

THE CITY OF MASKS

The Marchioness removed her apron and handed it to Julia. You would have thought she expected to confront Lord Temple in person, or at least that she would be fully visible to him despite the distance and the intervening buildings that lay between. Tucking a few stray locks of her snow-white hair into place, she approached the telephone in the hall. She had never quite gotten over the impression that one could be seen through as well as heard over the telephone. She always smiled or frowned or gesticulated, as occasion demanded; she was never languid, never bored, never listless. A chat was a chat, at long range or short; it didn't matter.

"Are you there? Good evening, Mr. Trotter. So charmed to hear your voice." She had seated herself at the little old Italian table.

Mr. Trotter devoted a full two minutes to explanations.

"Do bring him with you," cried she. "Your word is sufficient. He *must* be delightful. Of course, I shuddered a little when you mentioned Constantinople. I always do. One can't help thinking of the Armenians. Eh? Oh, yes,— and the harems."

Mr. Trotter: "By the way, are you expecting Lady Jane tonight?"

The Marchioness: "She rarely fails us, Mr. Trotter."

Mr. Trotter: "Right-o! Well, good-bye,— and thank you. I'm sure you will like the baron. He is a trifle seedy, as I said before,— sailing vessel, you know, and all that sort of thing. By way of Cape Town,— pretty well up against it for the past year or two be-