

THE HONOURABLE PEGGY

CHAPTER I

'PISTOLS FOR TWO'

"WELL?" said the Honourable Peggy.

She looked as though she had been running, but it was the effort to keep still which had reddened her face and shortened her breath. The Colonel put a hand on her shoulder. His old stern eyes were dim, and his voice shook.

"He took it like a gentleman," he said. "Damn it, Peggy, he took it like a *man*."

In the room behind there was one other out of whose world the Colonel had also knocked the bottom. But neither the man nor the maid in the long hotel corridor was thinking of him. Peggy dropped a kiss on the old veined hand.

"And he said—Surrey said——?" she hesitated.

"Very little. He was courteous and loving as usual. But I could see that it hit him hard. I—I wonder if I have done right, little girl."

The Honourable Peggy could have dispersed that doubt in one direct sentence. But this was not her hour. She laughed at him, gathering up the length of her dinner-dress.

"Suppose we leave them to find that out," she said. "And we'll go and do a dinner at the Savoy and a theatre afterwards. Come along, darling. It will be pistols for two only in that encounter, I fancy."

She slid a white arm through his and led him down the corridor. But her heart stayed behind with one