

THE POWERS AND MAXINE

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CHAPTER XVII.—(Continued.)

I was half fainting with fear lest Ivor had regained the Treaty only to lose it again in this dreadful way; but I controlled myself. "I rather hope it was not a letter from me," I said. "You know so much, that you probably know I admitted to the police at Elysee Palace, a strong friendship for Mr. Dundas. We knew each other well in London. But London ways are different from the ways of Paris. It isn't agreeable to be gossiped about, however unjustly, even if one is only an actress."

from you to du Laurier, saying that you find you have made a mistake; and not only will I do nothing to injure him, but will guard against the discovery of you-know-what. Besides, as a matter of course, I'll bring all my influence to bear in keeping your name out of this or any other scandal. I can't much, everything indeed, for I admit that it was through me the Commissary of Police trapped you with Dundas. I will say that I blundered. I know what to do to save you, and I will do it for your future life.

back at the girl, looking her up and down. "You pretend that you came from Mr. Dundas with a pressing message for me. You want me to believe this is his message? I think too well of him." "I don't want you to believe that," she answered. "I haven't come to the message yet. I have earned a right to speak to you first, on my own account."

paper, she whipped from a long pocket of a coat she wore, the Treaty. She put it into my hand. I felt it, I clasped it. I could have kissed it. The very touch of it made me tremble. "Do you know what this is, Miss Forrest?" I asked. "No," she said. "It was yours, or, And then there came the rap, rap, rap. Of course I didn't see it, but I heard the call boy at the door. The fifteen minutes were over. But I had the Treaty. And I had to pay its price."

to give me a box at the theatre this evening. "It is partly that," I laughed. "Partly for the pleasure of seeing you, of course. And partly—you know already, since you know everything that I am a friend of Mr. Dundas, the young Englishman who murdered his father, he could not possibly have committed it." "Could not possibly have committed it?" she mused. "I am sure that you are a friend of Mr. Dundas, and he would not have committed it if he had not been a friend of yours."

Then, at last, they did find the case, just as I'd begun to hope it was safe. I begged the Commissary of Police not to open it in vain. When he did, what was my relief to see the diamond necklace you must have heard of—my relief and my surprise. And now I'm going to confide in you the secret of another, speaking to you as my friend, and a man of honour. "Those jewels had been stolen long ago from Monsieur du Laurier, and he was in despair at their loss, for they belonged to a dear friend of his—an inveterate gambler, but what gambler she dared not tell her husband of money that she'd lost, but begged Raoul to sell the diamonds for her in Amsterdam and have them replaced by paste."

made me do have proved a blessing. I had never altered some of the facts a little, but none of those concerning Mr. Dundas. And a woman has to use such weapons as she has, against cruel enemies. "I hope you'll defeat yours," said Miss Forrest. "I begin to believe I shall," said I. And we shook hands. She is the only girl I ever saw who seemed to me worthy of Ivor Dundas. Early in the afternoon Raoul came, and the first thing I did was to give him the diamonds. "You are my good angel!" he exclaimed. "Thank Heaven, I won't have to take your money now, because you've got your own."