

wooded country seemed to dash past at a hand-gallop by steep larger hills and little hills, barer country, and then Barleythorpe with its first notice of Rutland.

Oakham was near, drenched in rain, and Wylde turned straight to the George Hotel.

"We haven't got much choice here," he said. "And this is the most historical. Some of it is twelfth century, I believe, and—good land, it looks like it."

Down a narrow side-alley he drove to a door that opened near a bar. Then he looked again at the Colonel.

"You needed to stay here to-night?" he asked. "It is only about sixteen miles to Stamford."

The Colonel had been consulting the letters he got at Matlock.

"I must meet Marten here to-morrow morning," he said. "It's all right. Peggy won't mind roughing it a little."

But Wylde's face and words meant more to Surrey than he had thought. This man chose rather to drive sixteen miles in the fierce storm that was now yelling down the street than to bring Peggy to a place of less comfort than she was accustomed to. Surrey would have more than hesitated about going on himself. In his thick gloves his hands were numb, and Wylde never wore gloves at the wheel. He stood a little, watching him run the car on into the yard and through the garage doors. And when, a half-hour later, he went to the door again, seeing Wylde in his oilskins with a hose going patiently over the body of the car, he thought still further.

He would not have done that, either, for there were two men watching, and if the paint was scratched by careless handling a few pounds later on would have set the matter right.