

THE TALL MAN.

CHAPTER IX.—CONTINUED. The private secretary advised the greatest caution, and, above all, silence in his proceedings. He treated Lane to be more attentive than ever in his military duties, and not, by either words or deed, to give cause for suspicion that he had any more than usual on his mind. He himself wrote letters to the magistrate of Frankfort-on-the-Main enclosing and attesting the letter written by Lane in his own proper name of Leo Librecht Hiebendahl, giving a brief, business-like account of his capture by the recruiting-party, and his present position as soldier in the King of Prussia's regiment of Grenadier Life-Guards. Lane also wrote letters to each of his most intimate friends and acquaintances in Frankfort—to the friends whose counterfeited letters had been the means of drawing him to Oppach on that fatal evening. Also he wrote more than one letter to his dear wife and to his mother for fear some accident might happen to delay or prevent his missive reaching its destination.

It was considered too dangerous to commit any of these letters to the post. The authorities were suspicious, and Lane had already tried many stratagems to send letters to Frankfort without success, and the private secretary naturally wished to keep out of the scrape, which would have had serious consequences if his share in the matter were discovered. King Frederick William did not like his grenadiers to be encouraged in schemes of liberty. It was necessary to find some trustworthy and careful messenger to go to Frankfort and take the letters in person. Bertram was the only person who could be absolutely depended upon for devotion and fidelity to his uncle. He was very young; Blitterman had destroyed his character in Frankfort, and there was a chance that he might not be believed even with credentials; but as he had found his way from Frankfort to Berlin once, he would have all the less difficulty in finding his way back. The private secretary saw him and talked to him. "The lad is honest," said he, "and that is the first quality in all undertakings; nothing will supply its place; he is devoted to his uncle, and he is reasonably intelligent, but his nature is very soft and credulous, and his very zeal in the cause makes me fear that he will be led into some mistake, for that scoundrel Blitterman is clever and unscrupulous, and will be fighting for more than his life if he once gets a hint of Bertram's mission; he is capable of getting him put into prison on the old story of theft; that it was a pure invention of his malice will make no difference. Bertram must be well cautioned and put upon his guard. I should recommend him to seek the magistrates and to give his letters to them, and beg them to act. I confess I have no faith in his power, unaided, to obtain an interview with Madame Librecht Hiebendahl, and he will want help to circumvent such a cunning villain as Blitterman."

Bertram was delighted with the mission and sanguine as to success. Blitterman was his own enemy as well as his uncle's. The consent of Bertram's master to transfer him to the service of the private secretary was easily obtained, and as soon as it was prudent, Bertram, well provided with money and instructions, started on his journey for Frankfort. "You have done your best, dear friend, all that was possible," said Madame Kruger to Lane, when next she saw him, "and now you must leave the hands are the issues of life." Poor Lane tried very hard to keep his mind calm, but this hope was more trying than any; even his former state of despair. That Blitterman should wish to marry his Agnes was the idea that stung him almost to madness, and that he might persuade her to consent under the idea that it would be for the good of her children, made the feat a impossibility. Strangely enough, the routine of his military duties was his great resource; the unchanging regularity and the minute detail of every day and hour occupied his mind in spite of himself and gave him constant employment. It was when with his pupils, with his sympathizing friends, Herr Kruger and his wife, that the fears and hopes of his position became almost intolerable.—His pupils found him changed and preoccupied, and their walks and excursions were not nearly so entertaining as formerly, but still they liked to go out with the "good big soldier," as they affectionately called him; for though now silent and absorbed, he was always kind and gentle. One evening he was returning with them from a somewhat longer excursion than usual, and to shorten the return home they went over a bridge leading to the Berlin water-mills, which are built beside the Spree. Absorbed in thoughts as to how far Bertram was likely to have proceeded on his journey, Lane followed the boys. A sharp roused him; he looked up and around; a head and two arms, which rose out of the river on the side of the mill-stream, told what had happened. In an instant Lane had sprung into the stream and succeeded in catching hold of the boy in his strong grasp. It required the exercise of all his strength and skill to avoid being drawn by the stream among the crushing mill-wheels. At last he succeeded in reaching a strong wooden post, which he grasped with his disengaged arm until assistance should come. When he had time to look at the boy, who was clinging convulsively to him, he saw that it was Deter, the son of the gentleman-in-waiting. The boy was alive, and beyond the fright and the immersion, had sustained no injury. The cries of the other boys brought out all the people in the neighborhood, and Lane and the boy whom he had saved were soon rescued from all further danger. Deter was carried to the nearest mill and put into a warm bed, whilst a messenger was sent to his mother.

Deter opened his large black eyes and held out his hand to Lane, who was surprised to see him already surrounded by Agnes, to whom his wife—who could tell the threats and forebodings of ruin to the children with which Blitterman might have enforced his persuasions? Agnes was so young, so helpless, and isolated from her friends. He never for an instant blamed his wife; he understood her position, though, alas! it was far more painful and difficult than he imagined, for he did not

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