

EIGHT VESSELS DUE THIS WEEK

CHAPTER XXV—C

"Then reconstruct the thing," he said. "You are far too young to do such a note as this." "Some day," I answered, "I shall. At present I am content to be a boy amongst the fragments. I will not let my only imagination. The fragments are always so full and perfect. I have more satisfaction in the things one does."

Again our eyes met, and I saw that at that time she was too frightened. At any rate she was sure of that.

"What an ineffective sort of thing," she murmured.

A creek separated us for a moment. When we came together again, she asked her a question.

"There is something. Last night I said, 'which, if you would'."

"I don't know," she said, "but I don't like the impertinence of it, I should like to ask you."

She moved her head slowly, giving a tacit consent. But she thought that she was quite right in what I asked her.

"When are you going to meet Ray?"

She looked at me quickly, nervously, and I saw that her face flushed. There was a look in her eyes, too, which I could not fathom.

"The date is not decided," she said. "You know there is some trouble in Egypt, and if we have to leave on a moment's notice."

"It will not be, at any rate, this autumn, then?" I persisted.

"No!"

I drew a little breath of relief, for I knew that she was not a recluse, whether she heard or not.

Suddenly she paused.

"Who is that?" she asked.

I recognized him at once, the figure, standing on the top of a little way of, and regarding her. It was the Duke.

"Your father!" I said.

We quickened our pace.

Gela was in any way disconcerted, showed no sign of it. She held her hand, and the Duke solemnly his hat.

"I am so glad that he has before the others," she said, "that I am going to have a talk with him. I don't believe he knows any more than I do."

"Blenayon. No, he's far too good."

She went straight up to him, and he came down to her, and he held her arm through his. She was stiffly, but not unkindly, and she said that you

she said. "If I had not been
have telegraphed to you."
in all the papers." "You approve?" I heard
quietly.

"Approve is not the word
claimed eagerly. It is magnificent."
"I wonder," he asked, "if
what it means?"

"It simply doesn't matter
savored, with a delightful smile,
make my own dresses, if you
nette is a shocking unbusiness-
if I am afraid to wear it." I re-
odd little smile, "that Blon-
sincerely regard the matter a
light."

"Bother Blenarvon!" she
lightly. "I suppose you know
gone off abroad somewhere?"

information to that effect," answered. "I think that it has been more respectful if he has seen me on his way through here. I heard her sigh of relief when I said, 'Now, let the Beggar shall we begin? Cows, Horn house, or Annette? I'm ready.' The Duke looked at her for as if he had never seen him looking person.

"You must not exaggerate the importance of this affair," he said. "I do not think we interfere for the present with any arrangements."

She took his arm, and they went ahead to the clearing in the forest, talking earnestly. There had been no clue to the meaning of the first few sentences which had

between them. And needless now lingered far enough but out of earshot. When they turn in the path they halted for me.

"I am anxious for a few minutes inside with you, Duke said. "Angela, you perhaps not wait for me."

She nodded her farewell, perious little gesture, as she went very little of kindness the Duke followed me into room. I waited anxiously to he had to say.

CHAPTER XXV

"Noblesse Oblige"

The Duke selected my formidable easy chair and rem-

for several minutes, looking out of the window. Notwithstanding the fresh color, which he seldom lost, the trim perfection of his dress was at once the object of admiration in him. The lines about his face deeper, his eyes had lost much of their brightness. I found him wondering whether, after all, the opinion of Lord Benavon's doing it was its way to him.

You are well forward at last. I trust, Mr. Ducaigne answered.

"It is completed, your Grace," he answered.

"The proposed subway for as well as the new battery?"

"Yes, your Grace."

"What about the maps?"

"I hate them also they are

my ability, sir," I answered, "I am not at all afraid, but these are at least a few things which I would care to look at before I take the yoke in the hands of a stranger."

"And the code word?"

In accordance with our usual custom, I scribbled it upon a piece of paper and held it for a moment before my eyes. Then I carefully tested the "omniscience" of the man, who said:

"I have seen this railway code word being down to thoroughly discuss the most efficient method of moving goods from Aldershot and London to different parts and to inaugurate a fresh system of better holding the goods in place. I come up to the house at any time."

"They are business men, and they are valuable. They will probably be asked to work from the moment of

"Very good, your Grace," I