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coated and rugged, she had settled herself on a deck-chair amidsthips. Then he strolled carelessly along in that direction, and affecting sudden realization of her presence beamed upon her delightedly as he lifted his travelling-cap.

"Oh—ah! There you are!" he exclaimed. "I—I wondered if you'd come—didn't see you on the train. I say, it's awfully lucky I happened to meet you because I've mislaid that card you gave me and forgotten the address of the hat-shop."

THE girl smiled, something in her smile emboldened Jimmie, with a murmured asking for permission, to drop into a vacant chair at her side. "Left the card on my writing-table," he added. "Just like me."

"All the same," remarked Miss Walsden, "you would easily have found the place. That is, unless you have forgotten that it is in the Rue de la Paix and that the name is Valerie et Cie."

"Same as in South Molton Street?" suggested Jimmie.

"The same as in South Molton Street—precisely."

"Same business, eh?"

"Just the same business."

"And, I suppose, the same hats?"

"Just the same hats—when they're made—or created."

"All the same," continued Jimmie, desperately endeavouring to make conversation, "I suppose that a woman would rather have a hat that was created as you call it, in the Rue de la Paix, than one that was put together in South Molton Street?"

"If she knew that it really came from the Rue de la Paix—certainly. That would give it an indefinable cachet, in a woman's eyes."

"That's all right," said Jimmie. "I'll be round there in the morning and we'll see what can be done. Don't forget that I never bought a hat before, you know."

"I hope you have brought the photographs of your sister," said Miss Walsden.

Jimmie clapped a hand to the exterior of his breast-pocket.

"By Jove! I forgot 'em," he said, with well-simulated contrition. "I laid them out and then left them, after all. Never mind, my sister's awfully like me. Think of me as her, don't you know, and—"

"That I am sure will be a great help. You seem to credit me with vast powers of imagination."

There was a spice of raillery in this remark, and Jimmie looked narrowly at his companion, who smiled demurely.

"Never mind," he said, "I guess we'll muddle through somehow—I always do. I'll buy her two hats, and if she doesn't like 'em, she can give 'em away to one of the natives. Lovely morning, isn't it?"

"Beautiful!" agreed Miss Walsden.

"Often come this way?" asked Jimmie. "Know Paris well?"

"I know Paris very well indeed," replied Miss Walsden. "I go to Paris once a month as a rule."

"Oh!" said Jimmie. "Ah, well, I don't know it as well as all that, but I know it well enough to—to know it, don't you know?" Then, with a desperate burst of daring, he added, "I say, we shall have three-quarters of an hour or so at Calais; will you come and have lunch with me? Do!"

"You are very kind," answered Miss Walsden, demure as ever. "Thank you."

"If there's one thing I loathe and abhor," said Jimmie, "it's travelling by myself. Nobody to talk to, you know, and that sort of thing, eh?"

Miss Walsden replied that it was certainly nicer when travelling to have company. Thereupon Mr. Trickett obtained permission to light a cigarette, and having established his footing, he proceeded to make himself agreeable until the boat ran into Calais, where he demonstrated his adaptability and usefulness by taking charge of and looking after all his companion's personal luggage and bribing a porter to convey it and his own to a first-class compartment in the Paris train. That done, he conducted Miss Walsden to the station buffet and exerted himself in the part of playing host with all the solicitude of an elder brother or a grandfather.

This role was one which suited him to perfection; he had a natural gift of being concerned for the welfare and comfort of other people, and by the time they had eaten their chicken and drunk their claret, Miss Walsden thought of Mr. Trickett as a very amiable young man, who was as thoughtful and attentive as he was polite. And she displayed no surprise and made no objection when she presently found herself vis-a-vis to him in a compartment into which no other person seemed disposed to enter.

"And so," said Jimmie when the train was at last rolling southward, "you come over to Paris regularly?"

"At least once a month," replied Miss Walsden.

"To see how hats are being made?"

"JUST so—to see how hats are being made. And to do other things. Sometimes to tell our people in the Rue de la Paix what we are doing in South Molton Street. Now and then, you see, we are seized with brilliant and original notions in London which we think it may be well to transplant to Paris—we don't give them the credit for possessing all the brains. There, for instance, in that hat-box of which I asked the porter to take such particular care, is a creation which has cost Madame Charles and myself several sleepless nights—to-morrow it will be on view in our window in the Rue de la Paix, and within a week half-a-dozen ladies of the beau monde will be wearing—something very like it."

"Why only half-a-dozen?" asked Jimmie.

"Because every hat that we make is a separate creation—we guarantee that we never turn out two hats alike. That is why I say half-a-dozen of our customers will be wearing something like the hat in that box—only something. They will fall in love with the general effect of the creation, and we shall make something resembling it. It would, of course, never do if we ever made two hats alike."

Jimmie meditated on this profound matter.

"Opposite way with men," he observed. "Our object is to be as much dressed alike as possible—no difference in toppers, anyhow. I suppose," he continued, "Madame Charles is the sabled lady I encountered yesterday?"

"Madame Charles is the sabled lady you encountered yesterday—yes."

"Runs both these shows, eh?"

"Runs both these shows, as you suggest."

"Ah!" said Jimmie. "Pleasant sort of woman, I should imagine. I suppose she considers herself a sort of artist, eh?"

"Oh, decidedly so! It requires art to create such hats as ours."

"Does it, really?" exclaimed Jimmie. "Well, I don't know. I remember that I once went in for a hat trimming competition at a bazaar that somebody dragged me into—they gave me what they called a shape and a lot of laces and ribbons and things and a needle and thread. I won first prize, too—a jolly good cigarette case it was."

"And what," asked Miss Walsden severely, "did they do with the hat?"

"Oh, I don't know," answered Jimmie. "Sold it by auction, I believe. It looked jolly well when I'd finished it—it had sweet peas and chrysanthemums in it—artificial, you know. And a couple of pink feathers with yellow tips."

"It must indeed have looked jolly well," remarked Miss Walsden. "I am sure we would have given anything to have had the privilege of exhibiting it in our window in South Molton Street." She turned in her seat and began examining her various articles of luggage. "Let me see now—one, two, three, four, five—I always seem to have so many small things with me," she continued. "They crop up at the last moment. I must keep an eye on that," she added, nodding at one of her belongings, a small hamper of polished wickerwork. "It would be a terrible trouble if that happened to get mislaid or lost."

"What is it?" asked Jimmie, indifferently. "Luncheon basket?"

"Luncheon basket! Indeed, no!" answered Miss Walsden. "Do you think I am going to lunch again be—"

(Continued on page 21.)

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