

if the engagement were broken, it would be by the hand of God. . .

Of course, there was never any objection to guiding the hand of God. He could not go out and get killed in this war, because there was not time (and he was not at all anxious to be killed); he could not get himself certified unfit to marry, because everybody knew that he had not had six months' illness in his life. There was always the possibility of disappearing. He could open an account under an assumed name with some remote bank, pay in a large sum of money—Bah! He could not trouble even to work out the first preliminaries. When he disappeared, any bank clerk who had read Jekyll and Hyde (or had a spark of native imagination) would track him by means of the second account, the tell-tale large transfer. And, if he disappeared with a five pound note in his pocket, prepared to earn his own living, who would let him disappear? Scotland Yard, to begin with, would never rest till he was found; the four thousand people who knew him well enough to congratulate him on his engagement, the four hundred thousand who, to judge by the press cuttings, knew his features and were interested in his doings, all of these would join hands in a double line, like one of the du Maurier nightmares in *Punch*, to make him run the gauntlet wherever he went. He had travelled rather like a Crown Prince, he was known everywhere. If he tried to slip away into the desert, somebody would recognise him at Gib. or Alexandria—and the gang that travelled by liner was much the same in personnel. . . . He was too well-known to disappear by growing a beard and shifting his domicile twenty miles. That was one of Wells' many clevernesses in "The History of Mr. Polly"; a man in Mr. Polly's position *could* disappear; when solvent, his whole estate was but a few hundreds, he was unknown, no one was interested in him, even his wife was tied by the ankle to the joint haberdashery business so that she could not follow him through the nearest wood, over the first dividing range.

Deryk had to remind himself that he was keeping his