

an impatient gesture he leaned back again. I continued to study the board as though the game were all in all to me.

"You are pleased to be mysterious, Miss Gilmore," he said, his tone a mingling of severity, sarcasm and irritation. I was to understand that a man of his exalted importance was not to be trifled with. "I appreciate greatly your valuable services, but—I do not like mysteries."

I raised my eyes from the board as if reluctantly.

"I am unlike your Excellency in that. They have a distinct attraction for me. This has." I indicated the mate problem with my hand, but my eyes contradicted the gesture. He believed the eyes, and again moved uneasily in his chair. "It is naturally an attractive problem. I have moved, you know."

He was a very legible man for his diplomatic experience; and the little struggle between his sense of dignity and piqued curiosity was quite amusing. But I was careful not to show my amusement. Nothing more was said until the envelope had been brought and Charlotte sent away again.

He toyed with it, trying to appear as if it were part of some silly childish game to which he had been induced to condescend in order to please me.

"What shall I do with this?"

"Suppose you open it?" I said, blandly.

He shrugged his shoulders, waved his white hand, lifted his eyebrows and smiled, obviously excusing