

ESMERALDA

Captain Tugwell himself seemed curiously obtuse on this delicate subject. Perhaps it was due to his nationality—or possibly to the fact that he had enormous orders to place for his government, and that the fact absorbed him largely. At any rate, he was marvelously impartial in the bestowal of his attentions and treated all the younger women in our set about alike; but this did not dampen their enthusiasm. It is indeed strange how mere beauty can attract the weaker sex, even when clad in outrageous Scotch tweeds; for there can be little doubt, particularly in view of his subsequent behavior, that Captain Tugwell was a man of by no means great intellectual caliber. Indeed, from the very first I considered that, though his social position was undoubtedly superior and his physical qualities more—more developed than my own, mine was and remains the superior mind!

However, to get back to this tale. Such, then, was the situation that was, as I may say, *au courant* when Miss Es-