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Had he allowed her to do so he could have preserved his own name, his own honor, clear of all accusation or stain.

It made her love him doubly, to think that he had thus stepped into the breach at the last moment and taken upon himself the guilt which she knew belonged in reality upon her.

As she sat there, conscious only of the flying trees outside the car-windows, the clicking of the wheels upon the rails, and the low breathing of her husband on the seat before her, her mind went forward into the future. The prospect made her shudder. In Paris she knew what manner of welcome awaited them. M. Lefevre would turn from them both, as he would not turn from the vilest criminal.

Their names would be held up to scorn, in official circles at least. If the public ever came to know of the affair, she knew they would have reason to fear for their very safety.

As to the results of her act; as to what the secret of the lost snuff-box was that made Hartmann declare its value to be priceless, she could not even guess. That it must have some diplomatic, some international significance, she fully believed; else why should M. Lefevre have declared that the honor of France was involved? And if so—if the possession of the secret by Hartmann, and thus by the foreign country, whichever one it might be, of which he was probably an agent, did result in complications of a vast and terrible nature, possibly involving war, or loss of national honor and prestige, how could either she or her husband ever again hope to hold up their heads, to find any joy and happiness in life?

Of course, there was America and home. But even there the secret would in time become known, and Richard would find that those who had been his friends in high places, would turn from him, no longer trusting in his honor and integrity.

She realized that even if the affair did not become known at home, it would stand forever between them, a black and grinning shadow, destroying confidence, happiness, even love itself. She had failed him—failed her husband—done what he had forbidden her to do, and he had sworn to leave her, to turn from her forever, if she disobeyed him.

Would he do this she wondered? Or would he understand that what she had done had been for his sake, for the sake of her love for him?

Presently she realized that the train was slackening its speed. The houses which began to appear in increasing numbers outside the car windows told her that they were approaching a station. She looked at her railway-folder and then consulted her watch. It was Maubeuge, the point at which they left Belgium and entered France.

The train drew noisily into the station and was at once surrounded by the usual crowd of passengers, porters, railway and custom officials, and the M. Grace watched them idly, indifferently. Her only concern was that they should not wake her husband with their noisy chatter.

Presently she saw a small, white-haired figure approaching the compartment door. At first she paid no attention to the man, supposing him to be a belated passenger. Then she was struck with a sudden familiarity in his appearance. She started back in alarm as she saw that it was Dufrenoy, and that he was making straight for the compartment in which she sat, his face stern and angry. Behind him she observed two gendarmes, walking with their characteristic jerky stride.

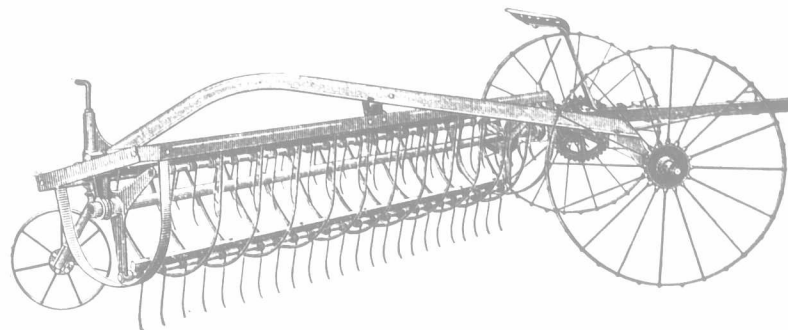
Dufrenoy had been a mystery to her. Until their meeting in Dr. Hartmann's laboratory that morning, she had never seen him. She had felt from his words that he, too, was of M. Lefevre's staff, a member of the secret police; but that he was no friend of Richard's or of hers she very well knew. She drew back further into the dim corner of the compartment hoping that he would not recognize her.

Her hopes, however, were in vain. Dufrenoy threw open the door of the carriage, which had previously been unlocked by the guard. Followed by his men he entered the compartment.

"Here is the fellow," he growled angrily, pointing to Duval. "Take him to the—"

Grace sprang forward and stood be-

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