

22 A SOMEWHAT EXCITING DAY

A sharp ringing at his elbow drew his attention to a contraption which he recognized as some manner of telephonic instrument. He wasn't accustomed to things of this sort at his elbow. Like thousands of other enlightened Englishmen, he considered telephones to be unnecessary evils. He had lived at home in London and roamed about the world very comfortably without any assistance from such jangling intruders as this. Now he closed with it fretfully.

"Mr. Beauchamp?"

"Yes."

"One moment."

"Mr. Beauchamp?" queried another voice.

"Yes."

"It is Victoria Featherstonhaugh speaking—Mr. Costin's stenographer, you know. A special-delivery letter has just come here for you. Do you want me to send it around to you?"

"It's very good of you to think of it, Miss Featherstonhaugh. Who is it from?"

"I don't know. It's a letter. I haven't opened it."

"Of course not. A letter? Where is it?"

"I have it. It's here on my desk."

"I'll go for it. Will you wait? I'll start immediately."

"I'll wait; but it is nearly four o'clock, so please hurry."