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THE MAN OF MYSTERY.

One bright day in the winter of 1802 a gorgeous chariot drew up before the principal inn of Heidelberg. It was drawn by four prancing steeds, which wore silver-mounted harness, and the coach itself was lavishly decorated with expensive curlicues. From this vehicle there presently stepped forth a man of stately and commanding appearance, a lady of queenly bearing, and three small children, the party being followed by a female servant.

There wasn't much doing at Heidelberg just then, and the coming of this princely stranger created a sensation. There was much coming and going of kings and princes in those days, and it was the general belief of the town people that the stranger belonged to some royal house. There was some disappointment when Herr Kinkel, who made vinegar in large quantities, announced that the stranger, Herr Grandisson, was a merchant from Denmark, and had talked with him about buying a large shipment of his product.

The days went by and Herr Grandisson and his family remained at the inn, while the herr himself made the acquaintance of the leading people of the vicinage. He was a most charming man, highly educated and accomplished, and of such stately manners that people felt themselves honored when he paused to converse with them. It soon became known that if he wasn't a prince of a royal house, he at least was a prince among merchants. He had warehouses in many lands, and ships on almost every sea. There was great satisfaction in Heidelberg when Herr Grandisson announced that he had concluded to remain there indefinitely. He had important interests in Germany, and

were as depressed as the business men. Grandisson was the life and soul of society, and with his departure the bottom dropped out of everything.

Imagine, then, the happiness that prevailed in Heidelberg when, in 1810, another gorgeous equipage drew up before the inn, and the great merchant, with his wife and family, descended from it! The whole town gathered around him and cried "Wie geht's?" and the leading business men embraced each other and wept for pure joy. Herr Grandisson was moved to tears by the warmth of his reception. He had come to stay this time, he said. His heart had been aching for Heidelberg wherever he roamed. He had made up his mind to establish a vine and fig tree among his good friends, even if his hat were shot full of holes every time he went to the post office.

His wife, dignified and beautiful, was less enthusiastic, but she seemed pleased to get back. The children had grown into fine young springalds, and the herr's first action was to engage a learned professor to act as their tutor. The family secured another fine house, and settled down to the familiar life. Grandisson's popularity in the town increased. He was so free with his money, and he had such cogles of it; he was such a good talker, and knew so many amusing stories; he was so deep in great commercial affairs, and so thoroughly posted on all matters touching the wars, that his company was a delight to everybody.

As in other days, he made occasional trips from town, and he never took anybody into his confidence as to the nature of those trips. It was assumed that he was looking after his business interests.

Thus things moved along, and Grandisson had become a town institution, pointed to with pride, and it seemed probable that he would live to a green old age and die at last covered with honors.

But one day the learned professor who was teaching the children asked for a few private words with Frau Grandisson.

"Your husband is away on one of his business trips?" he inquired, when they were alone.

"Yes," she replied, and her eyes expressed anxiety; "why do you ask?"

"I have a friend who is connected with the secret service," said the professor, "and he asked me so many questions about your husband this morning, and about when he is expected back, that I thought it best to give you a warning."

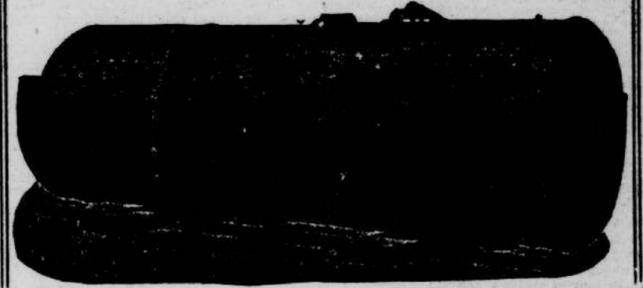
Greatly agitated, the frau dismissed the professor and at once wrote a letter which she mailed in great haste. The letter was opened by the authorities in the post office, and, by reason of the contents, they were enabled to trace down and arrest Herr Grandisson in Berlin, where he was living in splendor at the Crown Prince hotel. That dignified, imposing gentleman was cast into a cell in the evening.

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"I Have Been Shot at From Ambush," Said He, "and You Must Find and Punish the Misanthrope Who is Guilty."

wished to watch over them. Also, he was enamored of the town, which seemed an ideal place to educate his children. He rented a large and handsome dwelling and went to housekeeping in his usual princely way, with a retinue of servants, and fine horses and carriages in the stables, and everything that money could provide. Now and then he left the town for a week or two to look after his important business interests.

After being there some months, Grandisson approached the chief of police one day and showed him his hat, which had been pierced by a bullet.

"I have been shot at from ambush," said he, "and you must find and punish the misanthrope who is guilty, or I must leave this town."

Needless to say, the chief of police and all his underlings ruined their suspenders trying to run down the loathsome individual who had shot the great man's hat. Most of the townspeople went sleuthing, to help the police, and the neighborhood of Heidelberg was full of false whiskers and dark lanterns, but all in vain. Not a clew could be discovered. The leading business men, the wheelhorses of commerce, called upon the herr and begged him to remain notwithstanding, but the great merchant was firm. He didn't care a six-dollar about his life, he said, but his duty to others forced him to be cautious.

So he moved away, and for several years was heard of no more. But his memory remained green. The leading business men never ceased bewailing his departure. He was the only customer they ever had who threw money at the birds. And the social leaders

and in the morning he was found there dead. He had hanged himself from the doorknob with his handkerchief, and the immense will power of the man is indicated by the fact that he had to hold his feet up from the floor in order to make the suicide a success.

Who was he? The greatest and most spectacular robber of the time. For twenty-five years he had been robbing mail coaches, residences, post offices and all sorts of depositories of money, and with such wonderful skill that suspicion was never directed toward him until the close of his career, when accident led to his undoing. He was so magnificent, so splendid, that it seemed idiocy to accuse him of robbery, even when he had been the sole passenger in a mail coach which was despoiled of a large number of thalers.

Heidelberg went to bed with nervous prostration when the news came from Berlin. The leading business men simply couldn't believe it, until overwhelmed by the facts, Frau Grandisson was arrested, and made a written confession, and it is a disappointment to know that she proved a cheap sport. She tried to picture herself as a martyr of angelic qualities, who had been yoked with a monster. But, notwithstanding all his crimes, Grandisson retained the public sympathy. In fact, he was almost a hero; and the woman's story did her no good. She was sent to prison for two years, and it soon developed through police researches, that she was a detestable character, who was honored far beyond her deserts by her association with the magnificent Grandisson.

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