doing in the café in her fine clothes with that low-down actor. I said to the ladies who work with me, after she and her feller had gone: 'Girls,' I said, 'as God is my judge,' I said, 'she's . . . .'

But Grundt had heaved himself up and hobbled across to the window. "Bartsch!" he called out into the night. A voice spoke back: "Herr Doktor?"

"Stay beneath the window and keep your eyes open, verstanden?"

"Ist gut, Herr Doktor!"

Clubfoot slammed the window and turned about. He pointed at me with a commanding gesture.

"Search her!" he said to the woman.

I sprang forward, my every instinct in revolt. "I won't have it, . . . ." I cried.

"Another word from you," rasped Grundt, rounding on me savagely, "and I'll do it myself!" He swung round to Frau Hulda. "You've been in gaol. You know how it's done. And don't overlook the linings!"

He limped cumbrously from the room.

CHAPTER XX
THE PHOTOGRAPH

When I set out to write my story, I meant to put down each successive phase of my adventure just as it happened. But the feeling of nausea which brought me nigh to fainting, as that evil harpy laid her damp and pudgy hands on me, comes over me again now, more than four years after, in the country peace of this dear land of ours, and I cannot bring myself to think, much less to write, of that sickening ordeal.

And then Clubfoot was back again, leaning on his stick.
Frau Hulda had stood away from me at last, and I was cowering back, as far away from her as I could get, against the wall beside the window. Grim and silent, he surveyed us. "Also . . . nichts?" he said at length.

A servile smile spread over the woman's uneasy features. "Nichts, Herr!"

The misshapen boot thumped the floor as he took a pace towards the desk. "Get out!" he barked over his shoulder.

Frau Hulda cringed. "If I might make so bold as to trouble the Herr for my little expenses! I took a droschke, so as not to keep the Herr waiting. And there's the fare back. . . ." She paused, expectant.

With a snarl he turned on her. "Expenses, is it, you old hag? Madame must have her carriage, must she? She shall have her carriage, too, zum Donnerwetter, a beautiful green carriage, with a little cell all to herself and the door locked, so that she can't fall out. . . ." He chuckled unpleasantly and roared, "Hansemann!"

The pasty-faced man appeared. "Ring up the Tiergarten police station and tell them to prepare the pink suite for the Frau Gräfin. . . ."

With a wailing cry the woman plumped down on her knees and held up her hands in entreaty. "Ach nein," she gibbered. "Ich bitt' Sie, Herr . . . ."

"Let them send for her at once,"—Clubfoot seemed to roll the order upon his tongue, as though savouring an unusual daintiness—"and telephone to the Alexander-Platz: my compliments to the officer in charge, and he should send the flying squad immediately to raid the Café zur Nelke. They know it at police headquarters; it's the Animier-Kneipe in the Tauben-Strasse. Take the slut away!"

The man grabbed Frau Hulda by the shoulders and ran her, blubbering and lamenting, from the room. Clubfoot dropped into his chair with a heavy grunt. "And now,"
he remarked, as he began to hunt among the papers that littered the desk, "you and I will have a little talk, liebes Fräulein." He glanced up from his search. "But won't you sit down?" He pointed to the chair beside him. I had not moved from my place beside the window. I was paralysed by the disaster which had overtaken me. Seeing that I remained still, Grundt barked sharply: "Sit down!" I obeyed.

He started to rummage among his papers again. "I like spirit, jawohl," he observed reflectively, as though thinking aloud. "But too much spirit is a bad thing. An arrogant spirit must be tamed. Na ja, we have our little methods. So...!" He disentangled a file from a pile of folders and, spreading out his large right hand upon it, considered me tentatively, while his fingers drummed on the drab cover. He puffed once or twice at his cigar, then said: "You've given me a great deal of trouble to-day, liebes Fräulein. I'll pay you the compliment of admitting that for quite a while I lost all track of you. I won't deny that luck was on your side. If you'd gone to the Hotel Continental as was, I understand, your original intention..." He broke off. "Not that your change of plan would have made any difference if the triple sheep's-head whose duty it was to... na,"—he grinned impishly—"to escort you, shall we say, to Berlin, had carried out his instructions..."

My nerve was coming back to me. I began to realise how savagely angry the indignity I had suffered at the hands of that disgusting woman had made me. I would not let this overbearing cripple frighten me.... "I changed my hotel," I replied cuttingly, "because I object to being shadowed. Particularly, when there's no reason for it...."

"No reason?" Grundt's tone was mild as milk. "Have you forgotten our talk in the garden at Schlatz?"
I shrugged my shoulders. "I can't help it if you won't believe I had nothing to do with this English prisoner of yours."

"Have I ever said I disbelieved you?"

"Your actions show that you do?"

He held up his great hand. "Erlauben Sie! You were a young girl, unprotected, coming to Berlin. If I accepted your assurance that you had had nothing to do with the English criminal, Abbott, I had reasons for thinking that there were others who would be less credulous than I, associates of this man, accomplices. It was my duty, mein Fräulein, to see that you did not fall into evil company." He wagged his head ponderously. "I fear I have reached you too late."

His voice was soft and purring. He made me think of a great cat playing with a mouse. But this time I did not deceive myself. In a minute he would show his claws, and then, God help me! But what and how much did he know? And what surprise was he waiting to spring on me?

The file under his hand held the secret, whatever it was, I felt certain. He was opening the folder now. A photograph lay on top of the papers it contained. Grundt took the photo, glanced at it for an instant, then placed it, tantalisingly, face downwards on the desk.

"To spare you useless denials," said Clubfoot, "I will tell you what happened this morning. You called at Frau Hulda's cosy little café in the Tauben-Strasse and asked for an individual who calls himself Max Held, but who is also known by the nickname of 'The Count.' This man was seen no later than this morning in an office he frequents next door to the café, the office of a man ..."

—he shot me a glance out of the corner of his eyes—"named Bale. Bale claims to be a theatre agent. But the police suspect him of being a receiver of stolen goods. Do you begin to see the connection?"
"I can't say I do," I retorted, affecting an indifference I was far from feeling.

"Na schön! Let me take my story—your story—a stage further. At the café you ask for Max. He is not there. You wait for him. There's a little trouble about the bill as you have lost your purse. But then Max appears. He pays the reckoning, and you go off together. These are proved facts. You're,"—he cackled his dry laugh—"you're not going to deny them, I trust?"

I was speechless. With a smirk Grundt picked up the photograph he had taken from the file, glanced at it briefly and handed it to me. "Here you are. . . ."

It was one of those grim rogues'gallery portraits seen on handbills outside police-stations, in three parts, the full face, and the side face, viewed from the left and the right. At the first glimpse my spirits soared, for I thought I was looking at the likeness of some German criminal whose identity Nigel Druce had assumed, perhaps of that Max, the drug-seller, of whom Ottilie at the café had spoken, who was in Moabit gaol. As a portrait it was crude, as all such photographs are, flat and un lifelike; but when I looked closer I saw that the face was the face of Nigel Druce. His mien was haggard and bitter and miserable; but the eyes, still proud, still uncowed, were unmistakable. It was obviously a police photograph—a reference number was scratched on the plate at the foot: I wondered why Druce had not told me that he had been in the hands of the German police.

Clubfoot chuckled. "Well," he said jovially, "do you recognise your beau chevalier? Scotland Yard isn't so well equipped for this sort of work as we are; but Frau Hulda declares it's an excellent likeness. . . ."

"Scotland Yard?" I repeated dully.

Grundt turned the photograph over. His forefinger stubbed at a time-stamp encircled with an inscription:
"C.I.D., New Scotland Yard." Below it was an undecipherable scrawl in German.

"Come, come!"—Clubfoot's strident voice broke in upon my stupefaction—"You're not going to pretend you didn't know that your Max Held was an Englishman? But perhaps he didn't enlighten you as to his career. Here . . . !"

He dipped into the folder and drew out a sheaf of newspaper cuttings pasted on to sheets of paper. There were headlines: "Country House Theft: Officer Charged": "The Bandon Chase Robbery: Defence Opened": "Twelve Months for an Army Officer: Judge's Scathing Address": and columns of print that swam, as I tried to read, before my eyes. But a name stood out, the name of the prisoner. It was Nigel Marston-Gore.

Grundt took the cuttings from my lifeless hands. "You needn't read all that. If you follow the newspapers at all, you must remember the case. This fellow what 's-his-name—na, verdammt, these English names are beyond me—stole a gold cup from the collection of his host, Sir . . . Sir . . . nanu, read it for yourself. . . ." His broad nail underlined a name: Sir Charles Whirter. "A nice scandal for the British Army!" he went on. "But they cashiered him. See. . . ." He turned over the sheets until he had found the cutting he wanted. He handed it to me. The words zig-zagged this way and that as I tried, blindly, to piece together their meaning: "The 'London Gazette' announces . . . conviction by the civil power . . . dismissed His Majesty's service."

I sat there staring stupidly at the cutting. I was vaguely aware of Clubfoot rustling the papers as he replaced them in the file. His harsh voice sounded through the quiet room: "This scoundrel, Abbott, to abuse the confidence of a charming young girl! It was he who put you in touch with this English gaol-bird, nicht wahr? He told
you where the paper was hidden; and you recovered it and
gave it to his accomplice. That was the way of it, was?"

He drew my gaze. I looked up to find his hard, fierce
face eagerly thrust forward, his eyes glittering behind the
big spectacles, his strong hands clutching the arm of his
chair, as though he were about to spring at me and claw
the truth from my throat. Then came an interruption.
Hansemann’s pallid countenance appeared in the doorway.
He displayed a slip of paper.

Grundt swung round to face the intruder. Anger
blazed in his face. "Get out!" he ordered savagely.
"And don’t interrupt me again!"
The man wavered and held up the slip.
But before Hansemann could withdraw he was rudely
elbowed aside, and Rudi von Linz stormed into the room.

CHAPTER XXI

IN WHICH I AM UNPLEASANTLY REMINDED OF AN
UNIMPORTANT PERSONAGE

"OLIVIA," the boy exclaimed breathlessly, "I came the
moment I received your message. . . ."

"I’m glad you’re here, Rudi," I said. "But I sent you
no message. . . ."

"Strange! They brought word to me at Schippke’s
that you had telephoned for me to come on immediately
to this address. It was most urgent, they said. But
what’s happened? How did you get here?" The
charming face was full of solicitude: as the result of Frau
Hulda’s mauling, I suppose I did look a bit ruffled. Seeing
that I made no reply, he glared provocatively at Clubfoot.
"Has this fellow been annoying you? And what have
you done with the . . ."