

CHAPTER XI A FONT OF TYPE

Mary Louise went into Josie O'Gorman's room and found the young girl bent over a table on which were spread the disloyal circulars.

"You've been studying those things for nearly two weeks, Josie," she said. "Have you made any discoveries?"

"I know a lot more about the circulars than I did," answered Josie. "For instance, there are nineteen printing offices in Dorfield, and only two of them have this kind of type."

"Oh, that's something, indeed!" cried Mary Louise. "One of the two offices must have printed the circulars."

"No; the curious fact is that neither printed them," returned Josie, regarding the circulars with a frown.

"How do you know?"

"It's an old style of type, not much in use at present," explained the youthful detective. "In one printing office the case that contains this type face hasn't been used for months and months. I found all the compartments covered with dust a quarter of an inch thick. There wasn't a trace of the type having been disturbed. I proved this by picking out a piece of type, which scattered the dust and brought to light the shining bodies of the other type in that compartment. So the circulars could never have been printed from that case of type."

"But the other printing office?"

"Well, there they had a font of the same style of type, which is occasionally used in job printing; but it's a small font and has only twenty-four small a's. I rummaged the whole shop, and found none of the type standing, out of the case. Another thing, they had only three capital G's, and one of those was jammed and damaged. In the last circular issued, no less than seven capital G's appear. In the first one sent out I find fifty-eight small a's. All this convinces me the circulars were issued from no regular printing office."

"Then how did it get printed?" asked Mary Louise.

"That's what puzzles me," confessed Josie. "Three of the four big manufacturing concerns here have outfits and do their own printing--or part of it, anyhow--and I don't mind saying I expected to find my clue in one of those places, rather than in a regular printing office. But I've made an exhaustive search, aided by the

managers, and there's no type resembling that used in the circulars in any of the private print shops. In fact, I'm up a stump!"

"But why do you attach so much importance to this matter?" queried Mary Louise.

"It's the most direct route to the traitor. Find who printed the circulars and you've got your hand on the man who wrote and mailed them. But the printing baffles me, and so I've started another line of investigation."

"What line is that, Josie?"

"The circular envelopes were addressed by hand, with pen and ink. The ink is a sort in common use. The envelopes are an ordinary commercial kind. The circulars are printed on half a sheet of letter-size typewriting paper, sold in several stationery store in large quantities. No clue there. But the handwriting is interesting. It's disguised, of course, and the addressing was done by two different people--that's plain."

"You are wonderful, Josie!"

"I'm stupid as a clam, Mary Louise. See here!" she went to a closet and brought out a large card-board box, which she placed upon the table. It was filled to the brim with envelopes, addressed to many business firms in Dorfield, but all bearing the local postmark. "Now, I've been days collecting these envelopes," continued the girl, "and I've studied them night after night. I'm something of a handwriting expert, you know, for that is one of the things that Daddy has carefully taught me. These envelopes came from all sorts of people--folks making inquiries, paying bills, ordering goods, and the like. I've had an idea from the first that some prominent person--no ordinary man--is responsible for the circulars. They're well worded, grammatical, and the malicious insinuations are cleverly contrived to disconcert the loyal but weak brethren. However, these envelopes haven't helped me a bit. Neither of the two persons who addressed the envelopes of the circulars addressed any of these business envelopes. Of that I'm positive."

"Dear me," said Mary Louise, surprised, "I'd no idea you'd taken so much trouble, Josie."

"Well, I've undertaken a rather puzzling case, my dear, and it will mean more trouble than you can guess, before I've solved it. This pro-German scoundrel is clever; he suspected that he'd be investigated and has taken every precaution to prevent discovery. Nevertheless, the cleverest criminal always leaves some trace behind him, if one can manage to find it, so I'm not going to despair at this stage of the game."

"Do you know," said Mary Louise thoughtfully, "I've had an idea that there's some connection between the explosion at the airplane works and the sender of these circulars."

Josie gave her a queer look.

"What connection do you suspect?" she asked quickly.

"Why, the man who wrote those circulars would not stop at any crime to harass the government and interfere with the promotion of the war."

"Is that as far as you've gone?"

"Have you gone any farther, Josie?"

"A step, Mary Louise. It looks to me as if there is an organized band of traitors in Dorfield. No one person is responsible for it all. Didn't I say two different people addressed the circulars in disguised handwriting? Now, a bomb has to be constructed, and placed, and timed, and I don't credit any one person with handling such a job and at the same time being aware that the utmost damage to the War Department's plans would be accomplished by blowing up the airplane works. That argues intelligent knowledge of national and local affairs. There may be but two conspirators, and there may be more, but the more there are, the easier it will be for me to discover them."

"Naturally," agreed Mary Louise. "But, really, Josie, I don't see how you're going to locate a clue that will guide you. Have you attended the trial of those suspected of the bomboutrage?"

"I've seen all the testimony. There isn't a culprit in the whole bunch. The real criminal is not even suspected, as yet," declared Josie. "The federal officers know this, and are just taking things easy and making the trials string out, to show they're wide awake. Also I've met two secret service men here--Norman Addison and old Jim Crissey. I know nearly all of the boys. But they haven't learned anything important, either."

"Are these men experienced detectives?"

"They've done some pretty good work, but nothing remarkable. In these times the government is forced to employ every man with any experience at all, and Crissey and Addison are just ordinary boys, honest and hard-working, but not especially talented. Daddy would have discovered something in twenty-four hours; but Daddy has been sent abroad, for some reason, and there are many cases of espionage and sabotage fully as important as this, in this spy-infested land.

That's why poor Josie O'Gorman is trying to help the government, without assignment or authority. If I succeed, however, I'll feel that I have done my bit."

"Don't you get discouraged, dear, at times?"

"Never! Why, Mary Louise, discouragement would prove me a dub. I'm puzzled, though, just now, and feeling around blindly in the dark to grab a thread that may lead me to success. If I have luck, presently I'll find it."

She put away the envelopes, as she spoke, and resuming her seat drew out her tablets and examined the notes she had made thereon. Josie used strange characters in her memoranda, a sort of shorthand she had herself originated and which could be deciphered only by her father or by herself.

"Here's a list of suspects," she said. "Not that they're necessarily connected with our case, but are known to indulge in disloyal sentiments. Hal Grober, the butcher, insists on selling meat on meatless days and won't defer to the wishes of Mr. Hoover, whom he condemns as a born American but a naturalized Englishman. He's another Jake Kasker, too noisy to be guilty of clever plotting."

"They're both un-American!" exclaimed Mary Louise. "There ought to be a law to silence such people, Josie."

"Don't worry, my dear; they'll soon be silenced," predicted her friend. "Either better judgment will come to their aid or the federal courts will get after them. We shouldn't allow anyone to throw stones at the government activities, just at this crisis. They may think what they please, but must keep their mouths shut."

"I'm sorry they can even think disloyalty," said Mary Louise.

"Well, even that will be remedied in time," was the cheerful response. "No war more just and righteous was ever waged than this upon which our country has embarked, and gradually that fact will take possession of those minds, which, through prejudice, obstinacy or ignorance, have not yet grasped it. I'm mighty proud of my country, Mary Louise, and I believe this war is going to give us Americans a distinction that will set us up in our own opinion and in the eyes of the world. But always there is a willful objection, on the part of some, toward any good and noble action, and we must deal charitably with these deluded ones and strive to win them to an appreciation of the truth."

"Isn't that carrying consideration too far?" asked Mary Louise.

"No. Our ministers are after the unregenerates, not after the godly. The noblest act of humanity is to uplift a fellow creature. Even in our prisons we try to reform

criminals, to make honest men of them rather than condemn them to a future of crime. It would be dreadful to say: 'You're all yellow; go to thunder!'"

"Yes; I believe you're right," approved the other girl. "That is, your theory is correct, but the wicked sometimes refuse to reform."

"Usually the fault of the reformers, my dear. But suppose we redeem a few of them, isn't it worth while? Now, let me see. Here's a washwoman who says the Kaiser is a gentleman, and a street-car driver who says it's a rich man's war. No use bothering with such people in our present state of blind groping. And here's the list that you, yourself, gave to me: One Silas Herring, a wholesale grocer. I'm going to see him. He's a big, successful man, and being opposed to the administration is dangerous. Herring is worth investigating, and with him is associated Professor John Dyer, superintendent of schools."

"Oh, Professor Dyer is all right," said Mary Louise hastily. "It was he who helped bring Mr. Herring to time, and afterward he took Gran'pa Jim's place on the Bond Committee and solicited subscriptions."

"Did he get any?"

"Any what?"

"Subscriptions."

"--I believe so. Really, I don't know."

"Well, I know," said Josie, "for I've inspected the records. Your professor--who, by the way, is only a professor by courtesy and a politician by profession--worked four days on the bond sale and didn't turn in a single subscription. He had a lot of wealthy men on his list and approached them in such a manner that they all positively declined to buy bonds. Dyer's activities kept these men from investing in bonds when, had they been properly approached, they would doubtless have responded freely."

"Good gracious! Are you sure, Josie?"

"I'm positive. I've got a cross opposite the name of Professor John Dyer, and I'm going to know more about him--presently. His bosom chum is the Honorable Andrew Duncan, a man with an honest Scotch name but only a thirty-second or so of Scotch blood in his veins. His mother was a German and his grandmother Irish and his greatgrandmother a Spanish gipsy."

"How did you learn all that, Josie?"

"By making inquiries. Duncan was born in Dorfield and his father was born in the county. He's a typical American--a product of the great national melting-pot--but no patriot because he has no sympathy for any of the European nations at war, or even with the war aims of his native land. He's a selfish, scheming, unprincipled politician; an office-holder ever since he could vote; a man who would sacrifice all America to further his own personal ends."

"Then, you think Mr. Duncan may--might be--is--"

"No," said Josie, "I don't. The man might instigate a crime and encourage it, in a subtle and elusive way, but he's too shrewd to perpetrate a crime himself. I wouldn't be surprised if Duncan could name the man--or the band of traitors--we're looking for, if he chose to, but you may rest assured he has not involved his own personality in any scheme to balk the government."

"I can't understand that sort of person," said Mary. Louise, plaintively.

"It's because you haven't studied the professional politician. He has been given too much leeway heretofore, but his days, I firmly believe, are now numbered," Josie answered. "Now, here's my excuse for investigating Silas Herring and his two cronies, Dyer and Duncan. All three of them happen to be political bosses in this section. It is pretty generally known that they are not in sympathy with President Wilson and the administration. They are shrewd enough to know that the popularity of the war and the President's eloquent messages have carried the country by storm. So they cannot come right out into the open with their feelings. At the same time, they can feel themselves losing control of the situation. In fact, the Herring gang is fearful that at the coming elections they will be swept aside and replaced with out-and-out loyal supporters of the President. So they're going to try to arouse sentiment against the administration and against the war, in order to head off the threatened landslide. Dyer hoped to block the sale of Liberty Bonds, blinding folks to his intent by subscribing for them himself; but you girls foiled that scheme by your enthusiastic 'drive.' What the other conspirators have done, I don't know, but I imagine their energies will not be squelched by one small defeat. I don't expect to land any of the three in jail, but I think they all ought to be behind the bars, and if I shadow them successfully, one or the other may lead me to their tools or confederates--the ones directly guilty of issuing the disloyal circulars and perhaps of placing the bomb that damaged the airplane works and murdered some of its employes."

Mary Louise was pale with horror when Josie finished her earnest and convincing statement. She regarded her friend's talent with profound admiration.

Nevertheless, the whole matter was becoming so deep, so involved that she could only think of it with a shudder.

"I'm almost sorry," said the girl, regretfully, "that I ever mixed up in this dreadful thing."

"I'm not sorry," returned Josie. "Chasing traitors isn't the pleasantest thing in the world, even for a regular detective, but it's a duty I owe my country and I'm sufficiently interested to probe the affair to the extent of my ability. If I fail, nothing is lost, and if I win I'll have done something worth while. Here's another name on the list of suspects you gave me--Annie Boyle, the hotel-keeper's daughter."

"Don't bother about Annie, for goodness' sake," exclaimed Mary Louise. "She hasn't the brains or an opportunity to do any harm, so you'd better class her with Kasker and the butcher."

But Josie shook her head.

"There's a cross opposite her name," said she. "I don't intend to shuffle Annie Boyle into the discard until I know more about her."