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Straw's Castle that she could see that the chase had been abandoned.

"Where to now, miss?" came a voice from the roof.

"Victoria Station," she said, gaily; and sat back exulting. She was free—that was her only thought for the moment. She enjoyed her long drive, keenly interested in this London which as yet she had barely seen.

At Victoria she dismissed her cabman with a tip which made him stare, and was soon on her way to Horsham. When she arrived there she found, to her astonishment, that the station master had never heard of Mrs. Carlingford. He declared it to be impossible that any important lady of that name could live thereabouts and he not know it. The perplexed girl went to the post office. They were equally ignorant. She declared that a telegram had been sent there to that name—and delivered. The telegram was remembered. It had not been delivered.

Margaret went out of the post office dazed. If Mrs. Carlingford had not received that message, what had brought her— Was she Mrs. Carlingford? If not, who was she? And what was her motive for the pretence?

She sought the nearest police station; they had never heard of Mrs. Carlingford. She was finally convinced. She paced the platform impatiently, awaiting a return train, and when it came resented the slow progress towards London. She drove to Maiden Lane.

HODGSON was at the door and ran forward and shielded her skirt as she descended from the hansom.

"The key, please," she cried.

He procured it and took her up in the lift.

"I am not at home, Mr. Hodgson," she said—"not to anyone, anyone, you understand."

"Yes, miss," he answered; and she went into the lonely flat, determined to seek every clue that might guide her footsteps. She spent three hours in a careful search among her father's papers, but she found absolutely nothing. Her time had been wasted, she was forced to admit that when she had looked everywhere.

She could not stay there; the place choked her. She could not remain in London alone. There was only one place of refuge that she could think of—a school in Paris, where she had been three years before. She would go there for the moment, get proper legal advice, and know how to proceed.

She rang for the lift. "Mr. Hodgson," she said "you have my address."

He shook his head.

"Surely Mrs. Carlingford gave it to you?"

"No miss; she said you or she might be coming in, and that nothing was expected, anyhow."

Another deceit, further evidence of treachery. Margaret remembered how Mrs. Carlingford had answered her in the cab—that the address had been left with the hall porter.

"Very well, Mr. Hodgson," she said, "I am going to Paris. Here is my address. I shall take the keys of the flat with me. If any letters or telegrams come you will send them to me there. And you can give the address to anyone who enquires."

"Very well, miss."

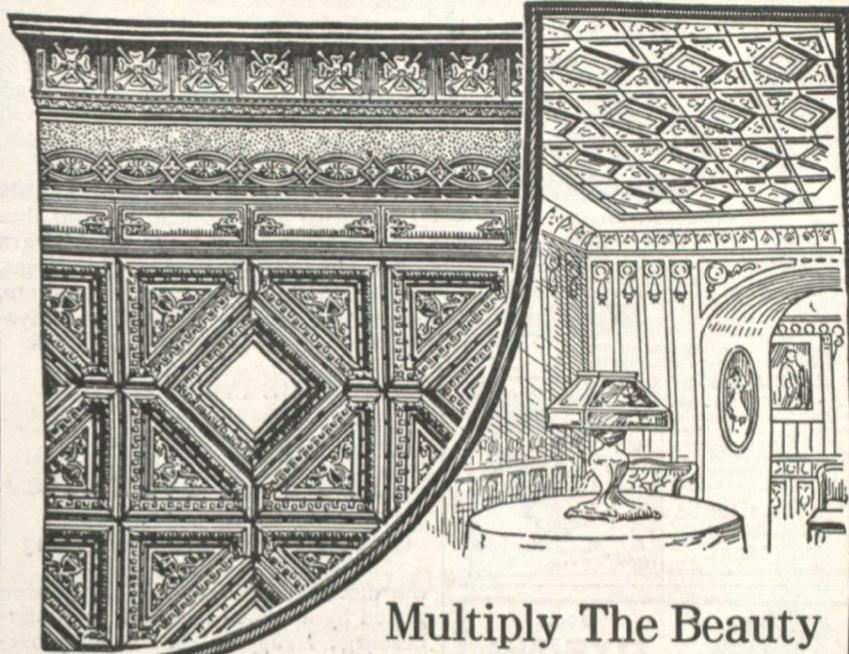
Once safe in Paris with her old schoolmistress, Margaret feared nothing.

"But mind, Mr. Hodgson, nobody is to have my letters. Send them to me direct."

"Yes, miss. Shall I whistle up a taxi?"

"Yes please."

Thus Margaret hurried back to



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