

"I am perhaps, not quite a usual person," I admitted, with a shrug.

He sat thinking, and presently I saw he would humour me. His brows straightened out, and his pursed lips relaxed into the indulgent smile once more.

"You are a charming woman, Miss Gilmore, if a little unusual, as you say;" and he rang the bell.

"You have not moved, I think," I reminded him; but he sat back, not looking at the board and not speaking until his daughter came. I understood this to signify that I was on my trial.

"Miss Gilmore gave you a sealed envelope some days ago, Charlotte," he said to her. "She wishes you to bring it to me. Has it really any connexion with this case?" he asked, as soon as she had left to fetch it.

I laughed.

"How could it, your Excellency? What could a girl in my position, here only a few weeks, possibly know about such a thing?"

As this was the thought obviously running in his own mind, he had no difficulty in assenting to it politely.

"Then what does this mean?" he asked, with a little fretful frown of inquisitiveness.

"I am only proving my self-diagnosis as a somewhat unusual person. Will you move now?"

He bent forward and scanned the pieces; but his thoughts were not following his eyes, and with