

he is, I have no more idea than the man in the moon."

"The woman was a lady?" Mr. Duncan's keen eyes scrutinized the young man's face, whilst his shrewd brain speculated whether his client could perchance have fallen in love with a dying woman. Stranger things than that had happened, as he well knew, from the many strange stories that had become known to him in the course of his work, "or was she—" he paused, "a mere adventuress?"

"She was undoubtedly a lady," Giles answered decidedly, though with no undue warmth, "she was one of the best specimens of a well-born, well-bred Englishwoman, very beautiful, very gentle and refined. I confess her absolutely lonely condition puzzled me."

"But how did she live? She must have had some resources. Did not remittances come to her from anywhere?"

"As far as I could ascertain, no letters of any sort ever reached her. I made enquiries about her from the hotel proprietor, a most worthy soul, genuinely concerned about poor Mrs. Burnett and her little girl. This Madame Richard told me that no letters ever came for Mrs. Burnett, but that her small account was regularly paid, and that she believed Mrs. Burnett had some small amount of money in the bank. She also told me that Sylvia's mother had been giving English lessons in one or two Russian families, and that on the day of her accident she had been driving out, as she did twice a week, to the chateau of a Russian countess some miles from the town."

"You acted on the information this landlady gave you?"

"Certainly. I saw the bank people, who, on hearing particulars, gave me all the help in their power. It amounted to very little. They told me a sum had been paid into them in Mrs. Burnett's name three years before, but by whom it was paid they had no idea. The money had come from England, and was entirely in five pound notes: the letter with it was signed with initials only, and no address was given. But the notes were genuine; Mrs. Burnett's signature was enclosed, the account was to be opened in her name, and a week after the bank received the money, she called in person. She had drawn small sums ever since, the manager told me, adding that the money was almost exhausted. He could not help me in the least as to her identity."

"And the Russian employers, you saw them?"

"I called at the two houses to which Madame Richard directed me. The ladies at both houses were most courteous, extremely distressed about Mrs. Burnett's death, and ready to give me any information they possessed. But they practically knew nothing. Mrs. Burnett had advertised herself locally as a teacher of English with a knowledge of Russian, and she had been engaged to teach the young people of the household—that was all. Everyone who came across her was struck with her beauty and sweetness, she was greatly liked by all those who knew her, but for practical purposes their knowledge amounted to nothing."

"How came she to know Russian? It is an unusual language for an Englishwoman to know."

"I can't tell you. Her own advertisement stated the fact, and the Russian ladies I saw corroborated it. They said she spoke their language with wonderful fluency for a foreigner, but how or why she had learnt it, they could not say. By a strange coincidence the owner of the motor car that killed her was a Russian. I heard him speak to his chauffeur," Giles added thoughtfully.

"You also know the language?" Mr. Duncan looked up sharply from the patterns he was still tracing on his blotting paper.

"I have made a special study of it. Nowadays, whether in India or elsewhere, it is a language that might at any moment be the one thing needful. I have done a certain amount of political work on the frontier, and oh! well, Russian is a handy tongue to know."

"No doubt you will give up the Army now that you have succeeded Sir Philip?"

"Give up the Army—not much," Giles laughed. "I'm only twenty-six, the service means a lot to me—and I don't feel like settling down into a country squire yet awhile. No, I am hoping to be mar-



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