

strict little sister-in-law a trifle more—I observed:

“I rather like being an Elphberg myself.”

When I read a story I skip the explanations; yet the moment I begin to write one I find that I must have an explanation. For it is manifest that I must explain why my sister-in-law was vexed with my nose and hair, and why I ventured to call myself an Elphberg. For, eminent as, I must protest, the Rassendylls have been for many generations, yet participation in their blood of course does not, at first sight, justify the boast of a connection with the grander stock of the Elphbergs or a claim to be one of that royal house. For what relationship is there between Ruritania and Burlesdon, between the palace at Strelsau or the castle of Zenda and No. 305 Park Lane, W.?

Well, then—and I must premise that I am going, perforce, to rake up the very scandal which my dear Lady Burlesdon wishes forgotten—in the year 1733, George II. sitting then on the throne, peace reigning for the moment, and the king and the Prince of Wales being not yet at loggerheads, there