

"Yes, I have it at home," replied Mr. Trustram; who, proceeding, said: "At first I was greatly surprised at being given such a letter, and chaf-fingly remarked that I hoped he wouldn't die just yet; whereat he laughed, refilled his pipe and declared that life was, after all, very uncertain. 'I want my friend Sainsbury to know something—but not before a year after I'm gone. You understand, Trustram. I give you this, and you, on your part, will give me your word of honour that, whatever occurs, you will safely guard it, and not allow it to be opened till a year has elapsed after my death.' He seemed to have suddenly grown serious, and I confess I was not a little surprised at his curious change of manner."

"Did it strike you at all that he might be contemplating suicide?"

"No, not in the least. Such an idea never entered my head. I regarded his action just as that of a man who makes his will—that's all. I took the envelope and, about five minutes later, left him, as I had been called down to the Admiralty upon an urgent matter."

"A quarter of an hour afterwards Mr. Sainsbury called and we could not get into the room," Thomasson remarked. "That is all we know."

CHAPTER VI.

Reveals the Victim.

THREE days had passed. The coroner's inquiry had been duly held into the death of Dr. Jerome Jerrold, and medical evidence, including that of the deceased's friend, Sir Houston Bird, had been called. This evidence showed conclusively that Sir Houston had been right in his conjecture, from the convulsed appearance of the body and other signs, that poor Jerrold had died of poisoning by strychnine. Therefore the proceedings were brief, and a verdict was returned of "Suicide while temporarily insane."

No mention was made of the sealed letter left with Mr. Trustram, for in a case of that distressing nature the coroner is always ready to make the inquiry as short as possible.

Jack Sainsbury, who had been granted leave by Mr. Charlesworth, the managing director, to attend the inquest upon his friend, returned to the city in a very perturbed state of mind.

He sat at his desk on that grey December afternoon, unable to attend to the correspondence before him, unable to fix his mind upon business, unable to understand the subtle ramifications of the cleverly conceived and dastardly plot, the key of which he had discovered by those few words he had overheard between the Chairman of the Board and his close friend, the great Lewin Rodwell.

He was wondering whether his dead friend's allegation that Rodwell was none other than Ludwig Heitzman was really the truth. Sir Houston Bird had promised to institute inquiry at the Alien department of the Home Office, yet, only that day he had heard that the official of whom inquiry must be made actually bore a German name. The taint of the Teuton seemed, alas! over everything, notwithstanding the public resentment apparent up and down the whole country, and the formation of leagues and unions to combat the activity of the enemy in our midst.

Jack Sainsbury disagreed with the verdict of suicide. Jerome Jerrold was surely not the man to take his own life by swallowing strychnine. Yet why had he left behind that puzzling and mysterious message which Charles Trustram, having given his word of honour to his friend, refused to be opened for another year?

The will had been found deposited with his solicitor—a will which left the sum of eighteen-odd thousand pounds to "my friend and assistant in many confidential matters, Mr. John Sainsbury, of Heath Street, Hampstead."

As far as it went that was gratifying to Jack. It rendered him independent of the Ochrida Copper Corporation, and the strenuous "driving-power," as it is termed in the city, of Charlesworth, the sycophant of Sir Boyle Huntley and his fellow directors. The whole office knew that Huntley and Rodwell, brought in during days of peace "to re-organize the Company upon a sound financial basis," were gradually getting all the power into their own hands, as they had done in other companies. The lives of that pair were one huge money-getting adventure.

In the office strange things were whispered. But Jack alone knew the truth.

The most irritating fact to him was that Jerome Jerrold, just as he had discovered Rodwell's birth and masquerading, had died. Why?

Why had Lewin Rodwell rung up his new friend, Trustram, just before poor Jerome's death? Why had Jerome asked to see his friend Sainsbury so particularly on that night? Why had he locked his door and taken his life at the very moment when he should have lived to face and denounce the man who, while an alien enemy, was posing as a loyal subject of Great Britain?

Of these and other things—things which he had discussed on the previous night with Elise—he was thinking deeply, when a lad entered, saying:

"Mr. Charlesworth wants to see you, sir."

HE rose from his chair and ascended in the lift to the next floor. On entering the manager's room he found Mr. Charlesworth, the catspaw of Sir Boyle, seated in his padded chair, smoking a good cigar.

"Oh—er—Sainsbury. I'm rather sorry to call you in, but the directors have decided that as you are of military age they are compelled, from patriotic motives, to suggest to you that you should join the army, as so many of the staff here have done. Don't you think it is your duty?"

Jack Sainsbury looked the manager straight in the face.

"Yes," he said, with a curious smile. "I quite agree. It certainly is my duty to resign and take my part in the defence of the country. But," he added, "I think it is somewhat curious that the directors have taken this step—to ask me to resign."

Charlesworth, an estimable man, and beloved by the whole of the staff of the company at home and abroad, hesitated a moment, and then replied:

"Unfortunately I am only here to carry out the orders of the directors, Sainsbury. You have been a most reliable and trusted servant of the com-

pany, and I shall be only too pleased to write you a good testimonial. You will have half-pay during the time you are absent, of course, as the others have."

"Well, if I leave the Ochrida Copper Corporation, as the directors have practically dismissed me, I require no half-pay—nothing whatever," he answered, with a grim smile. "I part from you and from the company, Mr. Charlesworth, with the very kindest and most cordial recollections; but I wish you, please, to give my compliments to the directors and say that, as they wish me to leave and act in the interests of my country, I shall do so, refusing to accept the half of my salary which they, in their patriotism, have so generously offered me."

CHARLESWORTH was a little puzzled by this speech. It was unexpected. The steady, hardworking clerk, who had been so reliable, and whom he had greatly esteemed, might easily have met his suggestion with resentment. Indeed, he had expected him to do so. But, on the contrary, Sainsbury seemed even eager to retire from the service of the company.

Charlesworth was, of course, ignorant of the conditions of Dr. Jerrold's will, or of those words Jack Sainsbury had overheard as he had entered the board-room. Vernon Charlesworth had been a servant of the Ochrida Copper Corporation ever since its formation eighteen years ago—long before the "new blood" represented by the Huntley-Rodwell combination had been "brought into" it. From the first inception of the company the public, who had put their modest savings into it, had lost their money. Yet recently, by the bombastic and optimistic speeches of Sir Boyle Huntley at the Cannon Street Hotel, and the self-complacent smiles of Lewin Rodwell at the meetings, confidence had been inspired, and it was still a going concern—one which, if the truth be told, Huntley and Rodwell were working to get into their own hands.

"Of course I am really very sorry to part with you, Sainsbury," the manager said, leaning back in his chair and looking at him. "You've been a most trustworthy servant, yet I, of course, have to abide by the decision of the board."

Jack Sainsbury smiled.

"No, please don't apologize, Mr. Charlesworth," he said, with a faint smile. "I daresay I shall soon find some other employment more congenial to me."

"I hope so," replied the manager, peering at the young man through his horn-rimmed glasses—a style affected in official circles. "Nowadays, with so many men at the front, it is not really a difficult matter to find a post in the city. It seems to me that the slacker has the best of it."

"I'm not a slacker, though you may think I am, Mr. Charlesworth," cried Jack, reddening. "A month after war was declared I went to the recruiting office fully prepared to enlist. But, unfortunately, they rejected me as medically unfit."

"Did they?" exclaimed the other in surprise. "You never told us that!"

"Was it necessary? I merely tried to do my duty. But—" and he paused, and then, in a meaning voice, he added: "If I can't do my duty out

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