

HONOUR WITHOUT RENOWN

BY MRS. INNES BROWN

Author of "Three Daughters of the United Kingdom"

CHAPTER XXII—CONTINUED

When Father Basil rose from his knees it was with the dew of a sweet submission filling his heart, and strongly resolved to endure without a murmur the decrees of Heaven. His eyes were dry, he spoke little; but Ma Seer read his heart aright, and knew what he was suffering.

Dr. Arno wandered restlessly in and out of the room. Inwardly he was exceedingly distressed, outwardly he was annoyed and irritable. He had not succeeded in his charitable efforts to rescue Manfred, and his brave old father without suffering on his own part. His usually ruddy face was scorched and burnt, and his hands caused him considerable pain; but to do the kind man justice, it was not so much his own sufferings which distressed and annoyed him as those of the poor little nun before him.

"Well, Father," he inquired in a soft, unsteady tone, "how did you find the miserable Englishman—the cause of all our trouble? Just as though there were not enough sorrow and grief to weep over at times like these! Did you make anything out of the creature, or was he as sullen and uncommunicative as ever?"

Not pausing for a reply, he stooped over the bed; and taking up carefully and tenderly one of the injured little hands, now enveloped in cotton wool, he continued, with tears in his eyes:

"This is one of the very saddest things I have ever known; and yet I have watched weak, innocent babes suffer and die, and seen strong men fall at their posts. But this one—physically so sensitive and delicate—had the bravest, most unselfish heart I have ever known; and to think that a precious life like hers should be sacrificed for that useless, stupid countryman of yours! Bah! it is unmanly when I think of it. Surely she has friends in your cold-hearted country who will mourn her death?"

"But she is not dead yet!" interrupted her brother hastily. "Nor is she in danger of it, surely?"

"No—tensely—but except for me she might have been. I tell you both, that had you seen what I witnessed it would have wrung your hearts with such pity and admiration that to your dying day you would never have forgotten it. I myself caught but a glimpse of her now and again, as driven by the wind the three tapers of fire were lifted upwards, sideways, and seemingly inwards upon her, while she knelt upon the threshold, her brave form enveloped and framed as with a canopy of purgatorial flames, and striving to force before her to a place of safety that heavy burden of helpless humanity. I saw her sensitive body shrink, in natural dread and terror, from the cruel flames; but I saw also the spirit flame, compelled by her noble grief, do its part. When at last the opportunity offered, and the unconscious burden safely reached me, I saw her fall with outstretched hands, as though overcome with exhaustion, pleading at last for help on her own account. Oh, Father!" said the old man, as he leaned against the bed for support, which shook with his sobs, "it is barely three months since I buried my only daughter; and in this sad vision I seemed to see her dear face, and to hear her sweet voice calling to me from out the purgatorial flames. O, God help me, it was a trying ordeal!"

"Doctor," said Father Basil, coming forward and placing his hand with a filial caress upon the old man's shoulder, "may God bless you for ever for this generous act. I little knew that we owed all this to you. From henceforth the name of Dr. Arno shall be uttered with lifelong gratitude and affection by her family. And deem us not all so base and unfeeling that we cannot value at its proper worth what you have done today."

"Nay, Father," protested the doctor, "Heaven knows I seek no thanks for aught I have done for her. Bear with an old man who has seen the roughest and worst side of life if he breaks down at the sight of such courage and devotion. Perhaps the undue excitement, or the privilege of being able to rescue her, has unnerved me. If only I dared examine the internal injury she has sustained from the falling debris, I should feel much more satisfied; but, as present, she cannot endure to be moved or even touched, and I must wait as patiently as possible until she regains a little strength. Poor child! See, she moves! Speak to her, Father. There is a chance that she may be just conscious enough to understand you."

Father Basil knelt down by the bedside and bent over her saying: "I—your brother Percy—am close beside you, Berlie. Speak, dear, and tell me if there is anything you wish for."

He knows all. . . . Save poor Leadbitter! Her mind suddenly became clouded again, and she spoke no more.

"Well, what does she say, Father?" impatiently asked the doctor. "Can you understand her meaning?"

"Hardly," responded her brother, as he rose slowly to his feet, astonished and bewildered by his sister's words. He stood with one arm thrown across his chest supporting the other, his hand of which clasped his brow, while his eyes looked into vacancy. "Edmund Leadbitter, the supposed forger or felon," he muttered; "once the friend of my brother, who, by the way, always swore he was unjustly condemned. It is possible that this strange Englishman can prove poor Leadbitter's innocence? If so, even as my sister bids me, I must hasten to his side at once, and leave no stone unturned to aid him and restore to him his honour and good name."

"Dr. Arno," he said suddenly, looking up and smiling, "it is imperative that I return to the sick man at once. There is more in this than meets the eye. There is a mystery somewhere, and the sooner I am able to solve it the better. Indeed, I begin to think that an innocent man has been condemned and made to suffer wrongfully; and, what is more, I believe that my sister here has by some means come to a knowledge of the fact, for the sick Englishman seems to hold the key of the secret. So, I can now understand why she uses such strenuous efforts to save him. Can you oblige me with the name of some notary who would kindly accompany me?"

"That I will, right gladly," replied the doctor, interested even in spite of his dislike to Manfred. "Take this card"—across which he hastily wrote something in pencil—"and call at the address which I have given you. You will find Monsieur Camard not only a very able and clever practitioner, but a man who understands and speaks your language like a native; moreover, his heart is in the right place. Au revoir, Father. Make all possible speed, for I fear there is but little time to lose."

Father Basil needed not a second bidding. The words of his sister had stirred a strange chord in his heart. He felt instinctively that she had done her utmost—perhaps had given even her life—that wrong might be righted, and it remained for him now to pick up the tangled threads and complete her task. Turning, he cast one fond look, fraught with grave tenderness and anxiety, towards the unconscious sufferer, then whispering earnestly his last instructions to Ma Seer, seized his hat and left the convent.

CHAPTER XXIII

"It is well that life holds not many such days," he meditated, as he stepped into the open street. "The time has flown so rapidly that I know not even what hour of the day it is. Stay! that is surely the Angelus bell. Poor Paris, I marvel there is a soul left mindful to ring it."

Presently he drew forth the card which Dr. Arno had given him and scanned the address. It led him in the very opposite direction to that in which Manfred lay. If only a *fiacre* would pass that he might hail it and thus hasten his journey—for he was not very sure of his bearings.

"Tell Marie and Madge I want them," he said to the waiter, who shall come to you. Had it not all broken upon me so suddenly and unexpectedly, I should have thought of summoning them sooner. Thank God, here comes a vehicle of some sort," and he ran forward to meet it. Fortunately it was unoccupied. "Drive as quickly as you can to the Rue St. L.—and call at the first telegraph office that you pass by the way," he cried as he sprang in. He flung the door to, and sinking upon the seat laid his hat beside him. Passing his hands over his brow, he sought to reduce to order his startled and confused faculties.

The nearer they drove to the city the more thronged he found the unsettled streets. The panic and excitement of the previous night had left its obvious and terrible trace. Twelve hours ago, all around had been a frightful scene of carnage and excitement. Father Basil was too preoccupied with his own thoughts to pay much attention to what was or had been passing. His patience was almost exhausted as he realized how impossible it was for the lumbering vehicle, with its worn-out, jaded steed, to make speedy progress.

Frequently their course was interrupted by the necessity of turning into side streets in order to avoid obstructions in the shape of shattered barricades, beside which lay frequently the bodies of dead Communists deserted by their comrades. It was, therefore, no small relief to him when the *fiacre* at last drew up at a post-office. He could at least despatch telegrams to his brother and Lady O'Hagan. He had no time to be delicate in his wording of them; they were brief, but to the point.

He found the notary just about to enter his private carriage and drive towards the very quarter in which Manfred lay. Father Basil accosted him eagerly, presenting to him Dr. Arno's card. The notary at once carriage and listened with grave and kind interest to his story as they drove along the boulevard. Father Basil's hopes and spirits rose as the invigorating breeze fanned his burning brow; for they were rushing now with all possible speed to the sick man's side. Dr. Arno had spoken

truly when he said that the notary had his heart in the right place; and one was almost as anxious and interested as the other by the time they reached the ruined house.

Manfred was lying awake and perfectly conscious as the two men entered the room. Looking up almost brightly, he stretched out his feeble arm towards Father Basil with a gesture of welcome, asking anxiously after Sister Marguerite.

"How is she, Father? Do not tell me that she is dead!" he gasped, when he received no immediate reply.

"She is not well enough to come and visit you herself," he answered guardedly; "but she has great confidence in your honor, and bade us hasten to your side in order to note down in the public interest all you have to relate to us."

"Yes, Father de Woodville, I understand very clearly what you mean; and, God helping me, I will keep you to her. Come nearer, both of you, so that you may hear and understand all that I have to tell. My name is Harold Manfred."

"Good heavens!" broke in Father Basil, in astonishment, as he gazed in wonder upon the wreck of humanity before him; "are you, then, poor Leadbitter's half brother?"

"Yes, I am he! I am also the accomplice of a scoundrel, who worked his ruin and ultimately cast him into a felon's cell."

Manfred continued his tale in as firm a tone as he could command, whilst the notary took down his depositions. Never seeking to justify or exonerate his own conduct, Manfred summoned all remaining strength of mind and body, and continued to unfold the whole of his base story, the main facts of which he had already related to Sister Marguerite. Having concluded, he heaved a deep sigh and exclaimed: "There! Make any use of this that you think fit; but I feel happier now than I have done since I was a little child. Only tell me speedily what course you purpose to pursue toward my brother?"

"It will be a matter of time," replied Monsieur Camard thoughtfully.

"But I have sworn to you that he is absolutely innocent. Thomas also swore on his death bed, and attested the fact in writing, that he himself tampered and altered the cheque, though at the time I knew it not."

"We believe you fully; but even so, his country, by whom he has judged and condemned, must equally be persuaded of his innocence."

"Oh, Edmund! and you have already waited so long! Promise me, on your word of honor," he implored in a trembling voice, addressing Monsieur Camard, "that you will hasten to your utmost the moment of his release, and never rest until it is accomplished."

appears now that it was fortunate his stay in Ireland was unavoidably lengthened by a day or two, thus preventing an unpleasant meeting under his own roof. As I was a friend of Sir Hugh Lonsdale and his own guest, it might have been a little awkward. However, having made that discovery in the Western Lodge, I felt glad to have the place as speedily as possible."

"It is altogether marvellous," pondered the priest, "and yet it is credible. Nevertheless, it still remains a fact that Lady de Woodville has not the slightest idea as to the identity of her quiet lodger. Only so late as February last we discussed the matter together, wondering who on earth she could be."

"You will find that I am right," sighed Manfred wearily, for he was suffering intensely. "The terrible headache of which I have been afflicted almost superhumanly, and now the reaction was fast setting in. Both men were startled by the painful pallor which was stealing over his features, and they welcomed with gratitude the advent of busy, florid Dr. Arno as, pausing with subdued curiosity as much as for want of breath, he burst open the door."

"Way, here you are! I have claimed; what a bump I have had for you!" he bawling quickly the ghostly look upon the sick man's face, he said: "Is everything concluded satisfactorily? He is bad, and probably will not last long."

"His signature to these papers is necessary," observed Monsieur Camard seriously. "Will you be good enough to sign these valuable documents for us, Mr. Manfred?"

"With all my heart, and would that I could assist in any other way to undo all the wrong I have done."

Supported in the arms of Father Basil, Manfred sat up and feebly penned his name. The letters grew firmer as he wrote, adding a line or two of bitter condemnation of his own conduct and of contrite sorrow for the base part he had played.

"You will show it to her," he pleaded, as white and exhausted, he sank back upon the pillow.

"I will tell her how nobly you have behaved, how gratefully you have acted, and how patiently and uncomplainingly you have borne your sufferings. Now, doctor, do see if you cannot afford him some relief."

"No, no! It is my foot that has caused me such intolerable pain. You can do nothing for it now, doctor. It will kill me, I know, and I do not seem to care how soon. But you will tell her, Father de Woodville, how faithfully I kept my vow, how very contrite I was at the end, and that with my dying breath I blessed God for the lessons of true Christian virtue that through her He had taught me."

"Indeed, I will tell her every thing," and Father Basil every thing close to the sick man, and taking a firm grip of his hand, continued: "I promise you faithfully that she shall know all—how brave, truthful, and patient you have been; and will she not thank God for it?"

"I know it, and she will pray for me too, if that can avail me anything."

experience had taught her the advantages of a cheerful breakfast table.

Philip Benton Brice was twenty four. He was born with a golden teaspoon in his baby mouth, and before he was ten he knew that the Brice family tree, as well as the family fortune, was in a highly flourishing condition. His mother and aunts quite often reminded him of his responsibility as a member of that aristocratic family. Responsibility didn't mean much to him in those happy days of boyhood, when he was acquiring on the college campus liteness and strength in his hard young body. It was only after a year in the gay society set of New York that the curious, intent look, afterward habitual and conspicuous, often possessed his beautiful dark eyes, those inscrutable eyes in the depths of which dawned little sparks of light. He was beginning to feel the urge, the god, of his career—only he wouldn't have called it by any such name. The young men and girls of his set seemed never to have enough of the glamor and glitter of the bright arc lights strung along Broadway like gleaming diamonds about the slim throat of a lovely woman. The excesses of the life of pleasure sickened Philip. The rough lips, the stenciled eyelash, the practiced smile, the boldness of youth, caused a revulsion in his heart. He longed to get away from it all, to do something worth while, to help make the world a little better place just because he had lived.

"Queer," you say? So said the young men who were drifting idly and without rudder down the stream to the "Port of Missing Men." So said the girls who, light and irresponsible as bubbles in champagne, could make no impression on Philip's head or his fortune.

His old professor at college, who knew the impulsive, lovable boy probably better than any one else, planted the tiny seed in Philip's soul that was later to bring forth the hundred-fold. He knew that Philip desired to explore life without fear and without resistance, as a child hunts for treasure in a strange room. He was talking to him one day about the fine art of personal service, of giving oneself to others, of not counting the cost of sacrifice. Praying that he might direct the strong force of Philip's nature into worthy channels, the old professor's eyes were filled with the yearning softness of deep sympathy as he spoke to the boy: "Life isn't what you get, but what you bring to it. What you have is nothing; what you do is only a little more; just being good is all that counts."

A question, ardent and quick, flew to Philip's lips and leaped in his eyes, but the man went on:

"It's entirely for you to determine what you become. Don't demand of life something for nothing. A man shall get only what he works for. The voice took on greater earnestness until it sounded clear and true like the notes on a silver bugle. "All that matters, Philip, is that you hold the torch in your hand. Don't let it go out."

"I'll not let it go out, sir," Philip declared from a full heart. "I promise you."

They shook hands, and the door closed as the boy left the room. Philip's eyes, under his eager young hands, was the door leading into the House of Happiness.

The tired city lay in the languid embrace of summer, like a little fretful child seeking rest and comfort and coolness in the hollow of its mother's arm. The rich had gone to fashionable resorts by sea and shore and mountain. The poor, as usual, panted and wiled and died under the cruel sun. Far away in California, at a fashionable hotel, the Brice family was making its annual summer drive on the society line. Before leaving, Philip's mother tried in vain to have him join them.

"I've made my decision, mother, and there's no time like the present for putting it to the test."

"You'll soon get tired of it," "Maybe so, but at least I'm doing my best."

The beautifully clear dark eyes, which could so easily fill with laughter, reflected the eagerness of his young soul. Suddenly his mother drew him to her. "Philip, my son," she said softly, and kissed him. For a brief dazzling second her eyes broke their way into Philip's heart. The two parted. Philip went to his room, packed his bag, put on his oldest suit, took the subway and in half an hour found himself in Little Italy. That is somewhat of a misnomer, as Poles and Rumanians, as well as Italians, swarmed in the dimly tenements and on the narrow, ill-smelling streets. Philip had chosen the "Alley" as being about the most dilapidated place in the section. After going through a dark, narrow tunnel he came on the small paved court of a back tenement. He looked a little downcast as he picked his way between the heaps of garbage and the awful litter of the place. Then up a rickety pair of wooden stairs whose railing was of wrensy, worn piece of wood held by only two or three rusty nails. Philip examined it. "This is a crime. I'd like to get my hands on the man who owns this place. That crazy banister is going to break very soon, and someone will be killed." Philip had not yet realized that a life more or less did not matter very much in Little Italy.

tones, which troubled somewhat, for visions of rant being raised floated through his mind. "Tomorrow maybe I bring you some name. My wife she has it on a little bit of paper. Here vera rich man. We pay our rent to him."

No more was said, but the question was still in Torrelli's beautiful, soft eyes as Philip stood on the dark and narrow landing. His own eyes looked extraordinarily glittering and cold water, so hard and glittering and steely were they in the half light. With the poignancy of a poisoned arrow came the realization that the incomes of many rich men came from sources such as these, and that the silken garments and costly furs and shimmering pearls that decked the beautiful iridescent butterflies fluttering about the flame of Broadway and made it brighter with their burning, were bought with the wasted, stunted, ugly lives of the poor.

Feeling along the panel of the nearest sagging door, Philip turned the handle and entered the room that was to be home to him for the next six months. It was low and dingy. Through the broken panes of the window the shy sunlight peeped in. Philip wondered if he could ever go back to that life, unthinking life after he had seen such glimpses of the other side as this. As a strong man wants food, so he wanted to lift the weight from these poor people who had from the first been kept down until they were almost submerged. He could not get the thought of that hanging rail from his mind. He arranged his things in order, and with the curious feeling of a man awakened from a long, dead sleep, began the life that caused his friends to call him queer.

Later, when they would meet him on the highways of the world, the truth would strike them that Philip had lived, whilst they had been satisfied with merely watching life go by. The details of his life will be another story. This is merely a little cross-section about the broken banister and the girl he met "down there."

Strange to say, if it had not been for the broken banister he would not have met the girl. Fate was weaving the silken chains that were drawing these two together, and a broken banister fitted quite admirably into the scheme.

The next day was Sunday, and Philip, on his way to Mass in the dark, cool chapel, stopped to pass the chapel of a girl came quickly down the stairs. Now, Philip had always smiled at every child he met, and each answered him as if there were a secret freemasonry between them. So he smiled at this girl, and she smiled, too, a very tiny smile, and passed on. When he entered the chapel a little form, vaguely familiar, knelt in front of him. He saw the face, and then he knew. It was the girl, and she was beautiful. Her eyes were dark, and so was her hair; her complexion was made up of sun and air and a very faint rose color. Her figure, in its simple blue suit, was the slight yet rounded form of young womanhood. Little golden specks of sunshine came strolling through the stained glass windows and danced on her dress and on her hair. Philip's hungry eyes looked at her. The girl must have read his thoughts, for a flush crept into her cheeks and her lashes fluttered. Somehow the day passed.

On Monday Torrelli met Philip at the foot of the stairs. "I got the name of the rich man," he said, handing him a square of dirty paper.

"All right," said Philip, and he looked to read the poorly written name. He didn't have time, for again the soft closing of the door made both men look up. All the light in that dark landing seemed to fall upon the girl as she stood hesitant at the top of the stairs. Philip caught his breath at the lovely picture she made. He knew then, in a sudden flash of vision, that his father was right. He had met the girl. Looking at her, he thought of budding flowers, of spring skies flecked with little ivory clouds, and of young sunlight on the trees. It was youth, eternal youth, calling, calling for its mate. The slight figure leaned against the broken banister. Then came a soft crunching sound as the decrepit support gave way, a frightened face, a swaying figure, a low cry for help, and at Philip's feet the girl lay bruised and broken. In an instant the hallway was alive with people. Philip lifted her in his arms.

Mingled with his fear, his anxiety, his hot anger at the accident, there was a thrill of joy in the closeness of her body. He carried her to Torrelli's room and laid her on the couch. Hardly had he hung up the receiver when the ambulance was clanging its way down the narrow street. Meanwhile Philip had made up his mind that no public hospital should shelter the girl. His own home was the proper place. When he rang the bell, the old servant who had been left in charge answered it, and her eyes grew wide with wonder as her young master, with the unconscious bardian in his arms, went up to his mother's room. It was only after several hours, when the light had come again to the lovely dark eyes, and the broken arm was bandaged, that Philip noticed a slight picking in the palm of his hand. On opening it he found the crushed paper, forgotten in all the excitement. A half uttered curse against the man whose carelessness had caused all the

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TORCH LIGHT

By Nancy Buckley in The Missionary

Philip Brice was queer; no question about it. In the opinion of his friends he would be a nighty fella fellow if he didn't have those foolish ideas about helping the poor, and personal service, and all that sort of thing. You see, in Philip's world a rich man left such things to his secretary, who would send an occasional check—very occasional—in most cases to some fashionable charity. The biblical injunction about giving in secret was not heeded. Not only did the right know what the left gave, but both came together to applaud. As for going among the poor, as Philip did, and living, or rather existing, with them in a little room in an impossible neighborhood, it was a thing unheard of.

His father and mother were discussing this much-beloved son one morning at breakfast over the second, but "not so good as the first," cup of coffee, Philip's decision to live for six months in one of the poorest sections of New York, so that he might see at first hand the poverty existing there, was the subject of the animated conversation.

"Philip was always queer," said his mother, sighing. She was thinking of her other sons, who had been quite content to take positions in their father's bank and who didn't bother themselves at all about the poor. "I guess he will get all sorts of germs in that filthy place. You know the poor have them so spaw."

Mr. Brice spoke as one having knowledge. She had brought up her three children in a germ-proof—and very often joy-proof—nursery, and therefore felt quite competent to discuss that aspect of the case.

Her husband didn't answer her; he was thinking of something more important. At last he spoke: "He'll probably marry some queer girl down there. That's part of the uplift business."

Mrs. Brice nodded wisely. She was not so competent a judge in this matter as in that of germs, having less knowledge of love, but years of