

born of poor parents, and had been educated by an English shipping-agent in Hamburg, who had adopted him and sent him to England. On the Englishman's death he inherited about two thousand pounds, which he made the nucleus of his present fortune."

"That's all news to me," said Jack, reflectively; "and yet——"

"What? Do you know something regarding Rodwell, then?" inquired Sir Houston, quickly.

"No," he replied. "Nothing very extraordinary. What you have just told me surprises me greatly."

"Just as it surprised me. Yet, surely, his case is only one of many similar. Thousands of Germans have come here, and become naturalized Englishmen."

"A German who becomes a naturalized Englishman is a traitor to his own country, while he poses as our friend. I contend that we have no use for traitors of any sort in England to-day," declared Jack, vehemently; both men being still engaged in searching the dead man's room to discover the message which it appeared had been his intention to leave after his death.

They had carefully examined the grate, but found no trace of any burnt paper. Yet, from the fact that a piece of red sealing-wax and a burnt taper lay upon the writing-table, it appeared that something had been recently sealed, though the torn envelope bore no seal.

If an envelope had been sealed, then where was it?

"We shall, no doubt, be able to establish the truth of Jerrold's allegation by reference to the register of naturalized Germans kept at the Home Office," Sir Houston said at last.

Jack was silent for a few moments, and then answered:

"That, I fear, may be a little difficult. Jerrold has often told me how it had been discovered that it was a favourite dodge of Germans, after becoming naturalized and changing their names by deed-poll, to adopt a second and rather similar name, in order to avoid any inquiry along the channel which you have just suggested. As an example, if Ludwig Heitzman became naturalized, then it is more than probable that when he changed his name by deed-poll he did not adopt the name of Lewin Rodwell, but something rather near it."

"Very likely," was the great doctor's remark.

Suddenly Jack Sainsbury paused and, facing his companion, said:

"LOOK here, Sir Houston. In this tragic affair I believe there's something more than suicide. That's my firm opinion. Reflect for one moment, and follow my suspicions. Poor Jerome, in addition to his profession, has for some years been unofficially assisting the Intelligence Department of the War Office. He was one of the keenest and cleverest investigators in England. He scented acts of espionage as a terrier does a rat, and by his efforts half a dozen, or so, dangerous spies have been arrested and punished. In a modest way I have been his assistant, and have helped to watch and follow suspected persons. Together, we have traced cases of petrol-running to the coast, investigated night-signalling in the southern counties, and other things, therefore I happen to know that he was keen on the work. Curious that he never told me of his grave suspicions regarding Mr. Rodwell."

"Perhaps he had a reason for con-

cealing them from you," was the other's reply.

"But he was always so frank and open with me, because I believe that he trusted in my discretion to say nothing."

"Probably he had not verified his facts, and intended to do so before revealing the truth to you."

"Yes, he was most careful always to obtain corroboration of everything, before accepting it," was Jack's reply. "But certainly what you have just told me arouses a grave suspicion."

"Of what?"

"Well—that our poor friend, having gained knowledge of Lewin Rodwell's birth and antecedents, may, in all probability, have probed further into his past and——"

"Into his present, I think more likely," exclaimed the great doctor. "Ah! I quite see the line of your argument," he added, quickly. "You suggest that Rodwell may have discovered that Jerrold knew the truth, and that, in consequence, death came suddenly and unexpectedly—eh?"

Jack Sainsbury nodded in the affirmative.

"BUT surely Trustram, who was one of Jerrold's most intimate friends, could not have had any hand in foul play! He was the last man who saw him alive. No," he went on. "My own experience shows me that poor Jerrold has died of poisoning, and as nobody has been here, or could have escaped from the room, it must have been administered by his own hand."

"But do you not discern the motive?" cried Sainsbury. "Rodwell has risen to a position of great affluence and notoriety. He is a bosom friend of Cabinet Ministers, and to him many secrets of State are confided. He, and his friend Sir Boyle Huntley, play golf with Ministers, and the name of Lewin Rodwell is everywhere to-day one to conjure with. He has, since the war, risen to be one of the most patriotic Englishmen—a man whose unselfish efforts are praised and admired from one end of Great Britain to another. Surely he would have become desperate if he had the least suspicion that Jerome Jerrold had discovered the truth, and intended to unmask him—as he had openly declared to you."

"Yes, yes, I see," Sir Houston replied, dubiously. "If there were any traces of foul play I should at once be of the same opinion. But you see they do not exist."

"Whether there are traces, or whether there are none, nothing will shake my firm opinion, and that is that poor Jerome has been assassinated, and the motive of the crime is what I have already suggested."

"Very well; we shall clear it up at the post mortem," was the doctor's reply, while at that moment Thomasson re-entered, followed by a police-officer in plain clothes and two constables in uniform.

On their entry, Sainsbury introduced Sir Houston Bird, and told them his own name and that of his dead friend.

Then the officer of the local branch of the Criminal Investigation Department sat down at the dead man's writing-table and began to write in his note-book the story of the strange affair, as dictated by Jack.

(To be continued.)



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