

PLAYING A DESPERATE GAME

seated with me. I introduced him, and we spent a pleasant hour, chatting and smoking. Ray had also been in Bremen, and the two men had, they found, many mutual friends. Then, when he had left, Ray declared himself charmed by him.

"So different to the usual German," he declared. "There's nothing of the popinjay about him, nothing of the modern military fop of Berlin or Dresden, men who are, in my estimation, the very acme of bad breeding and degenerate idiocy."

"No," I said. "Engler is quite a good fellow. I'm glad he's found me. I expected to be deadly dull this Christmas."

"So do I," replied my friend. "I've got a wire this morning from the Admiral saying he is down with influenza, and the Christmas house-party is postponed. So I shall stay in town."

"In that case we might spend Christmas day together," I suggested.

This was arranged.

My German friend Otto saw me daily. I was introduced to his brother, Wilhelm, a tall, thin, rather narrow-eyed man who, from his atrocious German, I judged was from Dantzic. It was one evening in the Café Royal that I first saw Wilhelm, who was seated playing dominoes with a rather stout, middle-aged man in gold-rimmed spectacles, Heinrich Griesbach.

Both men expressed delight at meeting me, and I invited the trio to my rooms for a smoke and a gossip.