

Murano for hundreds of years; it was antichico—antichissimo, as the signor could see for himself. It was of the best period of the art. That Shylock would guarantee. How came it into his possession? By the greatest good fortune. It was taken from Murano during the troubles after the fall of the Republic in the time of Napoleon. It had gone finally into the hands of a certain count, who, very luckily, was poor. Conte che non conta, non conta niente. So Shylock had been enabled to buy it. It had been the desire of his heart for years to own so fine an object.

"How much do you want for it?" asked John Manning.

Shylock scented from afar the battle of bargaining, dear in Italy to both buyer and seller. He gave a keen look at both the Inglesi, and took up the glass affectionately, as though he could not bear to part with it. Jessica interpreted Shylock had intended that goblet for his own private collection, but the frank and generous manner of their excellencies had overcome him, and he would let them have it for five hundred florins.

"Five hundred florins! Phew!" whistled Larry, astonished in spite of his initiation into the mysteries of Italian bargaining. "Well, if you were to ask me the Shakespearean conundrum, Hath not a Jew eyes? I shouldn't give it up; I should say he has eyes—for the main chance."

"Five hundred florins," said John Manning. "Very well. I'll take it."

Shylock's astonishment at getting four times what he would have taken was equalled only by his regret that he had not asked twice as much.

"Can you pack it so that I can take it to New York safely?"

"Sicuro, signor," and Shylock agreed to have the precious object boxed with all possible care and dispatched, and delivered at the hotel that afternoon.

"Servo suo!" said Jessica, as they stood at the door.

"Bon di Patron!" responded Larry in Venetian fashion; then as the door closed behind them he said to John Manning, "Seems to me you were in a hurry! You could have had that glass for half the money."

"Perhaps I could," was Manning's quiet reply, "but I was eager to get it back at once."

"Get it back! Why, it wasn't stolen from you, was it? I never did suppose he came by it honestly."

"It was not stolen from me personally, but it belonged to my family. It was made for Giovanni Manin, who fled from Venice to Amsterdam three hundred odd years ago. His grandson and namesake left Amsterdam for New Amsterdam half a century later. And when the English changed New Amsterdam into New York, Jan Manin became John Manning—and I am his direct descendant, and the first of my blood to return to Venice to get the goblet Giovanni Manin ordered and left behind."

"Well, I'm blessed!" said Larry, pensively.

"And now," continued John Manning as they took their seats in the gondola, "tell the man to go to the church where the picture of Mary Magdalen is. I want a good look at that woman!"

In the evening, as John Manning sat in a little cafe under the arcades of the Piazza San Marco, sipping a tiny cup of black coffee, Larry entered with a rush of righteous indignation.

"What's the matter, Larry?" was John Manning's calm query.

"There's the devil to pay at home. South Carolina has fired on the flag at Sumter."

Three weeks later Colonel Manning was assigned to duty drilling the raw recruits soon to be the Army of the Potomac.

## II.

IN THE NEW WORLD.

In the month of February, 1864, a chance newspaper paragraph informed whom it may concern that Major Laurence Laughton, having three weeks' leave of absence from his regiment, was at the Astor House. In consequence of this advertisement of his whereabouts, Major Laughton received many cheerful circulars and letters, in most of which his attention was claimed for the artificial limb made by the advertiser. He also received a letter from Colonel John Manning, urgently bidding him to come out for a day at least to his little place on the Hudson, where he was lying sick, and, as he feared, sick unto death. On the receipt of this Larry cut short a promising flirtation with a war-widow who sat next him at table, and took the first train up the river. It was a bleak day, and there was at least a foot of snow on the ground, as hard and as dry as though it had clean forgot that it was made of water. As Larry left the little station, to which the train had slowly struggled at last, an hour behind time, the wind sprang up again and began to moan around his feet and to sting his face with icy shot; and as he trudged across the desolate path which led to Manning's lonely house, he discovered that rude Boreas could be as keen a sharp-shooter as any in the rifle-pits around Richmond. A hard walk uphill for a quarter of an hour brought him to the brow of the cliff on which stood the forlorn and wind swept house where John Manning lay. An unkempt and hideous old crone as black as night opened the door for him. He left in the hall his hat and overcoat and a little square box he had brought in his hand; and then he followed the ebony lad upstairs to Colonel Manning's room. Here at the door she left him, after giving a sharp knock. A weak voice, "Come in!"

Laurence Laughton entered the room with a quick step, but the light hearted words with which he had meant to encourage his friend died on his lips as soon as he saw how grievously that friend had changed. John Manning had faded to a shadow of his former self; the light of his eyes was quenched, and all the spirit within him seemed broken; the fine, sensitive, noble face lay white against the pillow, looking weary and wan and hopeless. The effort to greet his friend exhausted him and brought on a hard cough, and he pressed his hand to his breast as though some hidden malady were gnawing and burning within.

"Well, John," said Larry, as he took a seat by the bedside, "why didn't you let me know before now that you were laid up? I could have got away a month ago."

"Time enough yet," said John Manning slowly: "time enough yet. I shall not die for another week, I fear."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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