

XLIII

AT ten o'clock on a bright morning in April Dick Stewart sat waiting for his morning meal. The meal was late in coming; it was an hour late, he considered. They had been rather neglectful of him recently; Bodinton had not been to see him for nearly a month, that would be why.

Dick Stewart sat waiting on a very uncomfortable seat, and when he rose and walked about, to kill the time, he found the room he occupied to be quite unreasonably small. A room like that might reasonably be quite large, he reflected; he thought that for at least the hundredth time, as he paced the room for at least the hundredth thousandth.

One good thing about the room was that people could not stare at you in it, however; last August and September people had stared at him a precious lot too much. And when your appearance was so changed—when your costume was so peculiar and your hair would have horrified Truefitt—it was just as well that people should not see you much. He remembered hinting that to Frenchy, the last time Frenchy came. Perhaps that was why he had stayed away for quite a month.

Several months had gone by since Dick Stewart left Château Royal—nearly eight months, in point of fact. Nearly the whole of one of these months had been taken up by the interminable forms and intolerable *tohu-bohu* of a French process-at-law. Law! The region of Temple Bar could show something bad enough in that respect, but what would Robert Shott have thought of a process-at-law in the Limousin? Jabber, forms, and noisy excitement; it had been quite a comfort to get that over; to get away to a place where quiet and privacy could be had was very welcome at first, no matter how small the place or intense