

6 CAPTIVATING MARY CARSTAIRS

"But I've ordered something for you, man."

"Varney can use it, can't he?"

The door opened, and the tallish young man stood on the threshold again, this time social and affable. His distrainness, oddly enough, had all gone. He greeted the two in the smoking-room as though he had seen them for the first time that evening; expressed his pleasure at being in their company; inquired after their healths and late pursuits; pressed cigarettes upon them.

They rallied him upon his furtive movements and fickle demeanor, but drew only badinage in kind, and no explanations; and Townes, laughing, turned to the door.

"Dally with us yet a little while, Reggie."

"No, gentles, no! I'm starting abroad to-night and have already dallied too long."

"Abroad!"

"My sister," said Townes, "as perhaps you don't know, wedded a foreigner—Willy Harcourt, born and raised in Brooklyn. Therefore, I am now leaving to go to a party in Brooklyn. Say that to yourself slowly—'a party in Brooklyn!' Sounds sort of ominous, does n't it? If the worst happens, I look to you fellows to break it to my mother. Please mention that I was smiling to the last."

He waved a farewell and disappeared into the hall. Varney dropped into the chair Townes had left empty, and elevated his feet to the lounge where sprawled the length of Peter Maginnis. Peter looked up and the eyes of the two men met.

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