emotions. The one a fear of his employer, the other admiration for himself. He considered Trent to be much impressed by his superior knowledge and, here a little and there a little, imparted much valuable information as to the castle, its inhabitants and their method of life. He considerately pointed out the count's library, the room into which no strangers had ever been bidden.

Anthony Trent, therefore, at one-thirty A.M. the next morning was better equipped for exploration than on his previous venture. Hentzi had told him that so long as the count remained up a servant waited to attend on him, old Ferencz by name. Trent remembered him at the servants' table as a surly old man who was silent and reserved and unpopular even among his fellows. He was liable to meet this man at any time. Trent was glad the Temesvar men servants had not the same silent ways of the Rosecarrel men. The men at Castle Radna walked heavily, lacking the thin shoes of the earl's servants, and talked loudly. There was little of the perfect discipline and service of the great English houses. It was due no doubt to the fact that the men were almost feudal retainers and not highly trained servants going from country estate to town house with the seasons.

Almost the moment he stepped from his tall ebony *armoire* Trent heard steps coming toward him. He was at the moment passing a door. His pass key opened it instantly and he stepped into darkness and shut the door carefully. But he knew he was not alone. There was a heavy unrhythmic snoring of a man far gone in sleep. As his eyes grew accustomed to the darkness Trent saw the outlines of a big bed.

He passed the foot of it on hands and knees. The professional always takes this precaution. A man waked from sleep by hearing a stranger at the foot of his bed invariably aims at a man supposed to be standing up. Although the sounds Trent detected were genuine sleep induced snores he could not be sure that another watchful occupant of the bed was not listening breathlessly and even now reaching for a weapon.

When he assured himself everything was quiet he looked about the room with the light of his electric torch. The sleeping man was a stranger to him. He was a red faced man of middle age and on a chair nearby was the undress uniform of an officer of high rank, a light blue uniform with silver facings. Accustomed as he was to khaki uniform alone Trent had no idea to what European service the sleeper belonged. He remembered Hentzi's remark that there were more people

at the dinner table than one might suppose. Trent was certain he had never seen this officer about the castle grounds and had never driven him.

From the bedroom a door led evidently to a room *en suite*. This was unlocked and Trent entered noiselessly. It was a room twice the size of the adjoining apartment and furnished magnificently. So vast and splendid was the chamber he thought it must be that of Count Michæl, the room where perchance the treaty lay concealed for which he had risked so much. But it was not Count Michæl who lay stertorously slumbering. It was instead a prince of a great and lately reigning family who had strangely disappeared from the world a few months earlier and had been, so report ran, drowned in escaping from exile.

Anthony Trent was looking at one, worthless in character and devoid of ability but nevertheless a man who might by reason of his name rally about him an army which could start again the dreadful struggle whose scars were yet fresh. A great ceremony had been made of the funeral and a society of his former officers had been organized to perpetuate his memory by embarrassing his opponents. Trent remembered, dimly, reading an article in a London paper which spoke of the prince as being as dangerous dead as when leading his dissolute life.

Anthony Trent looked at the weak, passion-lined face of the man who had sought Count Michæl's shelter and smiled. He had long ago been intrigued by the idea of mixing himself in high politics. Here, possibly, was an excellent beginning. But the prince could wait a little while. The time was not yet ripe for his resurrection.

Looking across the room Trent saw two long French windows lighting it. One was open. Instead of the balcony upon which the intruder assumed these windows opened, they led into a large courtyard some eighty feet long and forty feet wide. He did not understand how it was this great open space should have its being in the middle of the castle. There seemed no reason why it existed in a building of this sort. He was to find later that its origin was accidental. What was now a paved and open courtyard had been the magazine of the castle during the Turkish occupation of Croatia. The castle itself had never given in to the Ottoman conqueror. It had been shelled in the Reformation uprising in 1607 and a ball shot had exploded the ammunition. The chamber had never been rebuilt but a century later was turned into a pleasant garden.

Trent stepped through the open window and down three steps into the courtyard. It was plainly much used. There were lounges and chairs and tables. Pausing at one of them he saw London and New York papers which he had brought up from

Fiume earlier in the week. There were French novels and bon-bons and a feather fan. Evidently the prince was not without his feminine companionship. In one of these big chairs Trent sat down and looked about him. The room from which he had come faced due east. To the north and south were plain solid walls without windows. Only to the West at the other end of the space could he see that the walls were pierced with French windows. As he looked these were suddenly illuminated. He made no motion. He felt reasonably certain that he was in such a position as to be unobserved.

But he grew less calm when the count's unmistakable figure passed up and down before the two windows and finally opening one stepped out into the courtyard. Behind him came Hentzi who should have been in bed long ago. The two passed so close he could have touched them. They were speaking rapidly and in what he supposed must be the Croatian tongue. Twice he heard his name mentioned. The count always called him by the assumed name of Alfred pronouncing it "Arlfrit."

It was not pleasant hearing. They might be, for all he knew, discussing his already discovered absence from his room. It was true he had bolted the door but someone from the outside might have detected the dark-clad climber making his unlawful ascent. Already a search might be in progress which would eventually claim him as the third failure. Count Michæl was often so excited about trivial things that the listener was not able to guess whether his present mood was the outcome of some small irritation or of something far more sinister. There recurred frequently the name of Pauline and once or twice the count pointed to the windows where slept the man whom his people had mourned as dead.

There was one moment of dreadful anticipation for the American. He noticed that Hentzi was permitting himself to argue with his master. Suddenly as the twain passed by Trent's refuge the count buffetted his secretary on the head. It was Count Michæl's favorite expression of annoyance. Trent himself had suffered thus on the golf links. Hentzi ducked in time to receive merely a glancing blow but he gripped the arm of Trent's chair to steady himself. If he had taken his eyes off the count's still upraised hand he could not have failed to see the intruder.

For a full half hour Anthony Trent sat quiet. Then the count and Hentzi left him alone. Now that immediate risk of detection seemed past Trent assured himself that his evening had been well spent. Undoubtedly Count Michæl's rooms, the rooms he wanted to investigate—were those through whose windows the two had come and gone. He memorized as well as he could the position in the corridors the doors would occupy. The discovery of this courtyard three floors in

depth helped him to understand what had baffled him in his explorations of the corridors many of which came to abrupt meaningless ends. In other days they had continued across the space that had once been arsenal, magazine and strong room.

He made his way through the open window and past the sleeping men without mishap. In the corner of a panel in the *armoire* he bored two small holes and blew away the dust that fell from them. He descended the copper pipe prepared to find his room invaded by vengeful servants. But it was as he had left it. It was not for his arrest that the count had dragged Arlfrit into his conversation.

CHAPTER TEN

THE GREATER GAME

Trent was annoyed next morning to learn from Hentzi that he was to accompany Pauline and the count to the links. The only redeeming thing about the expedition was that he himself could get a few strokes in the demonstration.

The count was in high good spirits and gracious to them all.

"Ah, Arlfrit," he cried, "this is my last game for two weeks. Yes, I shall be too busy playing another and a greater game. And you, too, will be busy. Tell me you know the roads to Fiume, Zengg and Agram well?"

"I could set them to music," Trent said forgetting that it was Alfred Anthony who was answering his august employer. He waited until the count drove. He saw that the autocrat broke every rule of the many which go to make a perfect drive yet sent his ball every inch of two hundred yards. Never had Count Michæl done such a thing before.

"Let us see you beat that," he said dramatically.

Trent pressed. He wanted to outdrive the other by fifty yards and ordinarily would have done so. He took too much earth and sent a rocketting ball skyward which dropped full fifty yards behind the other.

"That was very tactful of you," Pauline whispered. "His Excellency will be in a good temper the whole day."

"Do you think I tried to do that?" he asked.

"Why not?" she asked, "I only know you are of a timid disposition. I hate timid men."

"I can't help being timid," he said grinning genially, "it's my nature."

So gratified was the count by his unusual showing at the game that he did not notice how close Pauline kept to Alfred Anthony. It was nervous work for Anthony and he answered the girl abruptly trying to keep her attention on the game.

"You are two men," she said presently when Hentzi and his employer were a

little ahead of them. For a moment Trent was thoroughly alarmed. What did she know?

He had always known that it was a fallacy to assume because he had seen none on his midnight wanderings that he had been unobserved. In a vast house such as Castle Radna there were nooks and crannies where frightened servants or timid guests might hide from him momentarily only to denounce him later.

"What do you mean?" he asked teeing up her ball. He had not answered her immediately.

"That you are two men. There may be three of you but I have seen two already. There is the timid, servile creature accepting a coin or a blow and eating with the servants as among his equals. I hate that man. The other is a creature that every now and then looks out of your eyes like a bird of prey. It is the man who drives the great car over the mountain passes as though it were on a smooth boulevard. It is the man who beat big Peter Sissek to the earth with tight lips and eyes that flashed. That is a man I could love."

He could feel her arm brush against his own. There was a caressing tenderness in her voice.

"Tell me, which is the real you?"

Anthony Trent looked straight ahead of him.

"If you slice your ball," he said, "you'll get into the rough. Golf, like other things is largely a matter of self control."

"I could kill you," she said, her eyes blazing.

"Think of my wife and children," he answered with a grin.

"That is why," she retorted. "The count is right. One should have only contempt for lackeys. I honor you too much as it is."

"Fine!" Trent observed, "suits me all right. How many quarterings of nobility have you Mademoiselle Pauline?"

"I at least am an *artiste*," she flung back at him. "To be the most graceful skater in the world and to have earned more in a week than you in a year is something which puts me as far above you as Count Michæl Temesvar."

"Absolutely," Trent agreed, "take your mashie here and go back slowly and don't look up for three seconds after hitting the ball."

Pauline was certainly a splendidly athletic woman. She held herself magnificently and was at her best this morning but merely to be with her bored the pseudo-chauffeur who had thoughts only for Daphne. Daphne could have given her two strokes a hole and a beating, he reflected. Gloom seized on him as he wondered if ever again he would see her. He was in peril in Castle Radna even as an honest worker. Peter Sissek had sworn to pay him for the beating. Half of Trent's energies were consumed in going over his car to make sure the bolts and nuts were tight and had not been loosened maliciously.

And in his position as an emissary of the Earl of Rosecarrel he was in danger of the most vivid kind. He was a spy in a house which sheltered a princeling who might yet force Europe into war. If it were discovered he possessed this secret nothing could save him. It was a sinister, dour pile of stone, this Castle Radna utterly unlike the Cornish castle with its rose gardens, its fountains and the charm of country life. He could well believe that in his present dwelling tragedies has been enacted of which no knowledge had filtered through to the larger world. Oddly enough it was during the day when he was peacefully employed as Alfred Anthony that he was most obsessed by despondency. When the servants were long abed and asleep and the silences of the early hours hung about the great corridors and halls Anthony Trent came into his own. His rubbershod feet were noiseless in the stone passages and his two pass keys opened every locked door. He was possessed of all secrets it seemed to him. Here he was free to wander like a ghost in banquet hall and corridor. None walked so silently as he.

Pauline did not talk to him any more that morning but the count was affable.

"Ah, Arlfrit," he cried, "tomorrow your work commences. Yes. You leave for Fiume at daybreak and meet the Ungarisch-Kroatische boat. This time you will go alone as you will have a passenger beside you as you return. You will wait at the *Hotel de l'Europe*. The boat gets to her dock at eleven and my guests will drive immediately to the motor. Make speed back for you must go to Agram and back before dinner."

"That will be going some!" Trent commented.

"For what reason do you suppose I buy a Lion car and a chauffeur if not to do what my other automobiles and chauffeurs cannot do? Why do you imagine I introduce a Londoner into my servants hall, a brawling man who assaults good Peter Sissek if not because he must travel fast and safely?"

But the count was not angry. He was in that good humor which comes to all men

who having been in the habit of taking seven for a last hole make it in four. Pauline had taken six and he had not permitted his record to be clouded by allowing Trent (as Pauline suggested) to see what he could do it in.

Anthony Trent started on his trip when it was as yet hardly light. He was singularly carefree. The repulsive Sissek was not at his side and he was free to wander about the seaport town, locate the cable offices and make certain arrangements that might contribute to future safety. That he was invariably able to make such good time was due mainly to the absence of traffic along the Maria Louisa road. Not yet had the old prosperity come back to Europe and there were more automobiles in Allenhurst, New Jersey, than all Croatia.

He was bound to admit that the group of people he took from the *Hotel de l'Europe* lived up to all the traditions of mysterious fiction. There were two men, middle aged and plainly used to power, and a very pretty vivacious dark woman of five and thirty to whom her escorts paid profound attention. The seat beside Trent was occupied by the lady's maid. The black morocco dressing case she held inexorably upon her knees was marked with a coronet. The woman was hard-faced, elderly and uncommunicative. Trent noticed that her mistress was in that deep mourning which European women affect.

Trent tried the maid in English but she made no answer at all. He strained his ears to catch what language was being talked behind him but the Lion was a car of tremendous wheel base and the passengers were removed too far from him.

Once or twice in the old days, particularly in the case of the Sinn Fein plot Anthony Trent had found his lack of knowledge of German a handicap. This linguistic failing was now remedied. He had studied the tongue carefully; and as languages were easily acquired by him had some fair proficiency in it.

He was not certain whether it was a trap or a genuine desire to know that made the woman after a whispered talk with the lady in black say to him suddenly, "*Wenn wir nur nicht unwerfen; die Strassen sind nicht besonders hier zu Lande*."

It was his first impulse to tell her that she would not be upset and that they would soon get on to the better roads. Then he remembered Alfred Anthony knew but little of any tongue but his own. He smiled at her and shrugged his shoulders.

"Try it in English," he commanded smiling. "No speak Dutch."

She did not take the trouble to answer. It was, he decided, a trap to find if he understood. Perhaps it was counted in his favor, this ignorance of continental

tongues.

At Agram he fetched six other people. He found that Sissek and another chauffeur had been busy also. Hentzi, always desirous of impressing those beneath him in rank, told Trent he was to be guest tonight at a table which would hold some of the great ones of the country.

"Will Pauline be among those present?" Trent asked.

"Pauline!" Hentzi sneered, "there will be gracious, high-born ladies at the table and among these our Pauline has no part. She knows that."

"What time do you dine?" Trent asked. It was now seven o'clock and Hentzi was not in evening dress.

"At half past eight. There is one among us who likes the late dinners of the English and his likings must be obeyed even by Count Michæl."

"An Englishman?" Trent queried.

"My friend," Hentzi said impressively, "if he could take all the British and all the Americans and sink them in mid-ocean he would be entirely happy. I do not think you understand world politics, eh?"

"I follow the racing and footer news," Trent confessed. "I'm not so much on politics. A set of grafters if you ask me."

Trent spent an hour on his car. He filled the tanks with gasoline and saw that his spare tires were ready and made the little adjustments that only sensitive fingers may perform. As a rule he drove the car straight into the garage and backed out. Tonight he backed into it. There might be the sudden need to utilize every moment.

Hentzi's news was good. A dinner of state commencing at half past eight would be continued long after dark. Of necessity the count would be there and undoubtedly the officer and his royal master would grace the board. Entrance could easily be made through their room and over the courtyard to the Count Michæl's apartment. There would be time for a thorough search.

The kitchens were full of bustling maids assisting the cooks. There was so much confusion that Trent helped himself amply to what food he desired and strolled out to the garage to eat it. More than half was stowed away in his car. If he were able to get away that night, as he hoped, it might come in handily for breakfast.

His plan was to place the treaty draft in an envelope already addressed and

stamped and mail it at Fiume. After that he would take the car into Italy if possible and make for Venice whence he could come easily to England.

The servants saw him take a candle and walk wearily to his room. They remembered he had been up before dawn broke. Not one of them had any suspicions that he was aught but what he represented himself to be.

At half past ten Anthony Trent, looking through the carved oaken musicians gallery twenty feet above the floor of the banqueting hall, beheld a notable company assembled. When he saw that the prince had at his side the vivacious dark lady, he remembered that the weekly pictorial papers had often presented her to their readers. She was the daughter of a royal house lately at war with his country. To her diplomatic skill and love of intrigue was due many checks to allied plans. It was said she ruled her husband absolutely and loved him little.

Trent recognized the two men he had brought with him. They were in evening dress as was Count Michæl and decorated with many orders, of St. Stephen of Hungary among others. The military attaché bristled with medals and there were others in brilliant uniforms.

No other woman was present but the princess. Her jewels made Trent's mouth water. No doubt the maid had carried them at his side for several hours and would, for all he had to do with it, carry them back. Not for a moment dare he think of taking them. It was obvious that the count would make no outcry about the loss of the draft if that alone were taken. He would piece things together and understand the riddle of Alfred Anthony. But were the valuables of his guests taken it might be a police matter.

So great was the buzz of conversation that Trent could catch no memorable phrase. Here and there was a name he had heard of but that was all. He noticed that Hentzi was not a guest despite his boasting. This in itself was awkward for the secretary might be even now in the big room to which the master criminal was bound. He was relieved presently to observe Hentzi hovering on the outskirts of the room directing the servants, a sort of super-major-domo.

It was exactly eleven when he crossed the dark courtyard and opened one of the long French windows of Count Michæl's room. It was in darkness. A little water driven power plant supplied some of the chief rooms of Castle Radna with electric light and he was able, after screening the windows to flood the room with light. It was an apartment the counterpart in size and decoration of the one occupied by the prince, across the courtyard.

Almost the first thing Anthony Trent saw was the safe. And as he looked on it he

knew his hopes were in vain and the draft of the treaty could remain there indefinitely for all his skill availed or all the knowledge of the greatest "petemen" would aid, had he possessed it.

Count Michæl Temesvar was not one of those who entrusted precious things to insecure keeping. It was a Chubbwood burglar proof safe of a type Trent had heard of but never before seen. The double-dialled cannon ball safe of the American maker was the nearest approach to this gleaming mocking thing which faced him. There was no chance that any forcing screw or wedge could damage the bolts. The locks were so protected that drilling was impossible and no nitro-glycerine could be used. The oxy-acetylene blowpipe, high explosives or electric arc were useless here. It was the last word of a safemaking firm which had been in the business for more than a century. Trent did not doubt, as he gazed at it, that there would be developed by the need of it craftsmen who could open even this. But the time was not yet.

Count Michæl Temesvar had been wise in buying the only safe in the world whose patent had been extended by the Privy Council of Great Britain. With his gloved hands Trent touched the thing lightly. The millionth chance that it might not be locked was against him. He was wasting his time. Quickly he made a methodical search of the room but found nothing that interested him.

On his own bed he sat for an hour wondering what to do. He had been so certain when speaking to Lord Rosecarrel that his professional skill would accomplish what others had failed to do that this disappointment was bitter indeed.

He had wondered why the count had taken so little caution in permitting a foreigner of the same supposed nationality as Lord Rosecarrel to live in Castle Radna. It was, plainly, because the count knew perfectly well that the Chubbwood safe preserved his treasures inviolate.

Probably no living crook could break into it even though he had a year in which to work. It was undrillable, unscathed by fire and could repose at the bottom of the sea without its contents becoming damaged.

Trent's first thought of compelling the count to give up the combination by force promised an unhappy ending. Surrounded by servants and friends he would assuredly be interrupted before he could be forced to give up his secret.

Hentzi would never be entrusted with the combination. None would know it but Count Michæl. For a moment he wondered if Pauline might be dragged into it to exercise her Delilah arts on her protector.

"There must be some way out of it," Trent murmured a hundred times as he sat on his bed's edge.

Dawn was breaking as he closed his eyes. His expression was calm and untroubled. He had found his solution.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

ANTHONY PLAYS HIS HAND

Lord Rosecarrel opened his town house in Grosvenor Place at the beginning of May for the London season. Lady Daphne observed that he had shaken off the gloom and apathy which had engulfed him for the last few years. He began to take a more vivid interest in the international situations which grew out of the Peace Conference. He began to talk to the girl again about the aims of nations with respect to Persia and indirectly with the future of India.

The earl was waiting impatiently for her one night when she came back from an opera party given in her honor by Rudolph Castoon.

"Daphne," he began abruptly, "Do you believe absolutely in the *bona fides* of Anthony Trent?"

The girl felt herself coloring.

"Absolutely," she said steadily, "Why?"

"I have had a long cable from him," he returned. "A cable so extraordinary that I can hardly believe he sent it. Here it is. It is only partly in cipher for the reason the cipher code I made was not intended for a message such as this. What you would not understand I have decoded."

The girl took the slip of paper eagerly.

> "At once," she read, "allow papers to announce you have decided to come from retirement and accept public office. If Temesvar wires for confirmation persist in your statement. If he threatens tell him he has not got treaty. Tell him if he has it to bring it to the prime minister. Follow these instructions implicitly otherwise I can never succeed."

"And will you?" Daphne demanded breathlessly.

"I don't know," the earl said slowly. "It seems rather a desperate thing to do. You must have heard rumors that I have been offered the enormously important position of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the cabinet that will be formed when the present government goes out of office. There will be two men

there who are my enemies. There is, for instance, Rudolph Castoon whose guest you have been tonight and Buchanan who will be Home Secretary. Castoon knows I do not trust him wholly. There is always a danger in making a man of his kind Chancellor of the Exchequer. He has a brother in every great country and some of them have been our bitter enemies in the past. Buchanan, of course, exercises enormous influence through his newspapers and seems to feel a personal grievance against me."

"It was because you never would invite him here or to the castle," she answered, "although he was forever spelling for an invitation. Those *nouveaux riches* are very sensitive."

"If I accepted office," the earl went on slowly, "I should have these two men against me. And if by any ill chance it should become known that I did not destroy the draft of a treaty which was entrusted to me Buchanan would see his opportunity and use his wretched papers to the full. I should be forced out of public life. I have always been intolerant of breaches of faith and that would be remembered against me as a mark of hypocrisy."

"But Mr. Trent says Count Michæl Temesvar hasn't got the treaty," she cried, "and that means *he* has it."

Her father shook his head.

"That's just what it doesn't mean," he returned. "Mr. Trent says I am to tell Count Michæl he has not the treaty. If Trent had it he would have told me so. I am to do this risky thing in order that he may ultimately succeed. You see, Daphne, my statement to the press that I have decided to take office is part of a move in the game that another man is playing."

"But he's playing it for you," she cried.

The earl smiled.

"Is he?" he returned, "I'll admit at all events that I am the one most to be benefited if he succeeds."

"But he will succeed," she persisted. "Does he look like the kind of man to be beaten?"

"Did Captain Hardcastle look the kind of man either?" Lord Rosecarrel asked. "And you remember poor Piers Edgcomb the best fencer in Europe, a man with nerves of steel? I firmly believe some of the count's men killed him."

It cost the girl an effort to say what she did.

"But, dad," she reminded him, "they had no experience at, at that sort of thing."

"And this one has? That, alone, comforts me. But the odds are so tremendously against him."

"He went there knowing it."

"I am not sure that it would not be safer for you for Arthur and for me if I did go back permanently to private life. If Mr. Trent should fail—"

"You won't be implicated," she reminded him. "He has gone just as a cockney chauffeur."

"But don't you see," the earl said patiently, "that I am here invited to throw down the gauntlet to the man who has in his power what can disgrace me? Hardcastle and Sir Piers failed but their failure did not drag me into it as this scheme will do."

"Who will be foreign secretary if you refuse it?" Daphne asked.

"That impossible nonconformist person Muir who has never been farther afield than Paris and has no knowledge of Eastern affairs at all. He will undo everything I have striven for. He will play into Count Michæl's hands as a child might."

"Then isn't the chance worth taking?" Daphne asked, pointing to the cable.

"I've taken it already," the earl said, "I wanted you to reassure me. I felt a confidence utterly without logical foundation as to the ability of your Anthony Trent."

"That's splendid," she cried.

"I am not so sure," her father returned, "Daphne, you know what I mean when I say I hope Arthur's action in saving his life was not like those other actions of the poor lad which have brought dire trouble to us all. You must know that there can be no attachment between you and him."

"You'd better know it," she said quietly, "but there is what you call an attachment. As to marriage—he says like you it is impossible so I suppose it is. That's all over." She patted his gray hair affectionately. "I'm not going to marry anyone. I shall have my hands full in looking after the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs."

"My dear," he said, "you are taking this wonderfully well. I'm grateful. I ought never to have let the thing drift along as I did. I blame myself."

"I'm glad," she whispered, "You couldn't possibly understand it, but even if I never see him again I shall always be thankful to have known him."

The earl looked at her and sighed. His daughter was one of the loveliest girls in England, highly accomplished, allied to some of the great families of her own land and continental Europe and had been sought after since her coming out ball. He had hoped to see her married to some honorable man of her own class and instead she had fallen in love with an adventurer whose past—according to his own admission—made a marriage impossible.

Of late he had suffered much. The death of his wife, the loss of two sons, the many troubles Arthur's past had brought, his enforced retirement and now Daphne's hopeless attachment. The only thing that offered him any relaxation was the possibility of getting into harness again. And that would only be attainable if Anthony Trent, that mysterious American he had grown to like, succeeded in a forlorn hope. At least he must do his part. A little wearily he took up the telephone and called a number in Downing Street where was the official residence of the prime minister, the man primarily in charge of the destinies of a great empire.

There was no telephone in Castle Radna. Every morning some one of Count Michæl's men went to Agram and brought back letters and telegrams. It fell to Anthony Trent to fetch the mail that came twenty-four hours after the conversation over the telephone with the prime minister. Among the many pieces which the postmaster placed in the double locked mail bag was a trans-continental telegram. It was the function of this big letter pouch to guard its contents from the inquisitive by locks to which only the postmaster and Hentzi had keys.

When once Trent had established this he came by night to the room where the secretary snored and made impressions of the keys and so was able to open the pouch without any forcing of the locks.

Instead of going on to Radna direct Trent turned his car into a byroad of the oak forest and steamed open the wire. It was as he feared, in code which he might be able to decipher after long study. But if the language should be Croatian or Hungarian he would still be in the dark.

It chanced that the count was near the garage as he drove in. It was a frequent

habit of Count Michæl's to walk over to the great stables where formerly his thoroughbreds had been housed and now only a few riding horses remained. He greeted "Arlfrit" with the manner that proved him to be in a good temper. Hentzi was at his side and opened the mail pouch. Instantly he passed the telegram to his master. Tinkering at some pretended indisposition of his engines Trent watched the count's face as he read.

The man fell into a sudden and roaring rage. He gesticulated, he swore and he pummelled the cringing Hentzi. His talk was in Croatian but his meaning was plain. Suddenly he turned on Trent.

"Do not put your car away," he ordered him, "You must return to Agram."

No mail was ever entrusted to the Temesvar servants. Even what was sent to Agram was sealed so that the post master alone or his assistant could unlock the bag.

In the same secluded dell of the forest Trent opened the bag a second time and read the message addressed to the Earl of Rosecarrel. "I am informed," it said, "that you have accepted office. Deny this rumor instantly. Affirmation means danger to you. Michæl Temesvar."

Trent chuckled. Things were beginning to move. Of late he had found his occupation boring. It seemed he was always acting as a mail carrier chosen over Sissek because he made so much better time. He had no chance at golf. Pauline was away. Hentzi told him so one day when he had driven three ladies up from Fiume and learned they were all high-born and that for a time the company at the castle was distinguished.

"You would not understand what I meant," Hentzi said, loftily, "if I told you many important things are going on. When our guests have gone there may be those of Pauline's sort you may drive from Fiume. Then the air is different. For myself I prefer such company as we have at present."

"The lords and ladies?" Trent said remembering that he had seen Hentzi acting as a sort of upper servant at such a dinner.

"Exactly," Hentzi agreed. "Pauline had been ill advised enough to disobey the count. There is a guest who admired her."

"Why didn't the guv'nor biff him one same as he does you when he's mad?" Trent demanded.

"There are some to whom even Count Michæl may offer no violence," Hentzi

returned in a shocked voice. "But you would not understand."

On the whole Anthony Trent was glad that the prince had been the cause of the temporary removal of Pauline. She was a menace to him. Also he rejoiced to think that the arbitrary Michæl Temesvar had his own uneasy moments.

Because Anthony Trent was more concerned in the successful outcome of his present design than any other of his adventurous career he denied himself the pleasure of those nocturnal wanderings in the castle corridors and rooms. So that he might make Daphne happy by delivering her father from bondage he decided to take no risks which might lead to his capture. Particularly he wanted to secrete himself among the trees in green tubs and flowers of the courtyard. Although it was not to his immediate advantage to learn of the plotting which was going on under the roof which sheltered him a knowledge of it promised some interesting developments in the future.

But now that the exchange of telegrams commenced between the two old adversaries he found excitement enough in going to Agram and opening the wires. Lord Rosecarrel, he found, had acted on his instructions. He affirmed his intention to take office and when he received another more threatening telegram from Count Michæl declared that he knew the treaty was not in his possession.

Count Michæl's anger was reflected in the face of each scurrying servant of the many with whom Trent came into contact. Hentzi visited it vicariously upon one Alfred Anthony until that bellicose chauffeur reminded him that the fate of Peter Sissek was his for the asking. Later Hentzi grew confidential. He had the impression that this humble member of a dominant people looked up to him for his world knowledge and in order to impress Alfred Anthony the more made indiscreet revelations which were duly stored in the careful retentive memory of Anthony Trent.

It was from Hentzi that Trent learned of the sudden trip of their common employer to London.

"It is most inconvenient for us both," said the secretary. "For the count that he should have to leave his guests and for me that I should have to entertain them in his absence."

"I thought you liked the company of lords and ladies," Alfred Anthony said in simple tribute to his companion's parts.

"There is responsibility you could not comprehend," Hentzi returned, and left Trent to think over his plans.

So far things had travelled evenly. The test was now to come. He was reasonably certain that when Count Michæl set out for London he would have in his possession the draft of the treaty. With this he would confront a prime minister and possibly the entire cabinet. He knew well of Buchanan's dislike of Lord Rosecarrel. Had Anthony Trent been in the count's place he would never have committed the error of taking so important a document with him. Trent invariably mailed what he had taken to himself and breathed freer when the responsibility was on another's shoulders. This, of course, only when a long journey was to be made. When he had stolen the Mount Aubyn ruby in San Francisco he had mailed it to his camp in Maine and thus confounded detectives who had searched his apartment.

That Count Michæl had not adopted this plan he knew because for the past week he alone had fetched and carried mail matter. The time he had taken in opening the mails had to be made up by faster travelling and the Lion engine never failed him. The peasants used to point out the racing car with pride and give him road room gladly. On those tablets of memory he inscribed many interesting details that occurred in letters written by other than the count. He could read in French, German, Italian and Spanish and the letters which most interested him were in German.

Sometimes in the lonely night he wondered whether or not this knowledge might not be sufficiently important to at least three governments to win him a pardon should he ever be found out for crimes of other days. And if there should come a time when he were free from the ever haunting fear of arrest might there not be the fulfilment of his dearest wishes? He was sure Daphne would drop her title if he thought it best.

Then he put the thought from him resolutely. That was in the future and he was immediately concerned with the success of this thing he had sworn to accomplish.

Hentzi told him that Count Michæl would travel by night to Fiume there to board a Venice bound boat and catch the continental express for Paris. As none but he drove the Lion and the count preferred it and its driver the assumption was that Alfred Anthony would take him. It was on this hypothesis that the success of Trent's scheme depended. He would probably be alone. At most some servant or valet would be chosen to travel with his master and he would of course sit next to the chauffeur.

Trent had long ago picked out a suitable spot where such a luckless person could

be dumped. There was a steep grassy bank some twenty miles along the road where a man hit sufficiently deftly would roll out of reach with small possibility of injury. A little stream ran at the bottom which would revive him if stunned or drown him as the fates saw best. Stored in the Lion car was a change of apparel, some food and other necessaries.

It was Hentzi who broke the bad news. The secretary came upon the eager mechanic tuning up his engine lovingly. So engrossed was he that he neither saw Hentzi nor noticed that Peter Sissek was polishing the brass work on his Panhard.

"Getting things shipshape and Bristol fashion," Trent said, when he saw Hentzi.

"It is Peter who takes the count," the secretary said idly, "You are to go to Budapesth tomorrow. You see what it is to be considered so skillful that Count Michæl offers you to his guests and goes more slowly himself."

Then Trent noticed the grinning and triumphant Sissek. It was a black moment for him.

"Yes, Peter takes the count," Hentzi repeated.

"I think he'll have to," Trent said slowly, "for the second time."

This alteration in the schedule which for the moment promised utter disruption to his plans might have been brought about by reasons other than those suggested by Hentzi. It was curious that at just this critical moment Sissek should be entrusted with his master's safety and Trent given a mission which Peter Sissek with his wider knowledge of the country could better have filled.

But it was time wasting to ponder on this now. In three hours Trent would have started with his Lion. Sissek a slower driver and using an older and less speedy car must get away earlier. Almost frightened out of his accustomed calm Trent learned that the count was leaving in a little over an hour, just as the darkness would set in. What plans he could make must be made instantly. Failure was now almost at his side.

Failure! Anthony Trent groaned at thought of it; Lord Rosecarrel would be publicly humiliated. Daphne would blame him for it. With what assurance and headstrong confidence he had plunged into an adventure which had brought death to those other men! He could never face her if he failed and failure was in sight.

For a moment he thought of forcing a quarrel on Peter Sissek. Before Hentzi or

others could intervene he could with his boxer's skill most certainly damage one eye if not two of a man who, to drive down dark and dangerous roads, must possess unclouded vision.

But he hesitated. If Count Michæl had chosen Sissek because Alfred Anthony was under suspicion an assault on the Croatian at the present moment might tend to confirm these doubts and he might find himself overpowered and under guards he could not overwhelm. To put the car out of commission was hardly possible with Sissek guarding it and another man cleaning it. And these two, it seemed to Trent, were watching suspiciously.

By some trick of fate it was Sissek himself who contributed to Trent's success. Peter was arrogant now and motioned to Trent to aid him in lifting some baggage to the top of the Panhard limousine. Like most of the continental cars it had a deep luggage rail around the top on which trunks or lesser baggage could be carried. There was a cabin trunk, a bundle of rugs and a dressing bag. Peter Sissek was astonished when Trent cheerfully obeyed him and even helped to strap the cabin trunk securely.

Hentzi was amazed at the sudden change that had taken place in the English chauffeur's attitude. He was now lively who had been gloomy, and loquacious when he had been taciturn.

"Why do you laugh," he asked.

"At the idea of Peter taking the count," said Trent. "Someday you'll know what that means."

"I know now," Hentzi insisted, "I speak perfectly and my English vocabulary is wider than could be that of a man of your position."

As Peter Sissek unaccompanied by valet or assistant drove down the hill, after leaving the pavilion at the first tee on his left, he was horrified to find a tree across his path. He dismounted, moved it aside with difficulty and proceeded on his way.

But this time he carried two passengers.

The motor had come to an abrupt stop under a big oak tree whose spreading arms reached across the mountain road.

Lying along one of those rigid oak limbs Anthony Trent, after nicely adjusting the fallen tree so that Peter Sissek's eyes would see it at the proper moment, had waited anxiously for the approach of the Panhard.

He was not sure that the powerful headlights would not pierce his leafy shelter and discover him to the watchful driver. He could imagine vividly the chauffeur warning his employer. And as Count Michæl always went armed and might even now be suspicious of his cockney servant he would very likely have no hesitation in picking him off the boughs as Anthony Trent, years before in his New Hampshire hills, had shot squirrels. If by any chance he could get to the ground, only twelve feet beneath, before he was aimed at he would have to trust to the moment's inspiration for his next move. He knew almost certainly that Count Michæl carried the document he wanted in a flat leather case which fitted into his breast pocket.

If by any chance the men did not see him and the car passed him on its seaward way his errand would be unaccomplished, his boasts vain and the humiliation of his friends certain. He had determined if this happened to send a telegram to the earl admitting defeat, and warning of the count's visit.

The Panhard came to a grinding stop a foot from the barrier. Sissek removed it as quickly as he could but it was heavy enough to have taxed Anthony Trent's superior strength! and the count grew so impatient at the time taken that he sprang down to the road and urged his man to greater activities.

The two were jabbering in Croatian when Anthony Trent lowered himself to the top of the limousine and nestled down in the shadow of the baggage.

Trent had often been incensed in reading newspaper accounts of his exploits to find that their success was so often ascribed to mere luck. He supposed it would be so this time if it were known. People would say that owing to two boulders in the side of the road Sissek pulled up so that Trent could drop directly down on to the car. In most cases the greatest luck comes to the best player and Anthony Trent had placed the rocks on the road with the same care that he would play a stroke in golf or cast along the edge of lily pads where the big trout lay in graceful ease. There was only one place where Sissek could halt his machine.

It was while the car travelled along a poor and rough section of the route before reaching the Marie Louise road that Trent unstrapped a bundle and selected a dark travelling-rug to cover him from observant eyes in the infrequent towns through which they must pass.

Half a hundred schemes raced through his quick, fertile brain only to be rejected.

He wondered, for instance, if it were possible to cut through the top of the car and get at the count who was certain to be sleeping a goodly portion of the journey. He decided that to lean over the rails and try to peer through the oval glass window in the rear would also be unwise. At most he would only catch a glimpse of the count and might just as easily be seen himself. Then he wondered if it might not be possible to drop down on Peter Sissek's shoulders and strangle him into quietness.

But Peter Sissek was taking his car along at a steady rate of twenty-five miles the hour and with his hands off the steering wheel—a certain contingency if Trent's strong fingers closed around his throat—a bad accident was inevitable. A precipice on one side and a wall of rock on the other, he would be between the deep sea and the devil.

He saw that Sissek must be eliminated at all costs. A match for either of them singly Trent would certainly be overpowered in a tussle with both; although they lacked the cat-like quickness of the American they were both of uncommon strength. The immediate problem was to get rid of Sissek and leave his master none the wiser.

There was a part of the road through which they must presently pass which promised aid to the schemer. It was a gentle rise through a very dense section of beech forest and Peter would go slowly fearing that the uneven surface would jolt his lord into unwelcome anger.

Peter Sissek, straining his eyes to see that his way was clear, was startled when one of the pieces of baggage on the top of the car was jolted off. It fell on the Panhard's bonnet and then bounded into the side of the road. He had run past it fifty yards before he brought his machine to a stop.

When he backed up to the fallen bag Count Michæl was aroused from slumber and ascribed the accident to Peter's carelessness. In the chauffeur's apology Anthony Trent heard his assumed name brought in. Plainly Peter was making him the culprit. He had pitched the bundle from the roof with some skill. It bounded far into the shadow. Finally Peter Sissek stumbled over it. And as he stooped to retrieve it, Alfred Anthony swung at him. For the second time Peter had taken the count. To hit a defenceless, unsuspecting man was not a thing to give Trent any pleasure, but it was not a moment in which to hesitate. With Peter's livery cap and duster on, Trent took the bundle on his shoulder and carried it at such an angle that in case of scrutiny his face would be shielded from gaze.

A quick backward glance a few minutes later on showed the new driver that the count had resumed his broken slumbers. So well indeed did the lord of Castle Radna sleep that he did not know the Panhard had left the main road or that any danger threatened him until he was suddenly hauled from his springy seat to look into the clear, hard eyes of Alfred Anthony.

Then he realized that his revolver was in the cockney's hand and the precious wallet gone from his pocket. Count Michæl was no coward and he thought quickly with that intriguing, plotting brain of his. A great diamond still sparkled upon his finger and the money in another pocket was untouched.

"I should have been wiser," he commented. "I thought my lord Rosecarrel had become suddenly mad. Now I see that he was saner than I. First Captain the Honourable Oswald Hardcastle, then Sir Piers Edgcomb and now you. May I ask your name and rank? You have been my servant and succeeded so far where they failed?"

Anthony Trent was not expecting this attitude. He had been so used to seeing the count fly into stupendous rages that this calm, collected manner was disturbing. It might be the man's natural attitude in moments of real peril or it might merely mean he knew he was ultimately to be the victor.

It was a curious scene. The Panhard had come to rest in a clearing of the woods and a brilliant moon gave the place almost the clarity of day.

Count Michæl sat down on a log and lighted a cigarette. Almost he was usurping Trent's *rôle* under such circumstances.

"This interests me," said Count Michæl, "let us discuss it."

"I've no time," Trent said smiling. "I am due at Fiume or Trieste or Zara as the case may be at a certain hour and as I haven't the Lion here I must push on."

"Have you thought that I shall certainly pursue you and assuredly capture you?"

"You may pursue later when you are found but by that time I shall be gone."

"You can never escape me," the count said. "I have a long arm and I do not forget. And my vengeance is a bad thing for those against whom it is directed."

"It's not altogether healthy to have me for an enemy," Trent reminded him. "I have my own likes and dislikes."

The count sneered.

"You," he cried, "Who are you? What have you done that men should fear you?

For a moment you have a little luck, the little luck that will bring you blindly to greater danger."

"I'm strictly *incognito*," Trent answered. "Once I was unwise enough to answer such a challenge, but you may believe me that I, too, have a name. Now count, it won't help you a bit to put up a fight. It will save you trouble if you'll back up against that tree and let me tie you up."

"You would put this outrage on me?" the other cried, his calm leaving him, the veins standing out on an empurpled forehead like raised livid ridges.

"Get up!" Anthony Trent snapped.

"It is because you have a pistol," the count said. "Put that down if you are a man and then see what you can make me do."

"You may believe it or not," Trent retorted, "but it hurts me to have to decline the offer. If I dared take time I would return several little tendernesses of yours. As it is I can't, having a weapon, strike a man who hasn't one. You are luckier than you know. Back up there and do it damned quick."

Trent was certain that Count Temesvar could never unfasten his bonds. And as he was gagged he could not cry for help. Some swineherd or peasant would discover him later. Meanwhile the discipline would be good.

"Good-by," said Trent genially, "Give my love to your guest the prince and all his high born companions."

If Count Michæl had looked angry before his face now was doubly hideous with rage. His hold over Lord Rosecarrel was gone and he could not doubt but this stranger who had posed as a chauffeur had learned somehow of the presence of the prince. If it were known in the chancelleries of Europe all his carefully matured plans would go for naught. Unless Alfred Anthony were captured Michæl, Count Temesvar could never again make his pleasant little trips to the great houses of England, France and Italy. There he was known as one who had abandoned all political ambitions to become merely the country magnate interested in cattle and crops. Never again could he gather useful information over friendly dinner tables or hobnob with prime ministers over golf or auction bridge if it were known he was giving sanctuary to one who threatened the world peace.

When Anthony Trent had satisfied himself that the document he had taken was the one Arthur stole from his father, he knew, in order to be absolutely safe, it should be destroyed. Its destruction would give the earl immunity. But Trent

hesitated. Once already Lord Rosecarrel had believed it was demolished and had suffered terribly for his trust. Inevitably there would be a seed of suspicion if a comparative stranger, confessedly one who had profited by unlawful operations, should ask him to take as true that the treaty had again been destroyed.

A man in Trent's position was doubly sensitive in a matter of this sort. He had no long and honorable record to back his assertions; and although in the present instance he was actuated by no motives of self-aggrandizement he was not sure others—Daphne alone excepted—would believe him. He thanked God that with her it was different.

So he put the paper in an envelope already stamped and addressed and placed it in his pocket. Then he started for a port of safety.

It seemed impossible that he should miss the way in the bright moonlight but he realized a few minutes later that he was only circling around the clearing where the count was tied to a tree. His headlights showed him innumerable roads like those by which he had come but there was no distinctive sign to guide him to the road to the coast. A group of peasants going incredibly early to their work could not understand him. He repeated the word Fiume but even that did not help. Their little life was bounded by the confines of a few square miles; and the troop trains which had taken them to the battle lines of a year or so back had only confused them as to topography.

Among the big oaks and beeches Trent could not easily find one tall enough to bear his weight on branches that would let him see over the tops of the others. When dawn came he was in no better plight.

The position in which Anthony Trent found himself was by far the most serious of his career. Hitherto he had faced imprisonment at most. Now capture meant without doubt—death. He had, without thinking of the folly of his utterance, told Count Michæl that he knew of the presence of the guests unsuspected by the great powers.

Count Michæl had probably staged the supposed escape of the prince and supplied a convenient corpse for his interment. Unrest was in every portion of what had once been the dual monarchy. Beggars on horseback were riding to a fall and the Balkan volcano was near eruption. And Anthony Trent, alone of those opposed to Count Michæl's party, knew where was hidden the man whom the count was coaching for his big *rôle*. His escape would mean disaster. By this time no doubt passing countrymen had recognized their overlord and released him. But for lack of a compass Anthony Trent should even now have been at a

port where he could escape to a friendly vessel.

He remembered what Lord Rosecarrel had told him of Count Michæl's character and autocratic power. Although theoretically shorn of his former absolutism it was unlikely that peasants who worked on his lands and still felt their dependence upon him should question Count Michæl's actions. World news which spreads rapidly among the herded workers in factories crept slowly among these land tillers. They had enough to eat and drink and were grateful for that after their years of fighting.

Now that capture was imminent Trent knew that the document must be destroyed. But even in this he delayed hoping his usual luck might cling to him and make the sacrifice unnecessary.

He abandoned the automobile. Its wheels were embedded in black viscid mud and to extricate them the engine would have to run on low speed and announce the car's position to such as might already be seeking him. If he could pass the day uncaptured he might at night be able to free the car of its imprisoning mud and make his escape. He had woodcraft enough to be able to mark down the spot where the Panhard was hidden.

It was high noon when Anthony Trent came in sight of a farm. A big dog came toward him with sharp, staccato inquiring barks. He had a way of making dogs his friends and soon the animal was wagging a welcoming tail. Trent satisfied his hunger and thirst with a meal of early plums and lighted his last Woodbine. The Croatian farmers of the district in which he found himself were horsebreeders to a man. It was an industry which the government had always approved and encouraged. Without a doubt in the distant barns there was some favorite animal which might bear Trent to safety if his car had been discovered. The watch dog, now satisfied that the stranger was one to be adored, would prove no obstacle.

Trent nestled back in some drying hay, well out of sight, he supposed, of observers and dropped into a profound sleep. It was the unusual spectacle of the watch dog sitting by the mound of hay that attracted the notice of the farmer. He supposed that the animal—part hound and part draft dog—had run some animal to earth. When the farmer saw that the stranger slept there for whom he had, under Count Michæl's direction, scoured the forest since dawn, he wisely brought assistance. Thus it was that Anthony Trent, rudely brought back to an unsympathetic earth, found himself seized, bruised and bound before he had time to recover his senses or put up a fight.

Peter Sissek it was who carried him to the recovered Panhard and threw him

violently to the floor. And for every blow that Trent had struck Sissek in fair fight the Croatian returned with interest now that his conqueror was bound and hopeless. One of Peter's assistants sat on the seat brandishing the revolver which had been the count's. He talked incessantly, threatening no doubt and insulting the captive, and punctuating his invective with kicks that bruised the American's ribs sorely.

He was carried past a mob of jeering servants when the castle was reached and put in a room which had been used as a dungeon for five hundred years. As he looked about the stone walled cell with its narrow windows through which his body could scarcely pass even though the heavy bars were sawn through, he knew his professional skill would avail him nothing.

There was one safeguard for gaolers which he sighed to see. Inside the door was a cage of iron where a keeper might stand and be protected from the sudden onslaught of a waiting prisoner. Thus the most usual form of escape was taken from him.

Hentzi was his first visitor, poor rotund, posing Hentzi who had liked Alfred Anthony largely because he supposed it was a semi-educated London cockney who listened to his worldly wisdom. When he had learned from his master that this pretended chauffeur was the third of the Rosecarrel adherents who had made desperate attempts he supposed him to be of high degree. With amusement Anthony Trent saw the change in his manner. Although disgraced and in prison Hentzi paid the respect that he invariably accorded to birth. He told himself that it was because he noted the instincts of blue blood that he had found pleasure in talking with Alfred Anthony. Trent's careless manner which had sometimes seemed overbold in a chauffeur was now explained.

"I grieve very much to see the marks of violence inflicted upon you by a clod like Peter Sissek," he began.

"I knocked the same clod out when he wasn't looking," Trent returned, "so he had a kick coming. You didn't come to be merely polite Hentzi, what is it? Torture? Boiling oil?"

"It will not be boiling oil," Hentzi answered seriously.

Anthony Trent looked at him searchingly. Of course Hentzi had his purpose in coming here; and that he did not deny the possibility of a Croatian third degree convinced the American that the danger he anticipated was real and near. So far as Count Michæl's power went in his own castle of Radna his prisoner might be in medieval times. Trent was a danger to be nullified and a single life was hardly

worthy of consideration in the game the count was playing.

To lose his life was bitter enough; but to lose it after failing and so be denied another chance to make good was agonizing. Hentzi gathered nothing from his scrutiny of the other man's battered face. He saw that the forced and rather vacuous grin which Anthony Trent had worn when he lived another part was gone. Only the powerful, brooding, hawklike look which he had occasionally seen for a flash now remained. He did not doubt but that this was the true character of the man a great English noble had chosen for a dangerous mission.

"You will remain here until the count returns," Hentzi announced.

"How long?" Trent snapped.

"A week certainly; more likely two."

"What will happen then?"

Hentzi sighed. His master's violence often frightened him. He came of a peaceloving family.

"That I cannot say."

"I can't go without a daily shave," Trent said yawning. "And I need cigarettes and the London papers. You can get them for me?"

"The razor I dare not," Hentzi said. "The rest you shall have."

"Afraid I shall commit suicide? You ought to be glad if I did. It would save Count Michæl a lot of trouble. That cage there prevents my slitting the throat of a keeper. A child with a gun could poke the barrel through the bars and put me out of business. Come Hentzi, be human. I will not live with whiskers. I swear to do myself no damage or anyone else either."

"You give me the word of a man of noble birth?" Hentzi inquired anxiously. "You cannot conceal your origin from me. You may not wish it known but I know."

Anthony Trent kept a straight face. Hentzi had always amused him.

"Hentzi," he said seriously, "I must preserve my *incognito* at all costs. That you appreciate, but if it will make you more comfortable I will tell you that in my own country there is not a man who has the right to call himself my superior or go in to dinner before me."

Hentzi's bow was most profound. He had known it all along. This was assuredly

the venturesome holder of an ancient title, a man of high birth and born to great honor. Hentzi's own Sheffield blades were at his disposal.

CHAPTER TWELVE

SAINT ANTHONY

Count Michæl returned to his castle after Trent had been for fifteen days a prisoner.

The prince and his suite were now safely hidden in a far Carpathian retreat and there was no evidence in Castle Radna of their occupancy. It had been a dreadful moment when Count Temesvar found himself tied to a tree and his plans in danger of disclosure to his enemies. He had no opportunity of knowing as yet to what use Alfred Anthony had put his knowledge.

The London papers told him only that Lord Rosecarrel was the new Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and was already making friends with the Balkans and cementing an ancient alliance with Greece. That was bad enough in all conscience. But if it were known that he had hidden a prince whose only use to him would be the furtherance of his political ambitions he would be denounced by the government under which he lived.

The easy going, pleasure loving and almost amiable side of Count Michæl's nature was for the moment put aside. The man who took pride in his swift travelling Lion and his occasional long drive at golf was banished by the need of the moment for possessing certain and wholly accurate knowledge of what Alfred Anthony was and what he had done.

Anthony Trent when he was brought before the count saw this at a glance. He was Francis the First in his arbitrary moods, the mood that made that versatile monarch sweep friends to destruction and visit wrath on them who had offended.

He was led, manacled, between Peter Sissek and old Ferencz and brought to the big room in which the Chubbwood safe was placed. Hentzi hovered nervously in the background.

"I have sent for you," Count Michæl said, "so that you may have the opportunity of making a confession."

"It is thoughtful of you," Trent told him, "but I have no confession to make. I have some complaints however. I dislike my present quarters. They are verminous and draughty."

"Is it possible," the count said slowly, "that you fail to understand your position?"

"What is my position?" Anthony Trent countered.

"You are a nameless prisoner absolutely in my power. There is none in the outer world to help you. Those other two who came told me as much. They were sworn not to ask mercy of me or help of my lord Rosecarrel."

"The cases are not parallel," Trent returned equably, "They asked no mercy of you. I don't either. They did not expect help of—what was the name you mentioned?"

"The man for whom you risk death is the Earl of Rosecarrel. He cannot aid you."

Trent shook his head.

"Never heard of him. I wonder what put it into your brain that I had any definite plans in coming here except to get a position which you forced on me."

"Why did you take a certain document from my pocket and leave much money? No, no. It is idle to fence. I have learnt from London that you were only in the Lion factory a few days and that previously nothing was known of you. You are not a mechanic; that is plain. You came for a certain political document worth in money—nothing. You took it. Now, sir, where is it?"

There was no doubting the count's eagerness or Anthony Trent's astonishment. The count had not recovered the treaty. So far as Trent remembered the envelope was in his coat pocket, the same coat he had taken off among the hay and made a pillow for his head. He assumed, naturally, that when he was roughly dragged from slumber his clothes were searched. A light of triumph came into his eyes at the thought that it did not repose behind those inviolate doors of steel. But it was amazing that the heap of hay had not been disturbed. He supposed it was because of the week of almost continuous rain.

"Where is it?" Count Michæl repeated.

"When I saw it was of no value," Trent said, sticking to his chauffeur rôle, "I burned it."

"For the moment we will assume that you speak the truth. Now, how is it you made the mistake of supposing that I had here certain guests of high degree?"

"Just a guess," Trent said calmly, "Wasn't I right? Remember I had to bring them up from Fiume. I saw coronets on dressing cases and from the way Hentzi

bowed and scraped I imagined they were at least royalties in disguise."

"You said," Count Michæl insisted, "'Give my love to the prince.' You could only have meant one particular personage. You did not speak in generalities you particularized. You said 'The prince.' I warn you you do not help yourself by denials. I am not a patient man. The world knows that. Here in my castle of Radna I am supreme. I have not chosen my servants idly. They are committed to me and my cause absolutely. Old Ferencz there would die for me or mine. It is the tradition of loyalty born in him. So with the others. You are surrounded here with those who regard you as my enemy. How can I chide them if, knowing their lord is in peril, they seek to remove it?"

"First and second murderers," Trent commented.

"Executioners," the count corrected.

"It makes no difference what you call them," Trent exclaimed.

"I am glad you look at it in that light," Count Michæl said, "It does not make any difference as you will see. I shall convince you of that by relating the sad accident which befell your friend Captain the Honourable Oswald Hardcastle, formerly of the Royal Dragoons."

"My friend?" Trent exclaimed.

"Certainly," the count returned, "Lord Rosecarrel's military attaché at Constantinople. Your innocence amuses me. You no doubt know that I owned that great horse Daliborka a winner of the Grand Prix. I was dissatisfied with my trainer and asked friends at the Jockey Club in Paris to recommend me someone. Captain Hardcastle disguised himself much as you have done. He was no longer an aristocrat, an officer of a great regiment, but a trainer who was an ex-jockey. He was a good trainer and a great horseman. Daliborka's time trials were marvelous. I entered him for the great races in England. My new trainer was so jealous of his horse he would have no strangers near and none was allowed to follow him in his rides through the grass meadows." Count Michæl laughed softly, "Yes, I was deceived, made a fool of, as you have it but I can confess it as I do in your case with the satisfaction that the last laugh, the last trick will be mine. It was my laugh at the last with Captain Hardcastle. You are interested?"

"I was in Paris when Daliborka won," Trent said. "I made money on him. Most certainly I'm interested."

"Captain Hardcastle wished for the document which you say you have destroyed. He obtained it. He did not seek to escape as you have done down the

main roads. No. No. He had studied the country profoundly with all the topographical knowledge gained at the Staff College. He had such complete charge of my large stables that none questioned his right to do as he chose and I was too busy at the time even to see him. He planned his route carefully. He found out a path to the sea where there would wait him a yacht. It was, oddly enough, the same steam yacht in which my lord Rosecarrel makes his cruises. At intervals he placed my horses, horses he had trained for steeple chases. But the first stretch of the journey, ten miles of velvet turf he had planned to ride Daliborka. It is sufficient to tell you that we knew his plans in time. He was to start at midnight. It happened that I passed his quarters at half past eleven and detained him in talk, talk that gave him no uneasiness."

"Then, thinking I was safely here he rushed to the little outbuilding where my great black horse was saddled. He sprang to its back quickly. And as he did so we lit a torch so that he might see how we laughed last. It was a black horse indeed, but a work horse, a slow placid beast which we had substituted. I have never seen real despair seize on a brave man as it did when he saw he had failed. I enjoyed it very much Arlfrit.

"The stable hands who had always resented his iron discipline, the discipline of the soldier, took their vengeance of him in my absence. They are rough, these brave fellows of mine, and do not know their strength."

"You mean," Trent snapped, "you let them murder a man who was probably tied as I am tied now?"

Count Michæl shrugged his shoulders.

"A man who puts his head in the lion's den must not complain if the lion be hungry. This is my house and I do not welcome thieves. Then there was Sir Piers Edgcomb. I was never sure of him. A big man, slow of movement and who spoke German so well I believed him to be of Bavaria. He was my butler. These country bred servants of mine do well enough in most things but the niceties of table service as I see in your own country are beyond them.

"A butler who has to take charge of much valuable plate and old, precious glass should at least be able to clean them. This man—he called himself Peters knew nothing of these things. So I set traps for him. He had a wolf's cunning. But a wise hunter can snare a wolf and I snared him. I did not bring you here to tell you of them so that you might be entertained. I brought you here to tell you that they who plotted, failed and died for their cause. You, who have succeeded and have injured me are my captive just as they were."

"Well?" Anthony Trent said, "What of it?"

"Simply this. You say you have burned the document. That might be true or untrue. It is possible you have concealed it in some place where I could recover it only after long search. I shall give you a day to make up your mind to speak the whole truth."

"And after that?"

"You will be glad to tell what you know," Count Michæl said grimly. "Your death will be but a poor triumph to me; that I am willing to admit, but it is the greatest loss that can befall you."

"You are trying to make a bargain with me?"

"Perhaps. I will say at least that if the document is procured Alfred Anthony would be free to return to London on one condition."

"Which is?"

"That he gave me his word of honor to forget every face and name he had seen or heard in Castle Radna. Under the circumstances I could allow myself to be so generous but I should require the most solemn of oaths." The count leaned forward a little and spoke impressively. "Remember again, that your death will be but poor consolation for me yet it is the most terrible thing that can happen to you."

"I'm not so sure," Anthony Trent muttered.

In that moment there was stripped from him the cunning and audacity that success in crime had brought. Often he had seen himself in a melodramatic almost heroic light, laughing at the nice distinctions of wrong and right, stretching out his hand to take what he wanted and caring nothing for the judgments of men. With the egocentricity of the successful criminal he had felt himself superior to all his opponents and had seen himself in future performing such exploits as none had dared to do.

His months at Castle Radna had been very dull. The plentiful food was coarse; his companions boors; of music he had heard not a note. He was anxious to be back again among people he liked. Such a chance was offered him now. He believed if he gave his solemn word that the count—in order to retain his hold on Lord Rosecarrel—would give him safe conduct to Fiume.

Yet he was amazed to find that he would not accept Count Michæl's offer. Rather than tell him the truth about the document and so bring disaster again on the family of the woman he loved he was content to give up his life. Perhaps there was another reason which brought him to this way of thinking also. Daphne was not for him. That, long ago, he had realized. Life without Daphne! Dreary days that would hold no joy lengthening into months and years of heart hunger and at last into dissatisfied old age. He was brought back from his thoughts by the count's voice.

"Of what are you not sure? That I shall not keep my word?"

"I'm not sure that I shall give mine," Trent answered.

"You will have a day and a night to think it over. I shall find you in a more

reasonable mood when I see you again. But remember this. After tomorrow there will be no other opportunity. I am not a patient man and I am holding back my anger with difficulty. I do not relish being sick of chagrin."

Anthony Trent held up his manacled hands.

"This is a sporting way of doing things, isn't it?" he exclaimed.

"Until tomorrow," Count Michæl smiled.

It was dark when the prisoner reached his cell. An oil lamp lit the bare room. It was hung on a nail in the little cage out of reach of any occupant of the stone chamber.

Peter Sissek and old Ferencz had brought him to his prison. They offered him no violence. Evidently they were acting under orders. The count had made no comment on the bruises that still discoloured the American's face.

He had been sitting an hour on the edge of his cot when the outer door opened. Trent did not even look up. It was at this hour unappetizing food was brought and thrust under the cage, food he could pick at clumsily with his hands in iron bracelets.

Hearing no grating sound of heavy plate being pushed over the uneven floor he looked up. Pauline stood in the cage with Hentzi. The latter was obviously nervous and alarmed. He looked about him in dread and listened unhappily for sounds that might indicate the coming of others along the flagged passage.

"Open the gate," Pauline commanded, pointing to the steel barrier.

"If the count should hear of it!" he wailed.

"I will bear the blame," she said. "Be quick."

"You must be but five minutes," he insisted.

"I shall take ten," she retorted.

Wringing his hands Hentzi, the prey of many apprehensions, left her alone with the prisoner. It chanced that Pauline was aware of some petty thefts on the secretary's part, defalcations which would destroy Count Michæl's faith in his probity. It was a threat of exposure which forced him to bring her here.

Trent rose when she came in and offered his visitor the single rush bottomed chair the cell contained.

He looked at her warily as one antagonist gazes at another before a struggle.

Always she had called up in him this need for caution. Her violent and passionate nature were graven on the face which had brought so many men to folly and disgrace. Hentzi had told him many stories of the life she had lived in great cities and the tragedies which had come to those who had loved her.

She was dressed tonight very splendidly. Jewels that should have belonged to the poor countess who was passing her days in retreat were about her neck. An emerald necklace which in other days would have set Anthony Trent's eyes glittering matched her strange almond eyes. There was a certain tiger grace about the woman which would have attracted men's notice and women's from wherever she might have gone. Did she, he wondered, come in peace or in war? He was on his guard.

"You are surprised to see me?" she began.

"I cannot choose my visitors," he reminded her.

"You have never liked me," she returned, "Why?"

"You were a danger to my enterprise," he answered.

"A danger now removed," she said quickly. "What are those marks on your face?" she cried as he turned his head from the shadow to where the dim lamp light showed him more dearly. "Who has dared to strike you?"

"That is nothing," he cried impatiently. "Certainly the least of my troubles. I am very weary; there may be very unpleasant hours before me and I need sleep. It cannot be such a great triumph to see me in this cell?"

"Why do you stay here?" she demanded. "I know what Count Michæl has told you. I know you have only to give him that piece of paper and your word of honor as a gentleman and you are free to go. It is very fortunate for you. Those two friends who also came are dead."

"Did he send you here?" Trent asked.

"He would be furious if he knew," she said quickly. "Certainly it would do you no good if he learned of it. You know," and Pauline looked at him through lowered lashes, "he has always been jealous of you."

"He has had no reason to be," Trent reminded her coldly.

"I know," she said, bitterness in her tone, "but he will not believe that. And now he knows you are noble and were masquerading as a chauffeur he will be all the more jealous."

"I'm not a nobleman," he said almost angrily. He resented her presence.

"You cannot deceive me," she said tenderly.

"If you did not come here to speak for Count Michæl, may I ask then for what purpose?"

"I want to warn you not to keep that paper from him."

"It was burned long ago," he answered. "If he can collect the ashes he is welcome to them."

"At present he is trying to collect your coat," she told him and noted with a smile his start of alarm. "When they took you you were coatless. He thinks somewhere in the forest they will find it and when they find it the paper will be there and perhaps other things of your own which will be interesting."

"I fear he will be disappointed," Trent said calmly, "but if he will return a favorite pipe in one of the pockets I shall be obliged."

She looked at him steadily. Hers was not always an easy face to read.

"I pray that they will find the coat," she said.

"Thank you," he exclaimed. "At least you make no pretence of wanting me to win."

"You don't understand," she cried, "it is because they will force you to tell if they cannot find it. I am speaking no more than the truth. Cannot you see that you have mixed yourself in high matters and are a menace to Count Michæl? He must know and he will know."

She saw his mouth tighten.

"Men just as strong and brave as you have broken down and told all."

"That may be," he answered, "but I am not going to alter my story about burning the paper and I am not going to weaken under any punishment they think of trying on me."

He was not going to tell her that in a few days he would be able to make his way out of this very cell if they kept handcuffs from him a little longer. Kicked out of sight among the dust on the floor was one of his most useful tools. It was a strip of highly tempered steel spring with a saw edge—forty teeth to the inch—and could bite its way through the barred window. When first he entered his prison he thought the opening too small for exit but he had revised his calculations and

was now certain he could wriggle through it.

"It is for a woman you do this," Pauline said. "It is because of a woman you are cold and ask no help of me."

"I can't prevent your wild guesses," he answered. There was no mistaking his distaste of her meddling.

"I do not give up easily," he told her. "I used to think that in a duel between love and duty love should always win. It doesn't seem to work out that way always. And I used to think that a man who had not been worthy of a woman should be given a chance to rebuild his life if he really loved her." He shook his head. "It isn't the right idea. Sentimental nonsense the world calls it. The wedding gift a man offers his bride is his past." He shrugged his shoulders. "I didn't qualify."

Anthony Trent looked at the rough wall and saw only those dancing days of happiness and love in another castle. And instead of Pauline with her world weary face, her knowledge of every art to hold men, he saw his slim and lovely Daphne. He knew that both of them loved him. Vaguely he understood that Pauline had come to offer to save him but he had kept her from telling him so yet. There might conceivably be a future with her in which he would find eventually his old ambitions stirring and his pride in his hazardous work revive. There might even be years that were almost happy; reckless, passionate, quarrelling years. But the thought of it was nauseating. He swept it aside. He remembered the phrase of Private Smith in the dug-out that he was dying in better company than he knew. Well, Anthony Trent if the worst came would die better than he had lived.

To Pauline, who loved him, the idea of a violent ending to one of his ability and address was tragic.

An Austrian by birth, Pauline had been taken to Berlin then blossoming into extravagant and vulgar night life by a mother who was a dancer. Vain, ambitious and jealous of the success of others, Pauline offered no objection to anything whereby she might become widely known. Later, when she had attained international fame as a skater she grew more selective in her affairs. She was the rage for several years and but for the suicide of a Serene Highness would never have been banished from Berlin.

Count Michæl Temesvar was an old admirer. The war swept away Pauline's possessions and there was no manager to engage her at a living wage.

At twenty-eight she had known many capitals, enjoyed great success and never

been really in love. Then she saw Anthony Trent on the golf links and never passed a moment but was filled with thoughts of him. His consistent repulsing of her threw her into moods of anger which she visited mainly on her protector. And when she summoned scorn and anger to her aid in dealing with this Alfred Anthony, she found them only ministers to her infatuation.

She looked around as Hentzi came into the cell.

"It is ten minutes," he whispered.

"Another five," she said. "I shall come with you then."

Hentzi withdrew nervous and expostulating. Trent noticed that her manner was different when she spoke. There was a certain timidity about her, an air of unhappiness almost of hopelessness.

"Have you thought what difference it will make to me?" she asked.

Gone from her face were those meretricious smiles, those little ways cultivated through intimate association with her world of warring sex. The Pauline who looked at him now was a woman stripped of artifice, a woman who suffered and loved.

There was an uncomfortable silence, the awkwardness of the man in the avowed affection of the undesired woman.

"Let there be no deception between us," she said quietly. "I see that it is someone else who claims your heart. I did not think there were men like you who would be steadfast and loyal in a moment such as this. I know only that we—you and I—are alike in one thing. We both love where there is no hope. I came here to offer you freedom at a price most men would be glad to pay. I will not insult you by saying what it was. I have known few good men and I know you are good."

"No, no," he cried, embarrassed by her manner, "Indeed if you only knew."

She would not listen.

"Love can redeem all," she said. "I pray the good God whom I have neglected," she smiled a little ruefully, "to redeem me. I feel that my life is over. I have had everything I wanted and am wearied of the taste. Everything I wanted until now. There comes a time when one is no longer so eager to live. It is so with me." She looked at him wistfully. "Can you believe me when I tell you I want to help you?"

"I do believe it," he said gratefully. "I am glad enough to have a friend in this

dismal place."

"Then let me help you," she said eagerly. "Something tells me you have hidden that paper. I warn you if it is still in existence, it will be found. Can I get it for you?"

Anthony Trent did not answer for a moment. The thought that there yet might be a way of getting the treaty draft to Lord Rosecarrel almost made speech an effort. If that were done with what energy and hope might he not bend his skill to means of escape!

"I should be putting my honor in your keeping," he said slowly.

Her face fell.

"And you dare not trust me?"

It was caution which had saved Anthony Trent a hundred times before and he hesitated just a moment now. Then he looked at Pauline again and was convinced of her sincerity. And, after all, no better way presented itself.

"I will trust you," he said, "but can you find out the place where they captured me?"

"I know it already," she said, "it is the farm of Zencsi and lies no more than thirty miles away."

"Thirty!" he cried, "I thought it was twice that distance."

"You went miles out of your reckoning."

"Have you a pencil?" he cried. "I want to draw a plan of it."

"Alas, no," she exclaimed, "but Hentzi will be here and he shall get one."

The five minutes were up and the count's secretary entered entreating Pauline by fear of discovery to come with him.

"A pencil," she snapped, "and paper. A leaf from that little red memorandum book where you keep account of what money you have saved by cheating your master."

She waved him away.

"Three more minutes," she commanded.

"I hid in a mound of hay quite close to the farm house. It was the one nearest a tree recently struck by lightning. It was a plum and the fruit was still red and

unwrinkled. I hid my coat there primarily with the idea of it being a pillow. When they dragged me out I kicked it down and out of sight. Three things may have happened. One, that owing to the rain they have not canted the hay. Second, that a farm hand found the coat and took the money in it and destroyed everything else. The third contingency is that the document may have been undisturbed. In this case it will be returned when the count inquires broadcast for stray garments."

"Yes, yes," Pauline said, excitement in her voice, "but tell me exactly what to do."

"Can you motor to this Zencsi farm without being found out?"

"It will not be easy but it shall be done."

Her air of assurance heartened him.

"You can only find the blasted tree by day light," he said thoughtfully, "and in day light you may be seen. Can you be there at dawn before the farmer himself is up."

"But that is easiest of all," she cried, "Listen to me. I shall wait until everyone here is asleep. Then I shall take the Fiat and get to Zencsi in a little more than an hour. I can hide the car in the forest and make my search. If I find it I can be back here before any man or maid is stirring." Her face fell. "But what am I to do with it? I dare not give it to you who may be searched."

"It ought to be destroyed," he answered, "but I've sworn to give it to the man who sent me here. I've got it. Put it in the tool box of the Lion, among the cotton waste. Can you get into the garage?"

"Hentzi has all keys, as you should remember," she said. "What keys he has are mine. And then?"

"You will find at the bottom of the big tool box a couple of keys. They are punched out of two thin steel bars. Really there are four keys. It is most important that you bring them to me. You will not forget?"

"When your life hangs on it? What else? We must be quick. I do not fear Hentzi but his master must not find me here."

"If the coat has been removed you must go to the farm house. There is a watch dog who barks but he pines for affection and you can win him easily. Find out who has the coat. If it isn't in the hay someone on the farm has it. If the document is handed to you look at it eagerly to make sure it is what I want and if

it is, tell them the thing is worthless and not what the count wants. And if you find the paper in the breast pocket do the same thing."

"Why?" she demanded.

"If you show them it is what you came for the count who will certainly hear of it will want to get it. What would happen if he knew you had given it to me?"

"Why think of that now?" she returned. But he noticed that a shade of fear passed over her face at the thought of it.

"If you get it and put it in the tool box he will only think how well you have served his interests in coat hunting while his lazy varlets were abed. Of course if they don't hand it to you at the farm and it isn't in the coat it may be destroyed. I'm afraid you'll have to do some bullying and threatening to get at the truth but the truth I must have."

She rose from the rush bottomed chair with a sigh.

"You believe that there are those who can read fate?"

Anthony Trent hesitated. Men of his profession were usually superstitious attaching unwarranted importance to fortuitous things, watching for signs and portents and abandoning planned enterprises at times because of some sign of misfortune which had met them.

"I don't believe it," he admitted, "but that sort of thing influences me. Why?"

"There is a woman nearby who can tell," Pauline replied, "Yesterday I gave her money. She said—can you think of it—that I should die happy."

"I hope you do," he said.

"But it is impossible," she cried. "None clings to life as I do. I am tired of this life. I love the life of cities, the restaurants, the crowds. I am city bred. In a year when conditions are better I shall go back. I shall appear in Berlin again, Petrograd, perhaps and of course in London and they want me in New York. I shall hate to die. But I did not mean to speak of myself. She told me that the man I loved would be successful. Fate makes no mistake. Keep up your courage for you will win and I shall die happy. What more could we want?"

But there were tears in her eyes as she said it.

He took both her hands in his.

"What a splendid woman you are!" he said with conviction.

"My dear," she answered, her voice a little uneven, "do not tell that to the woman you love. She would hate me and I want to live a little in your heart without anyone else to share it. Promise me that?"

There was in his mind to tell her Daphne was different. That Daphne would love her too, but he said nothing. Her intuition told her more than his hope could foretell.

"I promise," he answered, "and I promise that I shall never forget."

Hentzi's agitated voice disturbed them.

"Not one moment longer," he whispered. "I dare not."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

DOWN TO THE SEA

When Pauline had gone Trent was immeasurably happier in the hope she had given him. Until her visit his only chance of escape had been centered in the expectation that when once his hands were freed he might file the bars. There was now a scheme in his head worth many of that.

Half an hour after she had left two men entered guided by the now assured Hentzi.

"You have complained of the dirt here," the secretary explained, "and it will be removed."

The tiny spring saw was swept up unobserved. Trent saw it disappear now with a smile where before it would have been black tragedy to him.

He slept well that night and shaved himself next morning in high spirits. It was not easy, shaving with handcuffs on, but it was possible. Then he waited for some message from Pauline.

Hentzi came into the cell at five.

"Count Michæl will see you at ten tonight. My friend, I warn you to be wise and acknowledge defeat."

"That's not my idea of wisdom," Trent grinned so cheerfully that Hentzi was vaguely disturbed.

"You are more foolish even than the others," Hentzi said, shaking his head. "Brave men, all three. For my part I would be reasonable. I would say, 'I have fought a good fight and the odds were against me. How much can I save from the wreck?' That is the way to talk, my lord."

Suddenly he took a book from his pocket, a book tied with string and sealed but not enveloped in paper. He handed it to the American.

"This is from a friend," he announced. "I bring danger on myself in giving it to you but I can rely on your silence, eh?"

"Certainly," Trent said carelessly and betrayed no interest in the gift. "At ten

o'clock tonight? Is that it?"

"It is wise to acknowledge defeat," Hentzi said earnestly.

"We'll see when the time comes," Trent returned. "It's largely a matter of holding trumps my good Hentzi."

Anthony Trent tore the string from the book eagerly. In the middle, placed carefully in a space hollowed among the leaves were the bar keys which might, with luck, open the doors to safety. About them was wrapped a half sheet of scented, green note paper. On it was scrawled very faintly in pencil, "I have put it where you told me to."

"Thank God!" cried Anthony Trent.

Then with some difficulty he managed to put the two thin steel bars in a special pocket long ago prepared for them.

The hours seemed very long until Hentzi, with Sissek and Ferencz, came for him. The two servants carried their big service revolvers.

The anxious moment was at hand, the moment that was to tell Trent whether he was to be utterly defeated or to stand a chance of escape.

"Take these off," he said holding out his manacled hands.

"No. No." Sissek and Ferencz cried together.

"The count said so," Trent frowned.

"I have had no orders," Hentzi assured him, "and that is one key I have not got."

For one desperate moment Anthony Trent thought of bringing down his iron ringed wrists on Sissek's head and attempting to escape. But he put the thought from him as futile. There was still another trump to play.

They led him, as he hoped, to the great room where the safe was, the room he had searched so carefully.

In a carved oak chair at the head of a table sat Count Michæl. Pauline was there sitting in a chaise longue smoking a cigarette in a very long amber and gold holder. She did not turn her face from the count to the prisoner until he had stood there silent for a full minute. Then she looked at him coldly, sneeringly, and said

something to Count Michæl which brought a peal of laughter from him.

It seemed to Trent that he had never seen the two on such wholly affectionate terms.

There were two doors to the room. At one stood Peter Sissek, revolver in hand. At the other old Ferencz watched in armed vigilance. On the table before the count was a .38 automatic pistol. Shades were drawn over the long narrow French windows. In a chair before one of them Hentzi sat nervous as ever in the presence of his violent employer. Before the other window was a big bronze statue of the dying Gaul. The stage was set very comfortably for all but the manacled Anthony Trent.

"You said I could have these off," Trent began, "these damned steel bangles that I've worn so long."

"It is for yourself to remove them," the count said suavely. "I am about to give you the opportunity. You see I am generous. Others would blame me for it."

"You are not generous," Trent snapped. "A coward never is."

The count's face lost some of its suavity.

"Who dares call me a coward?" he cried.

"I do," Trent returned promptly. "You are a coward. Here am I, an unarmed man among three with guns. The doors are locked and yet you keep me here handcuffed. Generous! Brave!" All his contempt was poured out as he said it.

"If I take them off will you give me your *parole d'honneur* to make no effort to escape?"

Anthony Trent turned to Pauline.

"Madame," he said, as though to a stranger, "I cannot congratulate you on the courage of your friend. So afraid is he of one single man that he wishes me to give my word I will not try to escape. He forgets I am unarmed, in a strange and vast house filled with his servants, with death threatening me at any suspicious move. Are all your noblemen of Croatia as cautious as he?"

Pauline did not reply to him. Instead she spoke to the count in German.

"Pay no attention to him," she counselled. "I know that you are brave, my Michæl. Let him laugh at you for a coward if he wishes. I would not have him hurt you or frighten you for the world."

"Frighten *me*!" cried the count, "Hurt *me*!" He flung a little key across the table to Hentzi. "Take them off," he commanded.

Trent examined his reddened wrists with a frown.

"This should never have been done," he declared. Then he turned to Hentzi. "I need a cigarette."

"I did not bring you here to smoke," Count Michæl said acidly. "I brought you here to interrogate you. Remember that."

"I have been without a decent smoke for nearly two weeks," Trent returned. "And I want one. Unless I have some I shall not answer any one of your interrogations. Think it over, count."

Hentzi looked at the American reproachfully. He had supplied his prisoner with the best of tobacco. That he had done so surreptitiously robbed him of the privilege of recrimination. The two guards not understanding a word of the conversation could not deny Trent's statements.

Count Michæl Temesvar looked closely at his former chauffeur. He was standing on the rich red rug between the two windows. He was biting his lips; his face twitched and his fingers worked nervously. It was plain that he suffered as drug takers do when deprived of their poisons.

There was a cedar lined silver box of cigarettes on the little table by Pauline's chair. This Hentzi was commanded to place before the prisoner. Anthony Trent's symptoms were admirably assumed. He inhaled and exhaled in silent delight and his face grew more peaceful. But he was still unsettled and nervous. The count, remembering his iron-nerved driver, attributed the change as much to imprisonment and fear as to lack of tobacco. In a sense it was a tribute to his power over the man who had thwarted him. He watched Trent stride up and down by the two windows and ascribed it to a growing sense of the ordeal about to be undergone.

"I've got to keep moving," Trent said, "I've been tied up in a kennel for two weeks."

"If you must I shall permit it," the other answered. "But I warn you that the length of this table must be your limit. Otherwise my faithful men may have to shoot. You understand?"

"Perfectly," Trent said growing more affable. "I even give you my *parole d'honneur* not to go near the doors. Why rush on certain death?"

"You are growing sensible," Count Michæl said smiling. "I knew it would come. As you say, why rush on certain death? It is foolish. More, it is unnecessary and to do so wastes one's energy. I have not yet had time to learn your name and rank but I am treating with you as an equal."

"Thank you!" Trent retorted. "If you call locking me up in a verminous, rat-haunted cell treating me as an equal I'm hardly grateful."

"I dare take no risks," the count assured him. "You men who came here for my lord Rosecarrel are different from others. I have not forgotten that Sir Piers Edgcomb killed three of my honest lads before he died. There are others who would have treated you less well than I. Now, where is the paper you stole from me and say you burned?"

"What is the fate of ashes tossed to the four winds?"

"It was never burned," the other snapped. "Somewhere it exists in your pocket where I saw you place it. Remember this before you answer. If by your aid alone I find it you may leave this castle."

"How?" Trent demanded. "To walk into ambush outside?"

"There will be twenty square miles of country where none dare touch you. Do you need more than that, you, who cast aspersions on the courage of others? Is it possible you are afraid?"

"What is the other alternative?"

"To join your friends." The count laughed cordially. The idea seemed to amuse him. "To make the third grave. First the trainer, then the butler and last the chauffeur. I wonder what your chief will send me next."

"He will have no need to send anyone else," Trent said affably. By this time his nervousness had disappeared and he was cool and calm as ever.

"You mean he will give up the attempt?"

"Why should there be another when I have already succeeded?"

"This is bravado," the count cried. It was his turn to be nervous now. The importance he attached to the possession of the paper seemed out of all proportion to its value. Trent knew little of the great eternal European game of politics. For a few moments in Paris the New World had its glance at the complicated working but forgot it when booming trade held sway and salesmen took the place of diplomats. The elimination of the new Foreign Secretary meant

a great deal to Count Michæl. The other knowledge which Trent stored in his mind was equally dangerous but there were others who could attend to that. No matter what part Anthony Trent played the count had assigned him the rôle of the defeated.

"It happens to be the truth," Trent returned.

He could see that Pauline was now listening intently. Her pose of antagonism to the stranger was swept away by her anxiety for his safety. Her heart thrilled to see him standing there, debonair, smiling, dominating. It seemed madness to her, this avowal of success.

"You are learning wisdom," Count Michæl commented.

"We may define the term differently," Trent smiled. "I did not burn the paper."

"Ah!" the count breathed excitedly. "Now we have it."

"I preferred to keep it so that I could assure the Right Honourable the Earl of Rosecarrel, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that I had indeed succeeded. You will understand my feelings. Perhaps it was bravado but none seems to believe that such papers ever do get burned. You, count, seemed to doubt it."

"Where is it?" the count snapped. "Your life depends on your truth."

"I have put it in a safe place," Trent said, resuming his pacing of the room.

The count's excitement banished the air of toleration he had with difficulty affected toward one he hated.

"Where is it?" he bellowed.

Anthony Trent was smiling and his eyes were bright. It was one of his moments.

"I am going to fetch it," he said urbanely.

Long ago he had made a careful survey of the possibilities of the room in which he stood. He had thoroughly scrutinized windows and doors as likely aids to future needs.

Every pair of eyes in that great room was turned on him. Sissek and Ferencz understanding no word only saw that he was unmoved, unruffled, almost joyous in the presence of the great Count Michæl. They could not understand it at all. They only hated him the more.

Hentzi was rather thrilled with the spectacle. Here was a young and handsome man of a type he had longed to be, no doubt the bearer of an historic title, who in

the presence of great peril dared to laugh at the head of all the Temesvars.

Count Michæl felt the constricting collar that now almost choked him. These other two who had preceded Alfred Anthony met death bravely but they acknowledged failure. But this man was different. It was almost as though he thought himself the victor. What else would have nerved him to bandy words with his gaoler?

But of them all it was Pauline who watched him most eagerly, and most feared for his safety. He seemed incredibly rash to antagonize the count still further. Few guessed the cruelties to which he could sink when his *amour propre* was wounded. She had made up her mind that the man she loved so wholly should not suffer. So far the count had no reason to suspect her interest in the stranger. His first jealousy had passed when she protested how needless it was. He trusted women with few of his political secrets but she knew Trent was a marked man because he had stumbled on the identity of the princely guest. Therefore he would suffer unless her woman's wit could aid him. Knowing the count's vanity so well she perceived that every moment of this unperturbed attitude added to the severity of the punishment his prisoner would receive.

"You are going to fetch it!" Count Michæl said thickly. "Is it permitted to ask how and when?"

"By all means," Trent said graciously. "I am going to fetch it now and thus."

He made a lightning quick leap toward the window where Hentzi was sitting in a low chair and then a dive over the secretary's shoulder. Through the small panes of glass he went like a hurled rock. The shade torn from its roller wrapped itself about his head and shielded him from flying glass and piercing splinters.

Two shots rang out and he heard Hentzi's voice raised in a shriek of agony. There were other sounds which drowned even this. The count's voice bellowed forth instructions. He could hear Peter Sissek and Ferencz shouting and then, as another shot followed him into the courtyard Pauline's cry rang high above all other sounds.

Trent landed on his shoulder, bruised but not seriously hurt. When he pulled the enveloping window shade from his face he was amazed to see that the room from which he had come was now in darkness. He could hear the men thrashing about it in a fury of rage at being unable to find the way of pursuit. Whether failure of the current was the cause or someone had pressed the button, the delay was of incalculable value.

Trent raced across the paved courtyard and pried open the door of what had been the prince's apartment. It was unoccupied as was that of the adjoining room where the military aide had slept.

At the bedroom door leading to the corridor he listened carefully but heard no sound. He opened it quietly to come upon a servant passing by. It was an unmannerly fellow who had often jeered at him when they used the common table, a tall, awkward, stooping creature with a malicious face. His eyes opened wide when he saw it was the detested English chauffeur. Visions of reward darted across his brain and he made a movement as to apprehend the foreigner.

He was instantly gripped with a hold, which agonized him as he sought to break it, and forced into the bedroom from which Trent had just come. Then the door was locked and he was a prisoner. When, a minute later his master and the others came bursting through he supposed them to be other than they were and hid under a bed where the redoubtable Sissek pursued him and beat him soundly until his identity was established.

Leaving him in the room Trent made his way carefully to the *armoire,* that rock of refuge in a weary land, and entered it noiselessly.

It was established that no stranger could have left the castle by any of its exits. Such as were not barred had servants near them. It was clear that Alfred Anthony was concealed somewhere in the vast building. His capture was only the matter of time, the result of careful searching.

This search was gone about systematically Count Michæl directing his men personally. It was the count's theory that one of his bullets, the first shot at which Hentzi had screamed because of its nearness to his head, had wounded the fleeing man, and that he would sooner or later be traced by a trail of blood.

Hardly had plans been made for the disposition of the searchers than an agitated footman reported Peter Sissek's wife with dire news. She was brought before her employer trembling with excitement.

"Excellency," she cried, "He has escaped in the English car."

Pauline at the count's side clutched his arm.

"Thank God!" she breathed.

"They shall suffer who let him pass," the count roared, "Swine, children of swine, spawn of the devil."

"Let me go after him Excellency," Peter Sissek pleaded. "I will bring him back to

you dead or alive as you command."

"Fool," the count shouted, "Who are you to do this, you who have not his skill nor so fast a car! Get you to Agram. I will telegraph to Fiume and Zara and Trieste and have him stopped for a thief."

"But," Pauline protested, "how dare you let it be known that it is the paper he has stolen? Dare you invite notice of it?"

The count looked at her very oddly. Never had he looked so coldly.

"Is it also his car?" he asked. "Have I no right to that?"

Weeks before Anthony Trent had hidden a spare key to the garage in a secret place. From the moment of closing the door of the *armoire* behind him, climbing down the copper pipe and starting his engine, Anthony Trent had not consumed more than four minutes. As he drove it out of the yard he saw Mrs. Sissek running toward him. Soon they would be on his track again. He did not care. He knew there was never a driver in all Europe who could hope to catch him between Castle Radna and Fiume.

A quick glance had assured him all was well with his Lion. Two extra wheels were carried which could be put on in three minutes. There was gasoline in his tanks and the purring hum of the motor was like a Beethoven symphony to his ears. And he knew that somewhere in the toolbox was concealed the little scrap of paper which had cost two lives already and might take his own as toll were he not careful. He prayed that the gods of chance might give him no less than an even break.

Down the mountain side he went singing. At night there was little or no traffic. The peasants were early abed and the way would be deserted until he struck the Marie Louise road.

Anthony Trent knew that not a car in the garage would pursue him with any chance of success. They would probably send a telegram from Agram but that contingency did not worry him very much. It had taken no more than a minute of his time to do damage that would take a hundred times as long to remedy. He smiled to think of the savage Sissek trying to start his Panhard. Then they would attempt to get the Fiat going and finally, the old and tricky Mercedes. And they would all balk because that skilled mechanic Alfred Anthony had had his finger

in the pie.

At the roar of his engines, magnified in the night silences, peasants turned over and went to sleep again. It was their lord or one of his exalted guests who passed. Sometimes one of them would hear, floating out for a moment, the sound of his singing.

It was a night of triumph and hope for Anthony Trent. He had succeeded where others had failed. The hours brought him nearer to a sight of the woman he loved and he could not put away from him the hope that somewhere happiness and content might wait for them.

There was not an untoward incident in his journey until he reached the high land overlooking the harbor of Fiume. Day would break in less than an hour. Stopping his motor he took the rain stained document from its shelter. Pauline had not failed him. She showed her thoughtfulness by placing sandwiches and a flask of wine in the tool box. He thought of her with a flood of gratitude. Until this reminder he had forgotten her very existence in the thought of the other woman.

Trent had not come idly to Fiume with the bare hope of being able to make his escape. He knew that there were in port several British destroyers that lay off a certain breakwater which he had observed on many occasions. Tied up at this stone pier were a number of rowboats. It would be an easy task to pull off to a destroyer and climb aboard. No commander would deny him the privilege he sought and there was not a gun in Fiume which dare be trained on a British or American vessel.

It was Anthony Trent's way to look for opposition in his ventures and be a little uneasy if he met none. So far things had gone almost too smoothly.

He had threaded his way through the narrow streets of Fiume without other than a few laborers when he was suddenly halted by a policeman. The policeman stood before the Lion and waved his sword. It was plain he labored under stress of great excitement. Three others of his kind came running from a side alley. It seemed to the policeman that the great automobile made a vicious jump at him. He leapt aside with marvelous agility as the accelerated Lion passed him on its way to the pier.

There was just sufficient light for Trent to see the destroyer lying at her anchorage. Everything would have been comfortably done but for the cries of the pursuing police.

A groom of Count Michæl's had ridden a fast horse into Agram and the Fiume authorities were bidden apprehend a thieving chauffeur driving a blue and silver Lion. There was so liberal a reward that the police force was almost disorganized in contemplating it. Pursuers among civilian laborers and sailors joined in the chase.

Trent's heart sank to see the little cove where the boats were tied was not empty at this early hour as he expected. There was a group of seven or eight fishermen getting their nets ready. Their quick ears caught sounds of the disturbance and saw that the man in the motor was to be caught. They seized a two inch hawser and stood across the pier barring the motor's way. Four men holding to one end and three, to another.

Trent took the situation in at a glance. Stupidly enough the fishermen supposed themselves to be able to stop the car of their own strength. Had they fastened the hawser around the cleats at their side Anthony Trent would have gone down to defeat. It was plain that he could not carry out his plan of rowing to the destroyer with these men at his heels.

There was one last desperate thing to do.

The great car responded to the accelerator and by the time it had reached the men holding the rope it was going at fifty miles an hour over the smooth stone breakwater. Two of the men were jerked clear into the water. They were all thrown down and one had an arm broken. Fascinated they watched the great car racing down the pier straight to destruction as they supposed. Then they looked, horrified, as it seemed to hurl itself from the jetty, hurtle through the air and disappear in a tomb of foam.

When police and fishermen strained their eyes and could see no trace of the chauffeur they naturally assumed he had been caught in the car.

"He has killed himself!" the sergeant cried.

"He was mad!" said another.

Anthony Trent had no difficulty in freeing himself from the sinking Lion. It was his wish to swim under water as far as possible and so elude those who watched for him in the faint light.

There was a strong current running and the destroyer lay a couple of cable lengths distant. It was a hard swim, clothes encumbered as he was, and he dare not discard the garment that held the paper. There was a despairing moment when he thought he could never make headway against the tide which would

take him back into the harbor.

It was an astonished marine who saw the dripping exhausted man clamber aboard and fall to the deck.

"I must see your commander at once," Trent cried, when his breathing was easier.

Lieutenant Maitland awaked from his sleep was not inclined to see him.

"What's he like and the devil is it all about?" he demanded crossly.

"He's about knocked out," the marine answered, "and he says he won't tell his business to anyone but you."

Lieutenant Maitland put on a bath robe and interviewed the stranger. He was instantly taken by the man's face and manner. He saw, too that he was dealing with one of his own class.

"I have important despatches for Lord Rosecarrel the Foreign Secretary which I must get to him at once."

"Yes?" Maitland said interrogatively.

"I want you to take them and me," Anthony Trent said.

"I'm afraid that's impossible," said the officer. "You see that is a little out of my beat. Even if your papers were for the First Lord of the Admiralty I could not proceed to a home port without instructions. I am bound for Malta and weigh anchor in a little while."

Anthony Trent was silent for a moment. He knew that private matters concerning Lord Rosecarrel and his son had nothing to do with the government directly. He knew, too, that to commandeer a destroyer for a private errand was inadmissable. But he was determined to get back and had no appetite for Fiume. There was a trump card which he had yet to play.

"Why does a squadron of destroyers stay so long in Fiume?" he asked.

"Admiralty orders," Lieutenant Maitland said briefly.

"They are here because trouble may break out at any moment. The information I carry is necessary for the interests of your country and my own. I'm an American as I supposed you guessed. You will be thanked by the prime minister for taking me and my information back."

"Why not cable it?" Maitland suggested, "I'll wireless it for you in code."

"I dare not trust it," Trent said emphatically, "and they wouldn't believe it anyhow. Mine is a preposterous story but it's one that your government needs to know. Can't Malta get on without you a little? It won't take long. You fellows travel at forty miles an hour."

"Who is to judge of the importance of the information?" Maitland demanded, "I have to think of that. If you are spoofing me I run the certainty of court martial. Really I think I must beg you to be decently careful in asking this of me."

"That's only fair," Trent agreed. "Does the name of William, Prince of Misselbach, mean anything to you?"

"Only that I went to his funeral when he escaped from that island prison of his and was drowned. I was on the port guard ship at the time. I understand the allied powers breathed a sigh of relief that he had chosen to drown himself."

Anthony Trent pointed to a group of boats at the end of the pier from which he had taken his leap. They were growing distinct in the light.

"Those fellows," said Anthony Trent, accepting one of the officer's cigarettes, "are grappling for my body. They believe I'm dead. Drowned as deep as ever Prince William of Misselbach ever was. You have just as much right to think the prince dead. I've seen him. I know where he's been staying since his escape and I know who is behind the plot to put him on the throne of Hungary. Now, Lieutenant, do we steam back to England or shall I cable it?"

"I'll take a chance and slip back to Portsmouth. What you need is a hot bath and some hotter coffee. By the time you've fed and got into some of my togs we shall be on our way back to fame or court martial."

The lieutenant grinned cheerfully. He was still a boy for all the stern years he had witnessed disaster by sea and land. Also he liked Trent. It was rather a lark, he thought.

"By the way," said Trent suddenly, "if they wig-wagged you from shore that you were harbouring a man supposed to have stolen a Lion automobile from Count Michæl Temesvar the man who is at the bottom of the plot would you feel bound to deliver him up to justice? I ask because I think some sort of police are on the way here now."

"My dear man," said Lieutenant Maitland, "you have the good fortune to be aboard the fastest destroyer on God's wide waters. Also steam is up and we shall have started before the harbour authorities can get aboard. If they can overhaul my old dear you may ask me that question again."

When it was certain that Trent had made good his escape the black rage that took hold of Count Michæl plunged his household into a distress that showed itself on every troubled face except that of Pauline.

She was not easily able to conceal her joy in Anthony Trent's good fortune. The prophecy of the gipsy that he would escape was fulfilled.

She knew that rage must be eating at the count's heart, a rage compared with which all his other frenzied outbursts were as nothing. As a rule he made Pauline his *confidante*, desiring only that she approve of his behaviour. Twice she had tried to get Hentzi aside and learn what news, if any, had come of the masquerader. Hentzi sullenly turned away from her. She supposed he had been so upset over his master's temper that he was nursing a grievance himself.

She was in her room that night, about to take a gorgeous necklace from her firm white throat, when there was a knock upon the door.

"It is Mr. Hentzi," said her maid.

"Tell him I will not see him," Pauline yawned.

"He has an important message from Count Michæl," said the girl.

"Which will wait until tomorrow," Pauline said lazily.

Hentzi's voice made itself heard through the partly opened door.

"I must beg you madame, to come at once. It is imperative. The count must have your advice on matters of importance."

Pauline decided to go. After the silence of the day the count would tell her everything, and she was anxious to be reassured of Anthony Trent's safety.

"Where are you taking me?" she demanded as Hentzi guided her past the big room where Trent had been arraigned, the room from which he had made his escape.

"His Excellency cannot remain in a room with an entire window torn out. It would but be to invite a flock of bats to enter."

Pauline climbed two little flights of steps which led to the topmost floor of the castle.

"I have never been here before," she commented.

"Few strangers have," he said, locking it behind her.

"Strangers!" she repeated, "since when have I been a stranger?"

She found nothing strange in his silence. Hentzi was constantly a prey to the fear he might by some over zealous action provoke the wrath of the man he served. Probably he had not heard her question.

She found Count Michæl in a big bare room, octagonal in shape and knew it must be the tower which stood out boldly on the western corner of the castle.

"Why bring me here?" she said petulantly.

She had no fear of the man who ruled his people as an autocrat. It is not in the nature of such women as Pauline to eliminate a certain feeling of contempt for the power of men whom they can sway by whim and artifice. Michæl, Count Temesvar, was terrible to such as he hated, and a political force of sinister strength, but to the green eyed woman who looked at him mockingly he was one of the weak and pliable pawns on life's board.

"Sit down," he said suavely. There was no sudden look of affection as he gazed at her. He spoke, she reflected, very much as he had done to Anthony Trent. But the ex-chauffeur had been a prisoner. She looked about her and saw that this was almost a prison.

"About this Alfred Anthony," he began. "I am told, although I do not believe it, that you were much concerned for his safety."

"Who told you that?" she demanded.

"What matters that? It is untrue?"

"Naturally," she answered, trying to fathom what lay behind his smiling face.

"Tell me this Pauline," he said leaning forward, "when the Sissek woman informed us that he had escaped I thought I heard you say 'Thank God.' Why did you thank God when my enemy escaped?"

Pauline was not so easily to be trapped. She remembered breathing her prayer almost at his ear but she hoped in the excitement he had not heard.

"You are dreaming Michæl," she exclaimed. "Why should I say that?"

"Another thing," the count went on. "This man would hardly have escaped if the electric lights had not gone out." Abruptly the count turned to Hentzi. "Tell me, did you see the engineer about this?"

"Yes, Excellency," Hentzi assured him, "He tells me in technical terms which I do not comprehend that sometimes the light goes off for a few moments. It was the thunder storm or some atmospherical condition. I do not remember."

"Heaven seems to fight for him," Count Michæl commented. "First the lights extinguished and then someone in this house of mine who gives him keys and aids his escape. The garage door opens itself to him and lo, he disappears."

"He has an accomplice you think, Excellency?" Hentzi stammered. He was fearful that his master had learned of his carrying the book to the prisoner. Out of this slender fact the wrathful count might be weaving plot enough to engulf his faithful secretary. "I assure your Excellency," Hentzi cried, "that I am entirely loyal."

Pauline was still not to be frightened by this changed mood of the count and the agitation expressed on his secretary's face. She had been victor over him in a hundred violent scenes and Pauline loved violence and the raising of voices.

"A curious thing," said the count meditatively, "is that the lights went out only in my room. A well trained thunder storm Hentzi, eh?"

"Your excellence means that someone turned them off. I was on guard at the window as you remember."

"I know that you were. Ferencz was at the north door, Peter at the other. The thief could not be suspected and I was a dozen feet distant sitting in my chair. And yet, Hentzi, when I pressed the button light again flooded the room."

"I suppose you are hinting that I did it?" Pauline said calmly.

When the count smiled, it was another man looking at her, a man to whom she was a stranger. For the first time a thrill of uneasiness took hold of her.

"Is hinting the right word?" Count Michæl retorted.

"I might have done it," Pauline admitted, "I remember when I heard the crash of the broken glass jumping up. I probably put my hand out to steady myself and touched the knob without noticing it. How unfortunate!"

"Again," said the count, "I must question your right use of words. You said 'unfortunate,' did you not?"

"There is one other thing which has puzzled me," Count Michæl went on. "Peter Sissek's wife thinks she saw you come back to the garage two mornings back soon after sunrise. She was wrong?"

"She was right," Pauline replied, "I could not sleep so I went out to try and find the missing coat."

"What loyal helpers surround me," the count murmured. "Before you retire to your well earned night's rest one other question."

"As many as you please," said Pauline, some of her burden of anxiety lifted. "What is it?"

"This thief knew of the presence here of certain exalted personages. He had never been anywhere but in the kitchen quarters and his own room. No servant of mine would have told him anything. There were many hours when I was busy and you played golf that you could have told him. I want your word that the information did not come from you."

"You have it," she said lightly. "Now as that is all I shall go to my room. This hideous place chills me."

"Pauline," Count Michæl said sternly, "I have given you every chance to tell the truth. You have lied. It is in your nature to lie but I thought that one of your training would know when the time came to speak the truth. Such an hour is at hand. The man was your lover. You helped him to escape. That I am certain of. You have betrayed me and my cause—and your cause too—because you are a light of love, a thing who will accept a purchase price and then play false."

"My poor Michæl," she said commiseratingly, "you drink too much of your own plum brandy. Tonight you are crazy. Tomorrow I shall have you begging for a smile from me. As it is I find you tedious. Hentzi, open the door."

The secretary made no move to obey her.

She shrugged her shoulders. Neither of the men judged from her manner the fear that began to enwrap her.

"Yours will be a cold smile tomorrow," Count Michæl said, "and I, for one, shall not envy it. You have betrayed me but in the end I have triumphed. They have caught him Pauline. They are bringing him back to you. Do you think you will be there to aid him when he is my prisoner again?"

If Count Michæl wished for tribute to his victory it was his now.

The confidence left her face. She was white and smileless. The courage and bold carriage of her splendid body seemed taken from her. She leaned heavily on the bare table. Hentzi, a prey always to emotion, could have wept for her forgetting she was his master's enemy.

To Count Michæl her attitude had the effect of whipping into white heat his repressed and savage rage. He had tried to believe that he still stood first in her affection. It was the vanity of the successful man whose desire has outlived his fascination.

No woman could be stricken to the earth by news of the capture of a man unless he were unutterably dear to her. It was clear confession of the victory of Lord Rosecarrel's agent. What desire for mercy had been in the count's heart died down. There came in its place the craving for instant and brutal revenge.

"So you did help him?" he said in a low harsh voice.

"Yes," she answered. "I thought I had helped him to succeed."

"And you admit you told him of the presence here of the prince?"

"If you like," she said wearily, "If I denied it you would not believe me."

"Take note of that, Hentzi," the count commanded him. "It is important, this admission of guilt."

Pauline hardly heard him. The shock of learning that the man she adored had been recaptured overwhelmed her. She tried to shut out the thought of what punishment would be meted to him now.

"I will talk more tomorrow," she said brokenly.

"Do you not understand that for you there will be no tomorrow?" She could see now that the count hated her. Jealousy had swept from him all memory of past affection. He could only think of himself as one betrayed by the man he hated. In vain she might look for mercy here.

"I am to be murdered?" she said looking from one to the other of the two.

"You are to be executed," he said. "You took your oath to support this movement and you have betrayed it. I have given you your chance to confess and instead you perjured yourself." He raised a service revolver from his table.

It was Hentzi who in this last black scene rose above his fears to plead for her. The count waved his protests aside. The woman did not move.

"Madame," Hentzi cried almost hysterically. "You must not believe what his excellency tells you."

"Silence," the count cried angrily.

But Hentzi would not be stayed. At heart he was generous and in a dumb,

hopeless fashion he had long cherished an affection for Pauline.

"He escaped," Hentzi continued, "We have just learned that they did not capture him. Already he is on a fast war ship of his country far from fear of pursuit."

It was as though a miracle had happened.

The color came again into Pauline's cheeks and the drooping, broken figure grew tall, erect and commanding.

"So you lied to me, Michæl," she said slowly. "You were ashamed to admit that he had beaten you. But I should not have lost my faith in him so easily." She turned to Hentzi. "Thank you my friend. You have made me happy."

"Silence," the count cried. "Prepare yourself."

"You cannot hurt me now, Michæl," she laughed. Hentzi thought she looked like a young girl, splendid and triumphant with the wine of youth. "At most you can take my life. As I can never have him whom I love I do not mind. Perhaps I am a little grateful to you. Why does your hand tremble, Michæl?"

She held herself at this last moment with a brave insolence. Her head was carried high and the count knew she was laughing at him for having failed. He knew that her words were not idly spoken when she said she would die happy because her lover had escaped.

She stood there flouting him, jeering at him, this woman through whose actions his own safety was imperilled, the woman whose fascination had so long enthralled him. And he realized that although it would be his hands which would strike her to the dust yet she would be the victor.

Untrembling she looked into the black mouth of the revolver.

"Why do your hands shake?" she repeated. "Are you afraid he will come back and rescue me?"

Hentzi covered his eyes as the spurt of flame jumped at her. It was his shriek which rang out. Pauline met her death, triumphant, smiling, unafraid.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE CABINET MEETING

A fast destroyer is a wet and uncomfortable craft but Anthony Trent had never enjoyed a voyage so much. Life in Castle Radna had been a greater strain than he knew. He felt the need for relaxation. The trout stream called him, the golf links tempted him. He felt very much as he had done years before at Dartmouth when the rigors of the training period were finished with. He was safe. He was free; and he was speeding northward ho with the paper in his pocket which had seemed impossible of attainment.

"I dare not run into Portsmouth," Maitland confided in him, "as I'd have to report to the Admiral commanding and this news of yours is not for his ears yet."

"Can't you get nearer London than Portsmouth?" Trent asked.

"We're headed for Sheerness at the mouth of the Thames. I can lie quietly off Canvey Island and then train it to town. Later on when my irregular proceedings are dilated upon I can get the First Lord of the Admiralty to back me up. By the way," he said later, "Do you know the Grenvils well?"

"Very well," Anthony Trent answered, "Why?"

"Then you probably know Rudolph Castoon. One of my sisters who knows Lady Daphne says an engagement is rumoured between them."

"Nothing to it," Anthony Trent said confidently. "She doesn't even like him as a friend. Does your sister know her well?"

"Next door neighbours in Cornwall," Maitland answered. "She married Lord Polruan."

So it was Maitland's sister who had dubbed him an American adventurer and indirectly warned the earl against the danger of having him on such intimate terms! And this unassuming young naval officer was of course a son of an earl, and would rightly be described as the Honourable Willoughby Maitland. Anthony Trent smiled. He could not help thinking how gratified his old housekeeper in Kennebago would be to think he moved in such company.

The two men reached Liverpool Street station at ten o'clock at night and taxied

westward to Lord Rosecarrel's town house in Grosvenor Place.

The butler, that stern functionary who disapproved of democracy and the ambitions of the new rich, beamed a welcome when he beheld Anthony Trent. In a sense he felt the young American was one of the family. His greeting to Trent's friend as the son of an earl was respectful, but to Anthony he vouchsafed especial courtesy. It was very grateful to the wanderer. It was like coming home to a man who has no abiding place.

"His Lordship is attending a cabinet meeting," he said. "Her Ladyship is at an Albert Hall concert and Mr. Arthur is out of town."

It was plain from his manner that he expected Anthony Trent to make his quarters in the Rosecarrel town house.

"I must see his lordship instantly," Trent said. "Tell one of your men to whistle for a taxi."

"You seem to be very popular with old Barlow," Maitland said.

"I have spent the happiest hours of my life at Rosecarrel Castle," Anthony Trent said, Maitland thought with some little reserve.

At Downing Street the prime minister's butler could not conceive of such a thing as an interrupted cabinet meeting.

"It is business of state," Anthony Trent said loftily. "If you feel you have a right to dictate terms very well. But," he continued impressively, "I will promise you one thing. From tomorrow on, you will buttle for someone else."

It happened that the cabinet meeting, which had to do with domestic finance, was already ended.

The prime minister glanced at the card sent in, and turned to the private secretary of the Earl of Rosecarrel who had just entered the room.

"That splendid young man Willoughby Maitland who did so well at Zeebrugge is demanding an audience. I am rather tired. Do you mind seeing if it is of importance?"

"Certainly not, sir," said Colonel Langley.

He stopped short when he saw who accompanied the naval officer, and learned that it was Anthony Trent who had business with the premier.

"The last time I saw you," he said stiffly, "was under circumstances which give

you no right to expect me to plead your cause."

"That may be," Trent said equably, "but I am here not to converse with you but your superiors. By the way who is prime minister now?"

"Llewellyn Morgan," Maitland said. "His third term."

It was Llewellyn Morgan Trent had met in Cornwall. Things looked brighter. "The premier knows me," he said to Colonel Langley, "and you are no doubt aware I am privileged to call Lord Rosecarrel my friend."

When the two reached the simply furnished room Lord Rosecarrel looked at the American with wide open eyes.

"My dear boy," he said affectionately, gripping both his hands. "I do not think you can believe how glad I am to see you."

"Isn't this the young man who had the presumption to outdrive me forty yards every time we stepped to a tee?"

The Right Honourable Llewellyn Morgan greeted him in so friendly a fashion that Colonel Langley was astounded. But there was another man, of cabinet rank, who scowled when he beheld it. Rudolph Castoon had attained his desire. He was now Chancellor of the Exchequer. And Castoon knew in his heart that it was because of Anthony Trent Lady Daphne Grenvil had refused him.

"Do I understand," he said, with a show of friendliness, "that you have news of such importance that it justifies, shall I say breaking in upon us here?"

"It is for the premier to decide," Trent said. Then he looked at Colonel Langley and took his revenge. Trent addressed the pleasant and amiable personage who sat at the head of the table. "Have I your word for it that this gentleman is entirely to be trusted?"

"He is my private secretary," Lord Rosecarrel said quickly.

"By all means let him remain," the premier decided.

Lord Rosecarrel was vaguely disturbed. So far as he knew there was nothing Trent could have learned at Castle Radna which justified this. To tell the assembled members of the cabinet of his errand and its success would spell disaster to the one who had sent him.

"Briefly it is this," Trent began, "Prince William, of Misselbach, was not drowned although a real corpse was buried. He is at the present time hiding and Count Michæl Temesvar is planning to put him upon the throne of Hungary. I

have seen him with my own eyes a dozen times although he was not aware of it. I had the luck to get a list of names of the prime movers in it. I could not keep the paper so I memorized them and wrote them down while on the destroyer which brought me from Fiume."

Trent passed it across the table to the prime minister.

"This is exceedingly important," he declared after reading it quickly. "Mr. Trent you have performed a service to this government and your own which entitles you to a reward of no mean character. Now have the goodness to answer these questions."

They were fired at him quickly and embraced a variety of subjects. It was only because of his retentive memory and trained powers of observation that he was able to satisfy the premier.

"It is unfortunate," said Rudolph Castoon, "that Mr. Trent was not able to bring us the original document. One's memory, even when one's intentions are of the best, can play off tricks."

He said it so obviously to discredit the American that Trent flushed and disclosed something that he had not meant publicly to announce.

"Do you know Baron Adolf Castoon?" he asked.

"Naturally," Castoon answered, "One does not easily forget to know one's eldest brother."

"Then I have news of your eldest brother which will cause you infinite concern," Trent said, with sympathy in his voice. "Baron Adolf is financing this revolutionary movement. I brought him up from Fiume one day and being assured I did not understand a word of German he was indiscreet enough to talk about it."

"It is a lie," Rudolph Castoon cried. "Adolf is loyal to the interests of the Allies. His public speeches are evidence of it."

"But I am speaking of private speeches," Trent said smiling.

"What were you doing that you came to drive him?"

"Acting as chauffeur," Trent replied. "I stored many interesting facts in my brain during that four hour ride."

"Of course," Castoon said turning to his chief, "you do not believe this sir?"

"I can only say that Baron Adolf's printed speeches, a copy of which you sent me, did not interest me greatly. I am much more eager to hear what he said in private."

"First of all," Castoon said, "may I ask why it was this young man went to the trouble of acting as chauffeur. It may be, of course, that it is his profession."

"That's interesting," Colonel Langley commented, "Why did he go there at all?"

"I went," said Anthony Trent, "because Lord Rosecarrel, who knows Count Michæl and mistrusts him, asked me to go. He had an idea that I might be useful. I went and I think I can assure him I have succeeded in what he desired me to do."

Lord Rosecarrel breathed a sigh of relief. So, after all, this mysterious American had freed him from bondage.

Mr. Llewellyn Morgan looked at his friend reproachfully.

"And to have kept it from me," he said.

"The credit belongs to Mr. Trent and not to me," said Lord Rosecarrel. "To give merely a hint and have it followed to successful conclusion by another is not the lot of many. For my part I can never cease to feel under obligation to him."

"What we have heard," said the premier, "is under the seal of the most absolute secrecy." He turned to Castoon. "I am sorry for the news you have heard but it was not a matter of surprise to me. I have long heard unpleasing rumours as to the baron's sympathies. You understand that he must not be apprised in any way of this?"

"Certainly sir," Castoon returned stiffly. "I can hardly see the necessity of reminding me of it."

When the meeting had broken up Anthony Trent was amazed to see Colonel Langley's outstretched hand.

"I must apologize," he said frankly, "I did not know that you were working for my chief or that he regarded you so highly. You shoot I suppose?"

"Crazy over it," Anthony Trent admitted.

"I wish you would be one of the guns next September the first. My place is at Dereham Old Hall in Norfolk. You have never been to that part of the world I imagine?"

Anthony Trent looked at the tall colonel and understood.

"Never," he said, "but I shall be delighted to come."

Maitland remained after the others left. It was necessary that the premier should endorse his conduct with his own chief. British destroyers are not designed as passenger boats.

"Of course you are going to make your headquarters with us?" Lord Rosecarrel said and pointed to his waiting limousine.

"I think not," Trent returned. He had not forgotten that when he planned to go to Castle Radna he gave his word that he would seek no reward. To go back to Grosvenor Place would seem as though he had forgotten this.

"But I insist," the earl said.

"You are asking me to put myself in torment," he returned.

"Fiddlesticks!" the other cried, "How youth exaggerates."

Anthony Trent felt it was weak of him but he climbed into the car. The thought of seeing Daphne again was intoxicating. He was grateful that there was silence during the five minute ride.

The butler informed his master that Lady Daphne had come in and was now in bed.

"Did she know I was here?" Trent asked him.

"No, sir," said the man, "I did not see her ladyship."

The earl pushed a silver cigarette box over the table of his library.

"I don't want to talk of politics," he said, "until tomorrow."

"Nor I," Trent answered and passed the draft of the treaty to the other.

The earl held it in his fingers until the flame reached them. The paper was now ashes and a memory.

"Anthony Trent," said the earl, "No matter what you have done or what things have conspired to make your life unfortunate, you are a chivalrous gentleman. Let me smoke in silence for a little. My heart is too full for speech."

"Now," he said later, "Let me tell you about Arthur. He is splendid. He is my own lad again. The years that the locusts have eaten are still blotted from him. He has confidence in himself. He is marrying one of the dearest of girls next month. You are back in time. It is no secret that you are to be his best man."

"That's good news indeed," Trent said heartily.

"It has made me very happy," the earl said slowly, "and incidentally made me examine my conduct rather more severely than I had ever thought of doing."

"I'm afraid I don't see what you mean sir," the younger man said during the long pause.

"I will tell you. Here was the girl. Young, beautiful, of a great family. She had everything to offer and my son loved her. Here was the problem. Had I the right to let her marry him when there lay behind him those misspent years? I wondered whether I was not bound to tell her father of what he had done. It was true he was not responsible but nevertheless he had done them. In the end I persuaded myself that where love existed as it did between my son and the woman he is to marry, pasts counted for little."

Anthony Trent looked at him for a long time in silence.

"Had you any especial reason for telling me this?" he asked.

Lord Rosecarrel smiled.

"I am tired and must sleep," he said, "and my wits may be wool-gathering; but you know me well enough, I hope, to be sure that I have my reasons for making confidences."

"I am afraid to say what I think," stammered Anthony Trent.

"Then put it off until tomorrow," the earl laughed, "Go and sleep, my dear boy, even though it may be in torment. We breakfast rather later here than in the country. I don't suppose Daphne will be down until ten. We keep such late hours."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

ANTHONY THE TRIUMPHANT

The butler tapped upon Trent's door before nine next morning.

"I've just taken a telephone message for you, Mr. Anthony, very important if I may judge."

"Come in and tell me about it," the American said. He could not imagine who knew his whereabouts. It must be Maitland, he supposed, who had promised to see him before he joined his destroyer again if it were possible.

"It's from the American Embassy," the butler informed him.

"What?" Trent demanded. "Are you sure?"

The American Embassy! What had he to do with that? Once behind the doors he was on American soil and subject to her jurisdiction.

"It was a message saying that the ambassador must see you at once. I took the liberty of saying I thought you could get there by half past nine. A motor will be waiting when you have dressed."

Anthony Trent sat on the edge of his bed and saw all his high hopes dashed to earth. Someone must have told the ambassador of this young fellow countryman of his who was on intimate terms with a cabinet minister. And the ambassador with the aid of his intelligence department must have run him to earth.

For a moment he wondered whether it would not be wiser to make a run for it. Maitland now assured of his *bona fides* would not hesitate to take him with him and land him at some lonely spot on the Italian coast by night. He had money and his wits. It would be beginning life over again but it would be better than disgrace here in London.

Then his fighting side asserted itself. He would not be frightened into flight before he was convinced flight was necessary.

There was another visitor in the American ambassador's waiting room, a man of middle age who smoked an excellent cigar. He turned as Trent entered.

"Morning," said Trent morosely. He was annoyed to find that he had to speak. It

was the publisher of a chain of magazines for one of which Trent used to write when engaged in the manufacture of light fiction. He had often smoked one of the millionaire's celebrated cigars.

"Good morning," said the publisher graciously. "It's a long time since I saw you."

"The ambassador keeps extraordinary hours," Trent commented.

"He's a business man," the other explained, "Not bred to the old time diplomacy, just a plain, business man."

"What have you done that he sent for you?"

"You don't seem to understand," the publisher said mildly.

"I only understand," Trent said, still irritably, "that I'm being kept waiting. He was to see me at nine thirty and it's now twenty minutes to breakfast."

"He was on the minute," the other laughed, "Where have you been not to know I'm the ambassador?"

"You!" said Trent in amazement.

"And I'm making a damned good one," the diplomat said, "even if I do get up hours before the rest of 'em."

"What am I here for?" Trent demanded.

"Congratulations mainly," said the ambassador. "I was waked out of sleep at after midnight by the prime minister. He wanted to know if I had heard of an American called Anthony Trent. I said 'Sure. He used to write for me. Anthony Trent is all right.' The way these Londoners keep up half the night is something shocking."

"I still don't see why you've sent for me, Mr. Hill."

"I'll explain," said the ambassador. His manner was serious, so serious indeed that Anthony Trent was infinitely perturbed. "You may not know it but you've rendered your country a considerable service. Over here in the Birthday or New Year honours list you'll find decorations awarded men the public knows nothing about. Trent, sometimes they are given for work like you have done. We don't give orders or decorations or grants of money. If we did you'd have one coming to you. What you've done won't even come before Congress. You'll be a mute inglorious Milton, but—if the day comes when you need help, if you should ever be in a tight place, remember you've got something to trade with. I'm not going

to mention this again but you bear it in mind."

"I certainly will," Trent said gratefully. Then he spoke a little hesitatingly. "Be frank with me, Mr. Hill. I ask this as a personal favor. Had you anything at the back of your mind when you spoke about my being in a tight place or needing help?"

"No," the ambassador said after a mental reaction which could be measured in seconds. "But you've made enemies here. Some of 'em have sent in asking what you do for your livelihood. Of course I remembered that Australian uncle. He certainly must have cut up rich."

"He did," Anthony Trent said sombrely. He had invented an Australian uncle years before to account for possession of the large sums of money his professional work netted him. Oddly enough the memory gave him little pleasure now.

"I was able to assure the inquisitive," the diplomat declared, "that I had known you for years."

Enemies! Castoon perhaps, who hated him on sight, and possibly the Colonel Langley who was now his friend. What others unknown to him might there not be! And there was Lady Polruan sister of Willoughby Maitland. She probably would be influenced by her favorite brother and receive him on a friendly footing if they met again. These people he knew. But it was the unknowns who bothered him.

"Was Rudolph Castoon one of them?" he inquired.

"The Chancellor of the Exchequer?" Hill laughed. "My boy you have certainly got right into the top-hole set here. The inquisitive ones were your own countryfolk who were jealous that a man not even in the Social Register got in on intimate terms with the great families. Maybe they wanted to get your formula. Nothing serious. I've got a busy morning. Lunch with me at one tomorrow?"

"Gladly," Anthony Trent returned, his manner brighter. Never had he shaken hands so heartily with his old publisher.

"It's done me good to see you," he exclaimed.

The friendly butler informed Trent in confidence that Lady Daphne was not yet down. His lordship was already riding in the Row.

"Her ladyship has not been informed of your arrival," said the butler. "She is expected down in a few minutes. I have ordered kidneys and bacon *en brochette* for you, sir."

"This feels like being really at home," the American said. "I have wanted that for breakfast every morning I've been away and never once had the luck to get it."

Below stairs the butler informed the housekeeper, who later retailed it to maids, that Mr. Anthony seemed very nervous. A footman openly rejoiced when he overheard the butler's conversation with the housekeeper that his duties would enable him to witness the meeting of his mistress and the American.

"There will be nobody in the breakfast room when her ladyship enters but Mr. Anthony," his superior said firmly. "Haven't you got any romance in you, Simpkins?"

"Yes," answered the footman simply, "that's why I want to see them."

Anthony Trent was sitting in a big winged chair by the fire when Daphne entered. She walked to the table and picked up some letters without seeing him. At every mail she expected to hear from him and now was another of these continual disappointments. Invitations, letters from friends and relatives, but never a one from the man she loved.

Watching her Anthony Trent was a victim to many emotions. The rumor which he had confidently disputed that she was engaged to Rudolph Castoon now assumed a guise of probability. Why not? He had left her expecting never to see her again. He had convinced her of the unsurmountable barrier between them, a barrier which still existed. What a fool he had been to twist the earl's statement about Arthur into something that spelled hope when none was intended.

That he was here was due to the feeling on Lord Rosecarrel's part that he deserved courtesy at the hands of the Grenvils. Before leaving for Croatia he had assured the elder man that he would not claim a reward. And here he was within a few feet of Daphne. What he should have done was to call and greet her in a friendly fashion, a fashion which would have told her that he realized there could no longer be any pretence of intimacy between them. Instead he was hiding in a deep chair and must presently disclose himself.

He noticed anxiously that she was looking frail and tired. There was a sadness on her face which he had not seen there before. It was, he decided, a

hopelessness, a lack of the vivacity which had always distinguished her.

It was when the butler had decided time enough had elapsed for greeting that Simpkins was allowed to bear in silver dishes of food.

It was the footman's entrance which made the girl look up from her unopened collection of letters. She did not see Simpkins. She saw only the man in the chair, the tall, slim man who rose almost awkwardly when he met her wide-open eyes.

Ordinarily self possessed, never at a loss for a word or embarrassed, Anthony Trent stood there dumb and looked at her.

"Oh Tony, Tony!" she cried.

Immensely gratified, Simpkins beheld the American gather her to him. Honest Simpkins had tears in his eyes. He went from the room blindly, his mission unaccomplished. He had seen Love so near to him that he was dazzled.

It was in Daphne's own sitting room facing St. James' Park that they were able to talk coherently. "Why do you suddenly look so grave on this morning of all mornings in my life?" she asked tenderly.

"Darling," he said, "I can't keep on living in this doubt any longer. You know what I said in Cornwall?"

"That's so long ago. I forget. Exactly what did my wise Tony say? I only remember that he said he loved me."

"I shall always say that," he said softly. "Daphne, I must not go on deluding myself any longer. I ought not to have seen you. It was only because your father was courteous and I was weak that I came."

"You have seen father?" she cried.

"Last night," he told her. "I was with him for an hour. He was very kind."

"Did he tell you about Arthur?"

"He said he was going to be married."

She looked at her Tony with a smile he could not understand. There was certainty in it content, assurance. It was as though there were no barriers that kept him from her.

"My wise Tony," she said, "there is much for you to learn. Let us leave Grosvenor Place and go to Australia in the first place."

"Australia?" he cried uneasily. For the second time within a few hours the island continent had arisen to confound him.

"Yes, Australia," she said. "You remember that my father bought a place there for Arthur?"

He had often heard of it. It was a magnificent property of a hundred thousand acres. Great flocks of sheep and cattle grazed on it and there were hundreds of horses. There were lakes on it where the rainbow trout grew to fifteen pounds in weight. He had seen photographs of the big house with its tennis courts, its outside swimming pool, its walled gardens. It was administered, he knew, by intelligent superintendents and capable of even greater development.

"A wonderful place," he said. "Yes, I remember. Your father wanted to sell it."

"He has given it away instead."

"Given away a place like that?"

"Perhaps I ought not to say given away," she smiled. "He has given it in exchange for what business people call collateral. He has given it to you, Tony, subject to certain conditions."

"Me?" he cried, "Oh no! Impossible. I couldn't take it."

"But you haven't even heard the conditions," she said. "I go with it. It must be kept in the family."

Anthony Trent had a vision of the future. He saw himself a clean man again, a man with hard work before him and great responsibilities. He remembered his country's ambassador and the cryptic utterances which might mean so much. The new life in the new country where none knew him. The realization of those dreams of children who need never be ashamed of their parentage. And all this was offered him.

Daphne looking at him saw that the eyes which she had sometimes thought were hard were softened now. None but she had ever seen tears in the eyes of Anthony Trent who had once been the Master Criminal.

"Oh Daphne," he said brokenly. "Daphne."

THE END

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