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heart. And then he debated whether he should write and tell her of his meeting with Bertna Schmidt, but as he could scarcely do that without speaking of the warning the woman had given him—a thing that must cause Peggy uneasiness if not alarm—he made up his mind that it would be better not to write to her about that enigmatical person. Then there was his rescue of the child, and about that he wished to say nothing.

Peggy was thus unprepared for the shock of the startling news that nearly overwhelmed her two days later.

CHAPTER XIX.

A Glimpse of the Truth.

IN the afternoon Max Hamilton, apparently in the most casual manner but in reality, with all his faculties on the alert, strolled over a great part of Treves, and crossing the Moselle took a walk through the suburb on the further side. In the dusk he got back to his hotel without incident or adventure, but with the same conviction that he had had in the forenoon and in Luxemburg on the preceding day—the conviction that Beaumont, his editor, had been misled by the information received with respect to the designs of Germany, or rather its immediate action.

Next morning he travelled by train along the valley of the Moselle to Coblenz, returning by the same route early in the evening. Nowhere had he seen any signs of preparation for war, and this conviction was becoming a certainty. Max was thinking that Beaumont had been deceived, and that he himself was on a fool's errand; he had scarcely any doubt now that the report had been a canard. On the other hand, however, there was the unquestionable fact of the open antagonism between Great Britain and Germany, which might lead to a rupture at any moment.

Max recalled perfectly what the editor had said to him on the night when he was told to go to Luxemburg—that several army corps were to be marched into the Grand Duchy from Treves and Metz; it now occurred to him that while he had satisfied himself that the story was false as regarded Treves it might be true with respect to Metz, and that his next move should be to go to that city, the great fortress city which Germany tore from France in the last war.

In thinking over the subject—the probabilities for and against the truth of what Beaumont had been told—while on his journey from London, Max had considered it somewhat singular that Germany should bother itself with occupying the Grand Duchy, already in various ways practically a German state, when it could strike directly at France on the Alsace-Lorraine frontier. Now, if Germany struck in that quarter, the attack would come from Metz.

Therefore Max was of the opinion that if there was any basis for the story at all, it would be found at Metz. And it might be the case that the editor had been purposely misled; perhaps it had been anticipated that he would publish what he had heard, and that thus dust would be cast in the eyes of the British, blinding them as to the real point of the German attack.

By this time, Max reflected, Beaumont should have received the letter he had written to him from Luxemburg, telling him how little it dreamt of its being annexed by Germany. That intelligence must make the editor somewhat doubtful, surely, of the accuracy of the information which had reached him, even if it had come from what he generally considered a reliable source. Max rather expected a telegram from him, and so delayed sending off a message to him, giving his personal impressions of Treves.

Max sat waiting in the smoking room of the Hotel Porta Nigra till about ten o'clock, but as no dispatch came from Beaumont, he thought that if he wished to get a telegram off that night it was now time he sent it. He was considering how to express what he desired to say in the tersest manner when a body of soldiers headed by an officer, a young man, trooped noisily into the room. To Max's pro-

found astonishment, the officer advanced toward him, and the soldiers, of whom there were half-a-dozen, surrounded him; suddenly he recalled the warning of Bertna Schmidt.

"It would be better for you not to stay here at all," she had said to him.

The warning had been a cryptic one, but she had given it with no hesitation, no want of decision. Was he now to learn what had inspired her to speak as she had done?

Before the appearance of the soldiers, Max had not been alone in the smoking room; there were several men in it, and he had merely glanced at them; he now saw they were standing, gazing at him and the soldiers with eyes full of wonder and apprehension. As the officer in command approached Max, he saluted him punctiliously, as one officer salutes another, but Max was conscious of the alarmed scrutiny of the others in the room.

He rose from the chair he had been occupying, and gravely returned the salute of the officer. He had no need to be told that the situation was a serious one for him—the punctilious bow of the other said quite plainly to him that so much ceremony to a man not in uniform had some deep significance. "Are you Maxwell Hamilton of London?" asked the German, in English, which he spoke clearly and intelligibly enough, although the accent was marked.

"Yes," said Max, with a bow. He added with a slight smile, "I speak your language, but you speak mine very well."

In his turn, the officer bowed.

"You are an ex-lieutenant of the British army," he said in German to Max.

"That is true," Max replied.

"At present, and for some time past, you have been on the staff of a London journal, called 'The Day'?"

"Yes, that is the case. I am acting as its Special Correspondent—that is the position I hold on that paper."

"You do not deny your identity?"

"No. Why should I?" asked Max, with a stare.

SO much openness and outspokenness seemed to puzzle the officer. for he looked at Max curiously.

"You are the man," he said in another instant, however, and speaking in a loud voice he continued, "I have orders for your arrest, Maxwell Hamilton."

"My arrest!" exclaimed Max. "On what grounds, pray?"

"Surely you have no need to ask that," retorted the officer.

"Every need," Max returned. "I do not understand in the very least for what reason I am to be arrested. Will you not explain what it is?"

"It's not my business to supply you with the reason for your arrest, but to carry out my orders. I may tell you, however, that you are charged with being a spy—with espionage."

"A spy!" cried Max, and laughed.

"No doubt you will be able to clear yourself," said the officer with mocking politeness. "But I arrest you."

Max knew that any protest was useless; in the circumstances he was helpless against these soldiers.

"Very well," he said. "But I am not a spy; I am here in my capacity of journalist."

The officer gave orders to two of his men, and they arranged themselves on either side of Max.

"Where or before whom are you taking me?" asked Max of the officer.

"Will you not tell me that?"

"I am taking you to see my commanding officer, who instructed me to arrest you."

"Will you not first permit me to dispatch a telegram to the editor of 'The Day'?"

"With what object?"

"To tell of my arrest as a spy."

"You admit that you are a spy?" asked the officer quickly.

"Nothing of the kind; I am no spy. I wish him to know that I am arrested as one—which is a very different thing," replied Max, hotly.

"I cannot give you permission to telegraph."

"You have not the power?"

"Yes, that is it. Tell one of these