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CHAPTER XXXV

PASSPORTS AND TRAVEL IN FRANCE

"Strange all this difference should be
'Twixt Tweedledum and Tweedledee."

JOHN BYRON.

[T] is no small achievement nowadays to leave France; neither is it an easy matter to travel anywhere in it. A shrewd Government places ingenious and vexatious stumbling-blocks in the way of ordinary locomotion, and motor-cars in the fair land of France cannot guide Zeppelins in their work of destruction, since rigid examination is made at every stage of a traveller's progress into his character and antecedents. Here, for example (and warning), are the writer's experiences on a recent occasion :

My *sauf-conduit* having its time limit, and that being expired, I went to the Mairie at Nice to obtain a renewal. Space at the Mairie under existing conditions not being sufficient, I was directed to the Opera House in a neighbouring street, where, indeed, was a curious scene. Down one entire side of the entrance hall extended wooden tables on trestles, behind which sat a row of clerks busily writing. In front of this barricade stood a clamour-