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An American Surgeon

He Was Needed Because He Would Not Tell

By HORACE BRADFORD

I am a surgeon, and my home is in Florence, Italy. When a young man I studied at a college of physicians and surgeons in my native country, America, but, possessing a taste for art, concluded to change my profession. Coming here to Florence, I studied art for awhile, but soon saw that I did not possess the talent necessary to make an artist. Having fallen in love with this delightful city, I remained, hanging out my shingle as a surgeon.

One night I attended a ball at the Pitti palace. It was my first appearance among the aristocracy of Florence, and I was much interested in watching the people there, few of whom I had ever seen. A young girl with a gentleman attendant on each side of her walked by me. The appearance of the three told a story. The man on her left was young, handsome, in every way attractive. He on her right was past middle age and disagreeable looking as the other was engaging. As they passed me he gave the younger man a malignant look. The girl appeared to be much troubled. It was plain that her heart was with the man on her left, that she was constrained to choose the man on her right and that the two men hated each other on her account.

"Everywhere," I remarked to myself, "the stream of life is troubled. To be rich, to be prominent, does not render one immune from that which is disagreeable. Happy love has evidently come to this young girl, to be interfered with by one who, judging from her expression, has some claim upon her. How I should like to know the story!"

As I thought the last words I little dreamed that within a few hours a climax would come in the drama being enacted by these three persons and that I would come upon the stage for a minor part. When I left the palace I went directly to my rooms and to bed. An hour later I was awakened from a sound sleep by a violent knocking. I arose, slipped on a gown and opened the door. Two gentlemen in evening dress stepped into the room.

"You are the American surgeon, I believe?" said one.

"At your service," I replied.

"You are wanted to attend a man dangerously wounded," said the other. "You are chosen partly on account of your standing in your profession, but principally because you are not one of our circle. We do not like our affairs to be known. I must ask you to permit me to blindfold you."

I objected to this, but one of the men put his hand to his hip pocket and drew forth a small pistol with mother-of-pearl mountings, while the other produced a stiletto. I picked up my bag of instruments and suffered them to tie a handkerchief about my eyes. They led me out to the sidewalk, told me to raise my foot, and I stepped into a carriage.

"Drive a roundabout way," I heard one of the gentlemen say.

"No," interposed the other. "He may bleed to death. We must go as quickly as possible."

There was no need to make turns, for I had no idea where they were taking me. In what I supposed to be ten minutes the carriage stopped. I was helped out and soon by the increased warmth of the air felt myself to be in a building. Then I mounted steps, and at last the bandage was taken off my eyes. I was standing beside a bed on which lay—mirabile dictu—the young man I had seen walking on the left of the girl at the Pitti. I knew too well the danger of showing any sign of recognition.

"Signor Dottore," he said with a feeble voice, "I have been stabbed on the left side—here," uncovering. "It is near the heart."

It was near the heart, but had fortunately just escaped that organ. After an examination I assured the patient that if he kept perfectly quiet till the wound should heal he would recover. But I thought that, considering its close proximity to a vital organ, a surgeon should remain with him until a healing should be established.

"Then," said one of the men who had brought me, "you must remain. We do not care that two surgeons should be introduced here just now."

"But my practice—my patients?"

"All damages to your practice shall be liberally paid for."

I made a virtue of necessity and assented.

Meanwhile I had bandaged the cut and when I had finished turned and looked about me. I was in one of those



old palaces, as they are called in Florence, belonging to some influential family. The furniture, at least some of it, must have been several hundred years old. The bed on which the wounded man lay was canopied. On the walls were paintings, some of which I recognized as masterpieces of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. There was no one in the room except the two men who brought me and the patient. I directed that a large lounge of antique pattern should be made comfortable for me to sleep on, as it would be best for me to be very near the patient. Then the men who had brought me left, one of them first saying to me:

"Signor Dottore, we are very glad to hear you say that the patient has so good a chance for his life. When you leave here be discreet and all will be well with you, but if you talk—well, all I have to say is you will not talk very long."

I remained a week at the palace, the name of which I did not know. Indeed, I was not permitted to leave the room of the patient, my meals all being served there. My mail was brought me, and it was amusing for the first day or two to read the messages of my patients with reference to my sudden disappearance. Then I asked those who had kidnapped me to leave word at my apartments that I had been called to Siena on a very important case. This had the effect of quieting those who sought me.

My patient turned out to be as engaging a man as I had deemed him to be when he passed me in the Pitti palace.

"Your effort," I said to him one day, "to keep your drama—it came very near being a tragedy—from me would possibly have been successful had it not been that I was at the ball at the Pitti palace the night you were stabbed. I saw you pass me with the man who stabbed you and the lady for whom you were stabbed. So you see it would be safer for you to tell me the whole story, since I have a part of it, I pledging myself to secrecy, rather than to permit me to go away with what I already have unpledged."

He was not only very much astonished, but saw the reasonableness of what I said.

"I did not notice you," he replied, "at the ball and supposed that you had no position in court society. An Italian surgeon would have been unavailable for us. We are all so interlarded socially, those below constantly watching those above and all watching one another, that we dare not trust any one of our own number. You, as an American, are not mixed in our jealousies, our disputes, our—"

"Assassinations."

"You are wrong there. There are no assassinations in modern Italy. I fought with the Duke—But I will tell you the story and have every confidence that you will not reveal it."

"I am Count Baradini, and my ancestors have lived in this palace since the twelfth century. The man you saw on the other side of the signorina at the ball was the Duke of Abolino, a relative of the king. The signorina herself is the daughter of the Countess Francocci, an old family that sprang up under the influence of Lorenzo de' Medici, commonly called Lorenzo the Magnificent. Signorina Bianca Francocci and myself have been lovers ever since I was sixteen and she fourteen years old. Upon her entrance into society lately on her eighteenth birthday the duke saw her and became desirous of possessing her. He is a widower, very rich and has great influence with the king. Soon after seeing Signorina Bianca he made a formal application for her hand. Her mother—her father is dead—urged her to accept what is to be considered in a worldly point of view a better position than I could give her. To be a duchess and rich is higher in the worldly scale than to be a countess and with no possessions except this old palace. As for Bianca, her heart is all mine, as mine is hers, and if left to her own will she would refuse the duke to marry me. Indeed, rather than wed with him she declares

she will go into a convent."

"The duke was expecting to have his own way in the matter when at the recent ball at the Pitti he discovered that I was his rival. I was with Signorina Bianca a few minutes before we passed you, when the duke joined her and by a look bade me give way to him. I asked the lady to go with me into another apartment. She assented, whereupon the duke went with us. On reaching the other room Bianca showed the duke so plainly that his presence was not desirable that he left us, giving me a malignant look as he did so that plainly meant 'I am a man of too much importance to be interfered with by such as you.'"

"On leaving the palace the duke, who took occasion to go out at the same time as I, jostled me. Seeing that I must have it out with him, I sent him a challenge."

"Just at present the king would be furious if he knew that members of the nobility to whom he looks for support, especially his relative, had fought a duel. If I were known to have sent a challenge to the Duke of Abolino I should in some way be made to suffer. I met him within an hour after we left the Pitti; but, realizing my position, I did not dare even pink him. He came very near killing me, as you see, and I doubt not will be disappointed if I recover."

"The duke and my second joined in conference as to how to keep the matter a secret and decided to call upon you to attend me."

"There you have the story so far as it has been enacted."

The balance of the tale I learned from Count Baradini after he had recovered. Signorina Bianca was commanded by her mother to marry the duke, and the king sent a message to say that he would be pleased at a match between her and his well-beloved cousin. Despite these commands and requests the girl flatly refused to marry any one but the man she loved, and when those who were conspiring against her found it impossible to move her they desisted, and finally her mother gave a reluctant consent that she should marry the count.

When the wedding came off I was present and had a pleasant chat with the bride about her husband's wounding, of which she had been kept in ignorance till the affair had blown over. So long as I remained in Florence I was welcome at the palace of Count and Countess Baradini.

A Remedy for Earache.—To have the earache is to endure torture. The ear is a delicate organ and few care to deal with it, considering it work for the doctor. Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil offers a simple remedy. A few drops on a piece of lint or medicated cotton and placed in the ear will work wonders in relieving pain.

Blow the Steam Aside.

The wise woman sent a sudden vigorous puff of breath at the jet of steam rising from the copper teakettle she was tilting, repeated it hastily as she filled the blue teapot and set the kettle back on the stove with a nod of triumph. "That trick has saved me many a scalded hand," she asserted. "Whether I read it or was told it I am not sure, but until I tried it I was always getting most painful little burns. Steam is so easily blown aside if you have the presence of mind to remember it that you can easily keep it from reaching your hand until you can set down the kettle or pot. Don't forget it next time the lid slips or the steam comes unexpectedly from the kettle spout. You will bless me for the hint."—New York Tribune.

An Offensive Cravat.

A man once called upon Whistler with a letter of introduction, and an amusing scene followed arising out of the fact that the visitor was wearing a red necktie. Whistler declared it interfered with the color scheme of his room, and "put him off" a picture he was painting in quite a different "key." Finally he obliged him to take off the offending cravat before he would condescend to exchange another word with him.

Faulty in His Diagnosis.

Mrs. Malaprop—Young Sharp will have to apologize to me before I speak to him again.

Miss Interest—Did he insult you?

Mrs. Malaprop—Did he? The last time I met him I told him that my uncle had locomotor ataxia, and he asked me if he whistled at crossings.—Stray Stories.

CASTORIA

For Infants and Children

In Use For Over 30 Years

Always bears the Signature of

W. L. MARSHALL

Using the principal of reinforced concrete construction in the making of statutory models, a New York sculptress builds them of wire netting and coats them with plaster with a brush.

Princes Marv of England receives 30,000 a year from the government.

In The Spring

Now is the time to bring to your aid Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery (in tablet or liquid form). This wonderful remedy helps to restore stomach to its natural health and strength and to secure proper flow of the digestive juices, a good appetite and full digestion of the food you eat. It invigorates the liver, regulates the bowels and purifies and enriches the blood.

Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery is absolutely free from alcohol and injurious drugs. Its ingredients printed on wrapper. You can be certain it is a true blood-maker, tissue-builder, and a restorative nerve tonic and that it will produce no end after-effect. Thousands—probably many of your neighbors—are willing to recommend the "Discovery" because it has made them stronger in body, brain, nerve. Buy it in liquid or tablets; or send Dr. Pierce, Invalids' Hotel, Buffalo, N. Y., ten cents for trial package.

A MOTHER'S ADVICE.

Prince Rupert, B. C.—"I take great pleasure in announcing to you my heart-

felt thanks for the benefit our boy Arthur, aged seven, has derived from your medicine 'Golden Medical Discovery.' He is a different boy altogether after taking five bottles. His tongue used to be coated and his stomach and bowels always out of order, but Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery has cured him. We will recommend your medicine to whomsoever we can as we think there is none better."—Mrs. Otto NELSON, 536 2d Ave.

Effective Danger Sign.
A contractor who has observed that pedestrians pay little attention to signs has evolved a new plan to guard against accidents to "innocent bystanders." A steamed shovel working many feet below the surface of the street attracts scores of persons daily. They stop, lean over the board railing around the excavation and stare. Sometimes the crowd gets so large that there is danger of the railing giving way and plunging them into the excavation. "Danger" signs don't worry them; hence the new idea of the contractor. He has smeared the top of the railing with tar and grease. Now persons who never shudder at the "danger" sign flee from the grease menace as if it were poison.—Philadelphia North American.

Fanny Crosby's Memory.
The blind hymn writer, Fanny Crosby, who immortalized herself with "Safe In the Arms of Jesus," was capable of the most amazing exhibitions of "inability to forget."

On one occasion she contracted to supply a publisher with ninety hymns. She composed forty-five of these, simply storing them in her memory without committing a word to paper. When she had finished the forty-fifth she began to dictate them, going right through without a pause. She then did the same with the other forty-five.—London Answers.

To Prevent Draft.
To keep windows open and yet feel no draft while sleeping take an old sheet or a piece of cloth as long as the bed and about a yard and a half wide. Fasten a loop of tape or elastic to the corners of one lengthwise edge, loop over the posts at the head and foot of bed on side next to the window and you have a screen that will keep off all draft, but still give plenty of fresh air.

Ma Enters the Game.
"What do you want, ma?"

"You must go to the grocery store at once and get a pound of butter."

"But, ma, we're playin' war, an' I'm leavin' our army against the enemy."

"Never mind. Play the commissary department has been shot to pieces and go after that butter."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

Forever at Him.
Newitt—Funny! I always associate your wife with a certain episode in my own life. There's just one thing she always reminds me of—Henpeck—I wish I could say that. There's lots of things she always reminds me of.—Philadelphia Press.

Impedimenta.
Floorwalker.—Good morning. You wish to do some shopping, I presume.

Bride (with hubby).—Yes. Floorwalker.—Step up to the smoking room and the boy there will give you a check for your husband.—Exchange.

A grateful dog is better than an ungrateful man.—Saadi.

All mothers can put away anxiety regarding their suffering children when they have Mother Graves' Worm Exterminator to give relief. Its effects are sure and lasting.

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