

His Italian Friend

A Peculiar Experience of an American in Rome

By E. A. MITCHEL

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In the Piazza Colonna at Rome is an Italian restaurant the principal part of which is on the sidewalk. A couple of hundred feet distant, in the center of the piazza, towers a column erected in the days of the ancient Romans. In the shadow of this column one afternoon sat two gentlemen, Giovanni Sforza and Albert Park, the former an Italian, the latter an American, as the names indicate.

Park purported to live in Chicago but had become fascinated with Rome and lived there most of the time. The Eternal City is not only attractive in itself, but from its historic associations, the ruins of its ancient edifices and the abundant curiosities constant being deposited in its museums. Park had become interested in Roman archaeology and had no eyes or ears except for Rome.

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"Bert," said Giovanni Sforza, "a friend of mine saw you when you were driving out on the Appian way the other day and has asked me to bring you to see her."

"I have no time to make visits," replied the other, sipping a glass of wine from a table before him.

"One would think that you are in your Chicago, where time is money, in stead of an Italian city, where time is pleasure. What have you to do?"

"Tomorrow I go out with an archaeologist to be present at the opening of some Etruscan graves 2,400 years old. Thursday I am to go down the Tiber to a point where a vessel some seven centuries ago, loaded with many Etruscan articles, was wrecked, and I expect to secure at least one amphora for myself. On Saturday—"

"Never mind Saturday. I am quite sure you will be free on Sunday, and I have made an appointment for you to visit the charmer who, I am quite sure, will give you a new object to absorb you."

"No be it, Giovanni. You have done so much for me since I have been in Rome that I cannot refuse you. It is true that time for you Italians is only for pleasure. I wonder how you all live. I have never seen you, my friend. Do a stroke of work. I do not believe you own any property from which to draw an income, and yet you always appear to be plentifully supplied with money."

"Never mind how I live, my dear fellow. We Italians have a knack of getting what we need without breaking down our health as the Americans do. Before I take you to call upon Signorina Poli I wish to caution you against revealing to her that I have told you of her request for bringing you."

"I would surely not be so maladroit as that," was the reply, and the two men, holding their wine, turned and hurried toward the Capitoline hill. Meeting on the way an officer of the carabinieri, Sforza exchanged a meaningful glance with him, which his companion did not notice.

A month after this meeting between the two friends they sat again over a glass of wine in the shadow of the Colonna column.

"Giovanni," said Park, "I am worried about this woman to whom you have introduced me. I can't make her out. Her name is Italian, and she speaks Italian beautifully with that melodious voice of hers, but I doubt if any Italian blood runs in her veins."

"What is that to you?"

"There was no reply to this, only a nervous fidgeting of the stem of Park's glass, and Sforza continued:

"When I introduced you to Signorina Poli you had no time to make visits, spending it all in archaeology. Now you have no time for archaeology, spending it all in visits. Moreover, your visits are made exclusively upon Signorina Poli."

Park went on fidgeting his glass for a time without reply, then said: "She has bewitched me."

"Indeed, that means you think of marrying her. That I would advise you not to do without learning more about her."

"How can I do that?"

"There is an adage, 'A woman is known by her clothes.' If you could get a sight of the Signorina Poli's wardrobe you would know all about her."

"But I can't go spying into her closets. Besides, what opportunity have I to do so?"

"As to any man's right to obtain a knowledge of one he suspects of deceiving him, I have no doubt; as to spying on a woman one suspects and whom one thinks of making a partner for life he who is squeamish is a fool. There is plenty of opportunity for you to gain access to your ladylove's wardrobe. You need only call when she is not at home, tell the servant you will wait for her and when left alone make the inspection. If there is nothing to be learned the doors will be left open to you; if there is much to be learned you will find them locked."

"You speak as one of experience in such matters. If I did not know you to be above such a profession I would think you were a detective."

Sforza smiled and said that the Italian race were used to chicanery. It had been in the blood ever since the days of Julius Caesar and had blossomed in the Borgias. "You Americans,"

he added, "we consider very stupid at anything involving duplicity. You tell a person everything and are surprised that he tells you nothing. But I had said, my dear Bert, that this high stand, this delicate sense of honor, is very fascinating to us whose ancestors were used to getting rid of those who stood in their way either by poison or by a stab in the back. Nevertheless, you would be a fool to put yourself in the hands of Signorina Poli without a better knowledge of her than you have."

"I will think the matter over," was Albert's reply, "and if I decide to act on your advice will let you know."

"Hither tell me if you discover any thing remarkable."

"Why do you wish to know?"

"I don't. Keep to yourself what you learn, if you like."

"There was not even an offended tone in the last remark. It simply expressed indifference."

Park fretted a long while upon playing a spy on the woman he loved. It seemed at times that he could not do it. He would see in her something he could not understand, and he would know his suspicion of her. At this she would tell him that they had her part. She had no mind to be continually suspected. That would end the matter temporarily, but only temporarily.

One day Park called upon Signorina Poli and found her not at home. He concluded to go in, wait for her, and if an opportunity occurred possibly he might put in practice Sforza's advice. He told the maid that he would remain awhile, possibly Signorina Poli would soon return.

The maid left him in the living room. A door leading to the bedrooms of the apartments stood open, and Park was tempted to make an exploration. He went into a room where there was a closet. He found the latter locked. Remembering Sforza's words about this, he peeped. Another door led to another room in the rear. This door, too, was locked. Park went back into the living room and in a few minutes called the maid and told her he would not wait longer.

The American had crossed the Rubicon and had entered the land of secret methods. He had become a spy on the woman he loved. Obtaining some skeleton keys, he watched for Signorina Poli to go out, entered her apartments in her absence and, unlocking both the doors that had barred his way, looked into the closet and the rear room.

He was thunderstruck. There were disguises of various kinds, including wig, spectacles and other paraphernalia, while on a dressing table stood articles for making up, such as are used by actors.

Could his love be an actress? What ever she was, he realized that she would be a dangerous person to take home to America as his wife. He had learned the first part of what he wished to know. For the second part, what these disguises meant, he would consult his friend Sforza. He found him in the rear room on the side walk in the afternoon.

"Well," said Albert when they met, "I have followed your advice."

"What did you find?" asked the other in an indifferent tone.

"Disguises."

"Did you find any fun?" asked Sforza, betraying some interest.

"Why yes; I noticed a fur coat."

"Any thin tropical wear?"

"No."

Sforza sipped his wine and said no more.

"What does it all mean?" asked Albert.

"How should I know? One thing is patent, the lady has deceived you or at least kept something from you in which she is engaged. You must not see her again."

Albert groaned.

"I must go," said Sforza, emptying his glass. "I will see you later."

"You have no explanation of what these disguises mean?"

"None whatever."

Albert sat for awhile where he was, then came to a sudden resolution. He would go to Signorina Poli, tell her what he knew and hear what she had to say. If her explanation was not satisfactory he would take the next vessel sailing from Naples or Genoa for America. Rising, he crossed the Corso and, after walking a short distance, entered a street leading to the Spanish steps. In this street were Signorina Poli's apartments. He was nearing them when he saw his lady in a blue emerge from the house, a carriage on each side of her. They took her to a carriage standing before the door and got in with Albert. He reached the house as the carriage rolled away, and one of the carabinieri, looking through the window, waved his hand to him.

Jean Valjean Didn't Fit in China.

The eloquent advocate, Maitre (then), once visited China with his cousin, Marcel Bing. When they found themselves at Sianfou, in the heart of the Celestial empire, they made the acquaintance of a certain fan, an under-erect, who prided himself on his profery attainments. He begged them to dine with him and served them a dish was a preserve of not another. In the course of the feast he apprised them that a beautiful French novel had just been translated into Chinese. "It is," he explained, "the history of a very honest brigand. He succors a poor unfortunate girl. He is the defender of the weak and he has much trouble to escape a gendarme who has sworn his destruction. Do you know this writer? He is called 'Igorio?'"

"Victor Hugo," corrected M. Gans, who with infinite perspicacity had comprehended that the novel "Les Miserables" was meant.

"Perhaps," said fan, "it may be that I do not pronounce well in China we call him Igorio. His romance is interesting, but it is a little discouraging. There never was an honest brigand in China."—Cris de Paris.

How Battles Are Won. Napoleon had this to say of the way in which battles are gained "In all battles a moment occurs when the bravest troops after having made the greatest efforts feel inclined to run. That terror proceeds from a want of confidence in their own courage, and it only requires a slight opportunity, a pretense, to restore confidence to them. The art is to give rise to the opportunity and to invent the pretense. At Arcola I won the battle with twenty-five horsemen. I seized that moment of inattention, gave every man a trumpet and gained the day with this handful. You see that two armies are two bodies, each meeting and endeavor to frighten each other. A moment of panic occurs, and that moment must be turned to advantage. When a man has been present in many actions he distinguishes that moment without difficulty. It is as easy as casting up an addition."

Hunting in Russia. Nearly all the dogs used in hunting wild animals in Russia not only attack but endeavor to devour their quarry. With the boreal and gaitchko it is entirely different. At an early age they are put into training with old and experienced dogs, so that they soon learn how to properly attack their adversary. They are slipped three at a time after a single wolf. When one of the dogs gets nearly side by side with the wolf he makes one bold spurt and with the fore shoulder strikes the wolf's back, so that he is knocked over or else grips him by the neck. Each of the other dogs, coming up, strikes the quarry in the same manner as he tries to rise, finally pinning him to the earth, so engaging him until the hunter arrives. The sportsman then either kills the animal or takes him alive, the latter being much more exciting—Wide World.

Turned It to His Advantage. An instance of the usefulness to other people of illegible handwriting is included in the vast collection of anecdotes and facts that deals with the writing of Horace Greeley. One compositor could never get used to his spilling scribble, and, in rage at the continual "typographical errors," Greeley sent a note to the foreman ordering him to discharge the man at once, as he was too inefficient a workman to be any longer employed on the Tribune. The foreman did it, but the compositor got hold of the note and took it to another office, where the foreman, after much puzzling, finally read it "good and efficient workman and long employed on the Tribune," and promptly took him on.—London Chronicle.

Some Shakespeare Statistics. A Shakespearean enthusiast with a turn for statistics has discovered that the plays contain 108,007 lines and that there are 134,700 words. "Hamlet" is the longest play, with 3,890 lines, and the "Comedy of Errors" the shortest, with 1,777 lines. Altogether the plays contain 1,277 characters, of which 157 are female, entered a street leading to the Spanish steps. In this street were Signorina Poli's apartments. He was nearing them when he saw his lady in a blue emerge from the house, a carriage on each side of her. They took her to a carriage standing before the door and got in with Albert. He reached the house as the carriage rolled away, and one of the carabinieri, looking through the window, waved his hand to him.

Great heavens! The man was Giovanni Sforza.

There were no more meetings in the Piazza Colonna, but Park went to the headquarters of the carabinieri and asked for Giovanni Sforza. There was no such name on the roster, but Albert found his man in the full uniform of a carabinieri.

"You used me," said Albert, "to gain information of one you were shadowing."

"I did," said the other coolly.

"Well, now that I have found you out, perhaps you will tell me who is Signorina Poli?"

"I do not know except that she is wanted by the Russian government."

"Can I see her before she leaves?"

"She has already gone."

"Where?"

"To St. Petersburg, but I fancy she will go from there to Siberia."

Park turned on his heel and walked away without a word of adieu to his former friend. He, the American, has never been the same man since.

A Startling Lecture.

Mr. J. M. Barrie has given us a whimsical description of Professor Campbell Fraser, the famous author and dramatist having been at one time one of the professor's pupils. "I see him rising in a daze from his chair," says Mr. Barrie, "and putting his hands through his hair. 'Do I exist,' he said thoughtfully, 'strictly so called?' The students looked a little startled. This was a matter that had not previously disturbed them. Still, if the professor was in doubt there must be something in it. He began to argue it out and an uncomfortable silence held the room in awe. If he did not exist the chances were that they did not exist either. It was thus a personal question. It was no wonder that the students who do not go to the bottom during their first month of metaphysics begin to give themselves airs, strictly so-called. In the privacy of their room at the top of the house they pinch themselves to see if they are still there."—Pearson's Weekly.

Wonders of a Book. There is perhaps no greater wonder than a book. By the help of little figures upon spins or paper men have been able to transmit their thoughts through thousands of years. The names and shapes of things, the deeds and sorrows that have occurred as far back as Adam, have been made known to us. Even those invisible and abstract thoughts which have no shape or substance, but which inspired the writer and have since inspired others are all put down in the little letters and made eternal. The songs of David the speculations of Plato, the visions of Homer, have by these means been handed down faithfully for many centuries and distributed among many kinds. If there were no books our knowledge would almost be confined to the limit of sight and hearing. All that we could not see or hear would be to us like the inhabitants of the planet Saturn—a mere matter of idle conjecture.—Barré Cornwall.

Mother at Prayer. Suddenly opened the door of my mother's room and saw her on her knees beside her chair and heard her speak my name in prayer. I quickly and quietly withdrew with a feeling of awe and reverence in my heart. Soon I went away from home to school, then to college, then into life's stern duties. But I never forgot that one glimpse of my mother at prayer nor the one word—my own name—which I heard her utter. Well, did I know that what I had seen that day was but a glimpse of what was going on every day in that sacred closet of prayer, and the consciousness strengthened me a thousand times in duty, in danger and in struggle. When death came at last and sealed those lips the sorest sense of loss I felt was the knowledge that no more would my mother be praying for me.

Court Fees. Court jesters were either crossbepenned imbecile midgets, whose senseless remarks were welcomed with laughter, or witty poets who devoted themselves to the task for the income which it brought.

It was their business in medieval times to entertain kings and nobles with amusing sallies.

One of the early French jesters was Mathurine, a woman.

English jesters made use of calfskin coats, which buttoned down the back and protected them from the anger of those who were provoked at their satirical thrusts.

A fool's cap was adorned with three asses' ears and a cock's comb and worn on a shorn head. He had a wide collar carried a scepter and his costume and cap were decorated with bells.

Animals That Smoke. The writer was extracting some after the petty worries of the day from his well seasoned brier when it was suddenly revealed to him what sort of creature he really was. It was an extract he happened across from a work on "The Common Use of Tobacco." There are but three kinds of animals which generally use tobacco: the rock goat of Africa, whose stomach is so insufferable that no other animal can approach it; the tobacco worm whose intolerable visage gives to every beholder an involuntary shudder; and the third animal—which is he!—London Chronicle.

Largest Crystal of Beryl. It remained for a Turk, wandering far from his native land, to find the largest crystal of beryl (aquamarine) ever discovered, a long distance inland in Brazil. It was dug out at a shallow depth, transported by canoe to the coast and finally sold at Bahia, bringing the finder, it is said, \$25,000. According to estimates this crystal would furnish fully 2,000,000 carats of aquamarines of various sizes.—Arizona.

Life's Three Questions. The three great questions of life are: "Is it right or wrong? Is it true or false? Is it beautiful or ugly?" These our education should help us to answer, and inasmuch as it fails it will lack in reachings, proper physical or moral standard.—Harper's Bazar.

Clam Shells. Clam shells are susceptible of a fine polish and are used for many ornamental purposes. Chinese carve them into snuffboxes, tops of walking sticks, bracelets and similar articles.

Natural Suggestion. Harduppe—I don't know how to express my love for Miss Grotz. Wigwag—I should think you would send it. C. O. D.—Philadelphia Record.

ROMANCE OF A STATUETTE

Trials and Reward of a Shifty Financier.

Algernon Withers was in a quandary. The birthday of a lady to whom he wished to become engaged was at hand, and he had not the wherewithal to buy a present. Algernon was one of those fellows who are always seeking to gain time. In other words, he was what is called financially a "shifter." Having a note to pay in the bank today, he would draw with three days' grace on Milwaukee. The draft he would meet with another on St. Paul. By the time he had chased his indebtedness around a circle by way of San Francisco, New Orleans and Charleston it was quite possible that some real funds tied up somewhere would be released and he would make a bonza tide payment. At present every cent he had in the world was deposited with his brokers as a margin on certain stocks he had bought. The market had gone down a few points, but a boom was confidently looked for, and he was holding on with a tight grip.

Passing a china shop, he resolved to look in, buy a present for the lady, Miss Gaudalet, give a draft in payment and chase it over the continent. All the expected boom had come and he should have plenty of money. Entering the shop, he heard the proprietor scolding a luckless porter who was sweeping up the fragments of a china statuette.

"Pardon me," said the dealer, "My porter has just broken a five hundred dollar piece of china."

An idea seized upon Algernon. "What will you take for the fragments?" he asked.

"Nothing. You are welcome to them." "Will you send them?" "Certainly."

Algernon wrote "Elise Gaudalet, Central Park West," on a piece of paper and gave it to the dealer, asking him to have every scrap boxed and sent to the address.

"Do you hear?" said the dealer to the porter. "Do as the gentleman says. Don't leave out a single piece." Algernon left the store in a comfortable frame of mind. "The box will be opened tomorrow. I will keep away for a week, at the end of which time I will call and learn that my gift has been broken in transit. By that time we shall have a better market and I can get money from my broker with which to send another statuette."

But unfortunately the coal miners of the country took it into their heads to strike, and the market instead of going higher went lower. A week passed, and Algernon found himself under the necessity of duplicating the broken present being at the same time in desperate financial straits. Entering his club one afternoon, he took his mail from his box and observed Miss Gaudalet's familiar handwriting on one of the letters. Tearing off the envelope, he read:

My Dear Mr. Withers—Why have you not before this given me an opportunity to thank you for your beautiful present? It is the handsomest gift I received. Do come and see it on its pedestal. The man who brought it was very careless and dropped the box in the hall, but fortunately I found every part perfect. Sincerely, ELISE GAUDALET.

To say that Mr. Withers was astonished by no means expresses his sensations. Had a volcano opened in the center of the club swimming tank he could not have been more thunder-struck. Calling a cab, he rode to Central Park West and called for Miss Gaudalet. He was ushered into the drawing room, and there in a bay window on a marble pedestal was the statuette. In a few minutes Miss Gaudalet came in and poured forth her thanks.

"Isn't it beautiful?" she exclaimed. "I'm glad you fancy it," stammered Withers.

"And to think," she said, changing her tone to one of complaint, "that you should have kept away all this time!" Algernon looked into her eyes and saw, or thought he saw, tears. He turned and took her hand.

"Have you really missed me?" An hour later he left the house engaged. He concluded that the stupid porter had delivered the perfect statuette by mistake, and as he had not ordered it he could expect ample time to pay for it. During the next few days he expected with each mail to receive a notification of the error, but none came. Then stocks advanced, and he sold out with a handsome profit and sent a check for the statuette. It was returned with a note stating that there had been no mistake.

Something had gone wrong. Algernon puzzled his brain for awhile with a view to an explanation.

"Elise," he said one evening, "there is a mystery about the statuette I sent you for your last birthday."

"What is it?" "Why, you said the porter dropped it in the hall—and are you sure it wasn't broken?"

Elise burst into a laugh and, throwing her arms about her lover, she said: "You stupid! Did you suppose I would have been deceived even if your instructions had been obeyed? Don't you know my methods?"

"What do you mean?" "When the box was opened I found every piece carefully wrapped by itself in tissue paper. I went to the store and ordered a duplicate."

"Will you let me give you a check?" asked Algernon.

"Certainly. It is your present, and you may pay for it. I knew that all you needed was time."



Wanted at Once. 19 Ashley, Ind., B. 2, Box 12, Oct. 19, 1911. I had very severe Nervousness, could only sleep two nights in a week and scarcely walk. Life was a burden to me, as I had no appetite at all. A friend recommended Pastor Koenig's Nerve Tonic and the third dose of it relieved me. Mr. Charles Erwin took one-half bottle for nervous headache of about 14 years standing and I cured him. I was treated by my family doctor with no relief, until I took the Nerve Tonic. I am feeling ever so much better. I was troubled with Nervousness of the wonderful remedy. I would be today in an asylum or have taken my life had it not been for the great Nerve Tonic. I will always praise it. Mrs. Minna Erwin.

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