

MY FIRST MEETING WITH DAUNT 11

"Ha!— You are Captain Rupert Granville!"

"Was," I corrected.

"Ah! So! What is your business?"

"A moment's private chat."

He looked at his secretary and said "Go!"

The young man immediately departed.

"Well?"

"I am starving."

"Well?"

"I have tasted nothing for two whole days."

"Indeed."

He eyed me keenly for a moment. "Was it not you who gained the Luckstadt medal for modern languages?"

"It was I."

"You subsequently entered the English Army; became a sapper, a Captain of Engineers; later you drifted into the Diplomatic Service. Later still you resigned, and were made bankrupt in the London Courts. Since then you have lived where and how you best could, calling yourself in England Granville, in France de Granville, here Grossburg! Am I right?"

"You are qualified to act as my biographer," I replied, with sarcasm.

"Not quite. I require to know the why and wherefore of your retirement, the reason of your ruin. Will you enlighten me?"

"You are interested in my affairs? Baron, you overwhelm me!"

"You will do well to confide in me, if, indeed,