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for five years; I heard from her frequently, and she often came to England for her vacations—sometimes she went to other parts of the Continent with the Von Nordheims. Four years ago, or rather more, she returned to England for good."

"May I ask your sister's age?" inquired the superintendent as Chase stopped for a moment.

"She is—was—about twenty-seven," Chase answered. "Not quite twenty-seven; she would have reached her twenty-seventh birthday in a few weeks had she lived." Chase choked on the last word. "She was twenty-two when she came back to London. She saw me at once; indeed I met her at the station. She had grown into a woman, and I found she had already made her plans for the future. I confess they amazed me at the time, for I hardly hoped she would succeed. But she did succeed, as she never doubted she would."

"I know that she became a literary woman," said Max. "I have read several of her articles, and they were capital."

"Yes," said Chase with some pride. "She had it all mapped out when I saw her. She had already arranged to write for a German paper some articles on her impressions of England, and she set about arranging with an English paper to give her impressions of Germany and of life on the Continent generally. She did arrange for these articles with the greatest of English journals; they were published anonymously, but I fancy their authorship was known, for from that time on she did very well as a writer on foreign topics in our reviews and magazines. She had saved some money while in Germany, and with that and a sum I gave her, she took and furnished a flat; then she had an annuity from the Von Nordheims in consideration of the good work she had done when with them."

"Thank you, Captain Chase," said Johnson, who had listened very carefully to every word Chase had spoken. "What you have told me is most interesting, but can't you tell me something more about her friends, for example? Nothing you have said seems to help me to place a finger on any particular person who was so connected with her as to be—well, her murderer."

Chase flushed a dusky red.

"I know you do not mean to be offensive," he returned; "and of course I have all the while had the question in my mind—the man who has killed her; how could I help thinking about it? But there I am absolutely in the dark—as much in the dark as you are, Mr. Johnson. I have not the slightest suspicion who he is. She had men friends, yes! Some army men and some journalists, I fancy, several of whom indeed I know. Her maid will be able to tell you more of them than I can."

"She had a maid?"

"Yes, a woman she brought over from Germany; her name is Bertha Schmidt, and she came to England soon after Sylvia. Of course you will see her," said Chase to the superintendent.

"After we have been to the station," said Johnson, "and I should like you to go with me if you will."

"Certainly. She may help you; I cannot."

When they arrived at the police station Johnson saw the surgeon, whose report was ready for him; it affirmed that Sylvia Chase had been killed by some thin narrow instrument resembling a stiletto, but more delicate, more like some fine surgical instrument, which had been driven through her heart, causing instant death.

The grief of Villiers Chase broke out afresh when he saw the dead body of his sister.

"Who can have done it?" he cried in a piteous voice.

### CHAPTER VI.

#### Clues that Failed.

THE flat which Sylvia Chase had occupied was situated in Earl's Court Square, and as it was only a comparatively short distance from the police station in Kensington High

Street, Superintendent Johnson, accompanied by Max and Villiers Chase, soon arrived at it. Villiers knocked at the door, through a glass panel in which a light could be seen. It was now getting well on into the Sunday morning, but as yet there was no sign of dawn. "The lamp has been left burning against her return," thought Johnson: he meant against Sylvia's return.

Almost instantly, however, the door was opened by a middle-aged woman of distinctively German appearance; she was only partly dressed, and her face wore a disturbed and worried expression, which quickly changed into one of fear and alarm, when she saw Villiers Chase. Her eyes dilated; it seemed to Max that her aspect betokened fright more than anything else; he thought she was scared, and certainly she was incoherent, as her words plainly showed.

"What is it?" she demanded of Villiers, whom she knew. "Has anything happened to the fraulein? Why are you here? She is not here; she has not returned. I do not know where she is. Is there anything the matter with her, sir?"

"I know she is not here, Bertha," said Chase, sadly.

"There has been an accident?" interposed the maid. "Something has happened to her!" Bertha Schmidt spoke breathlessly.

"Yes," said Villiers. "She is dead, Bertha." His voice was low and full of pain.

Bertha Schmidt fell back a step, and threw up her arms with a strange gesture, which was unconsciously dramatic. All three men were looking at her intently, and each of them observed that gesture; to Villiers it appeared a natural expression of the woman's surprise, to the superintendent as lacking any trace of grief or sorrow—he suspected that perhaps the maid had disliked her mistress; to Max, as the attitude of a person who was warding off a blow which was being delivered by some unseen hand.

"MY sister has been stabbed to death—murdered," said Villiers, in tones suddenly harsh and stern.

The face of the woman went white, and she trembled visibly. Max thought she looked frightened beyond words, but she ejaculated in German—

"They have killed her! They have killed the fraulein!"

Then, before any of them could speak to her, she broke into stormy crying and sobbing, piteous to witness.

"Tell her to speak in English," said Johnson to Villiers. The superintendent did not understand what she said; Chase attached no importance to the words, but Max thought them odd. Some minutes passed, however, before her outburst of weeping calmed down sufficiently for her to speak with some approach to tranquility, and as Max watched her the impressions he had received—of the state of terror into which the news had thrown her, and the singularity of her words—were blotted out for the time. Her distress seemed to be deep and sincere. "She must have been fond of her mistress, after all," said Johnson to himself. Villiers did not think about it, but if he had, he would have deemed it in no way extraordinary.

He told her how the body of her mistress had been found in the train by Max Hamilton, and that there was no trace so far of the murderer; he mentioned next that the police were in charge of the case, and bade her give any information she was able to impart to "this gentleman, Mr. Johnson, an officer from Scotland Yard." He indicated the superintendent as he spoke.

"Your name is Bertha Schmidt," said Johnson to her, "and you have been maid to Miss Chase for some years."

"Yes, sir—for nearly five years." There was a sort of sobbing in her voice, but otherwise she showed no embarrassment.

"You are a German. Did you know Miss Chase in Germany?"

"No. She applied for a servant to a German agency, and that is how I came here: I was well recommended,