

# LOUISA MARKESFELDT UNABLE TO DO ANY SPYING IN BERLIN

Saw No One Outside Her Employers. Got No Letters, Did Not go Anywhere

## TRACE OF NOTHING BUT FOOLISHNESS

It is Denied That She Understands Any Language But English

From a Staff Reporter.

Berlin, Ont., June 17.—That she is the daughter of a German officer; that she was educated delicately in England until she was about nine years old, when a tragedy happened in her life that gave her brain-fever and left in an active, imaginative mind the seeds of insanity;

That she ran away from the convent where she was placed after her mother's death, and was picked up by Dr. Barnardo's Homes, a walf in a London workhouse;

That the constant surrounding suspicion that she is a spy has led her, at times, to believe that she is a spy when she is not;

Such are the suggestions made to explain the case and attitude of Louisa Markesfeldt.

As for Louisa Markesfeldt speaking no less than eight languages, she cannot speak even German or French, according to Rev. R. G. Katzunoff, who is a Bulgarian and an accomplished linguist. She can read these languages, but when he addressed her in them she did not appear to understand and replied evasively in English. He denied positively that she could speak any dialect of the Balkan Peninsula, and laughed at the idea that she could speak Italian or Spanish. She had a Spanish book, he said, and was trying to learn the language.

When Dr. C. L. Morgan, her employer at Shelburne, addressed her in German she refused to answer, and pretended indignation. The Daily News took particular pains to ascertain what language "The Girl of Mystery" had used when she had her raving spells at the home of Dr. Morgan, and found that she had spoken English. The supposition is that in a time of tense excitement such as those, the speaker, waking or sleeping, would revert to her native tongue.

Mr. Katzunoff said he was positive from her remarkably pure pronunciation of English that she had never spoken German as her mother tongue. Yet she does not speak English like a native.

"You could not speak with her for five minutes without noticing the difference," said Mr. Katzunoff. He says the difference lies in the pedantic precision with which she picks her words, and refuses abbreviations such as "can't," "gon't," "wouldn't," and so on.

### No Abbreviations.

One of her employers relates that one day she found in a grammar belonging to one of the children a list of permissible abbreviations, and brought them to her mistress for explanation. "They would not let me use them," said the girl.

Her mistress told her that if she would speak English like a native she must learn to use these abbreviations. For a few days she tried to take this advice, but after that went back to her "would not's."

If, then, neither English nor French nor German is her mother tongue, in what country was she brought up—this human puzzle? She herself claims that her mother was an English woman.

What was the home life of this walf picked off the streets of London and sent out to Canada as a destitute orphan at ten years old, and since then employed in a dozen households as a domestic drudge, who still reads French and German and speaks the English of a great lady of a past generation?

### Delicacy of Feeling.

About her birth she is extraordinarily reticent. She had remarkably cleanly habits, though she paid no attention to her dress.

She had a certain delicacy of feeling that in a girl educated in an orphanage cannot easily be explained. "The only time I ever saw her angry was when I mentioned to her the suspicion of the girls in the factory that she was not a girl at all, though I scolded her more in the four weeks she was with me than I have scolded any other girl in four years. And even then she apologized repeatedly for having lost her temper," said one of her mistresses. "When she went away she said good-bye to the people next door."

"She sent us all a Christmas card signed 'Dot German Girl,'" said one of the girls at the factory.

Then, too, she had a smattering of Greek and Latin.

"I was not allowed to read novels until quite recently," she told her mistress, who returned from church one Sunday to find the cloth unlaid, the dinner cold, though it had been set ready to put on the stove, and Louisa, oblivious of everything, absorbed in a copy of Balzac in the original.

"She knew table manners," said Mrs. C. L. Morgan of Shelburne.

### Knows the Continent.

It is possible that as the daughter of a German officer and well-to-do English woman, she might be sent on the continent with a governess. She herself claims to know Russia, Berlin, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Southern Europe, England, not to speak of her travels in America.

Everybody with whom she came in contact, the police in Toronto included, were hoodwinked by her in believing she had traveled extensively—with an English instructor, governess and a maid.

"People whom The Daily News interviewed were convinced she had

traveled. "She described the places," said one. "She told us that anyone who could support himself could get a college education in Russia, that the peasants were not so ignorant as we supposed, and afterwards we found that she was right," said another.

Yet Louisa Markesfeldt's travels have been limited since she arrived at the Margaret A. Cox Home for Girls in Peterboro to going from one situation to another.

### Fable About Virginia.

The Daily News has been able to solve this riddle also. Virginia has been her favorite sporting ground of late. She told Detective Maurer that she had gained her tanned complexion there. She had ridden her own horse and had her own dogs in Virginia, she told credulous females. Yet she has never been in Virginia. She came in contact with a woman who had been there, and she was insatiable in her quest for information about the place. This she stored up in her remarkable memory, and repeated as her own experience to anyone who would listen to her. Not the least extraordinary thing about the girl is the fact that she "got away with it."

"She was always asking questions about different countries we had been in, about the towns and how the people lived, and all that sort of thing," said one of the factory girls.

"She was remarkably well posted on a number of subjects," said one of the managers of the shirt factory. "Geography, and general conditions, and so on."

### Thirst for Knowledge.

Probably it was her thirst for knowledge that made her dip into books of psychic research and attempt hypnotic experiments.

Probably too, it was this same passion that made her express the determination to walk home with every girl in the factory, that made her approach the members of the firm to establish friendly relations with them, that made her pry about all parts of the factory where she had no business, that made her spend her days in talking rather than working until she was dismissed as a general nuisance.

To some she affirmed that she was a German spy. To Mr. A. R. Goudie and Mrs. Henry Hillbourne who befriended her, she laughed the idea to scorn. "Why," she would say, "what could I learn here?"

"My parole is that I will not send any information to Germany. I have not broken my parole." So she said to Mr. Goudie.

At the factory, on the other hand, she told the girls that she had sent samples of the army shirts to Germany. She would walk down from the factory with the girls and leave them to go into the post office where she had a private box in which no letters ever came. She let the girls see that she had received letters, three of them at least, and that her friends had forwarded her copies of that "infernal" German paper, forbidden in this country. The girls saw her burn them.

### List of Reservists.

She went to a prominent German citizen of Berlin and asked him for a list of the names of German reservists in the district.

She told the girls that she had been "at the end of a gun in Niagara," and that if she was a man she would have been shot. She said her brother was a general fighting against the allies, and that she belonged to the "Wolf Gang," where-at the girls made much fun.

"She gave me the impression that she was in touch by wireless with Sayville and had daily information regarding the war," said Rev. Mr. Katzunoff.

One of the wildest yarns she told was that six weeks before the war she had crossed to the United States on a tramp steamer. For the three weeks of the trip she had not dared to come on deck lest the men should penetrate her disguise and know that she was not a boy as she was dressed to be. She did not say where she landed, but said that she had got into trouble in Buffalo on Fatherland Day. She had crossed to Europe six times since she first came to America, she said.

It is consistent with Louisa Markesfeldt in these moods that it should have been she who dropped the following letter in Berlin, meaning it to be picked up:

"The S. S. T. is doomed. Still getting alle changes of W. T. Same Eng. dog does it for money: If they put away it would help them: yet hope not. I pass as Eng: I look the dictionary often in und grammar when writing.

I teare Before Sunday W. M. will bring any message.

The word is Deros (written in Greek letters).

The Greek word at the end is typical of her. The writing, the punctuation, and the spelling were almost certainly feigned. The man who saw the letter dropped by a girl could give no further description of her than that she carried parcels. It may not have been Louisa Markesfeldt who dropped the letter, but it is more unlikely still that there is another in the city crazy enough to carry and to drop such an epistle.

### Did No Spying.

As for spying, Louisa Markesfeldt did none in Berlin—that is unless she could do it without writing or receiving letters, without going out at night, without time to go out in the daytime if she had anywhere to go, which she had not, without friends, without meeting any mysterious person, or in fact any one not accountable for by her petty occupations, without the aid of the Berlin Germans who would do nothing for her, without leaving the city and without money. The Daily News could find absolutely no trace of anything not attributable to mere foolishness in the actions of a girl who for six months was the gossip of the town and under the eager suspicion of all as the German Girl Spy.