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Miscellaneous.

The Diamond Bracelets.

It was during the palmiest days of the Empire. Never was Paris so gay; in fact, it was the *fete* day of the Emperor, the last flickering days of his greatness ere his glory departed forever. All Paris knew that he would grace the opera that night and add to its usual luster the glittering pomp and circumstance of power. Accordingly, all that portion of Paris who had the necessary number of francs went to the opera, and, in honor of so great an occasion, Mons. Blauvais, the director, was to produce *La Prophete*.

The overture was over; the Emperor, accompanied by the Empress, radiant in her beauty and glittering with jewels, had just entered the royal box; his suite, uniformed in every color of the rainbow, stood grouped in the background. In another moment the bell would tinkle and the opera commence. But in an instant of time, when every sound was heard, the second box to the right of the Emperor was opened, and the curtains were drawn aside, and revealed the lovely wife of the Russian Ambassador, Duke Metzkerwitsch.

No wonder that the bell tinkled unheard, and the curtain went up unnoticed; no wonder that every eye was fixed with a fascinated gaze upon the woman who had just taken her seat, and was calmly and with well-bred nonchalance glancing about the house; for upon her arms, blazing like beacons, sparkled the diamonds of which Paris had heard so much, and which royalty in vain had long sought to purchase. A hum of admiration ran through the house, and then for the first time the enchanting strains of the chorus were listened to.

Imperial Admiration.

When the curtain fell upon the first act, and Milord This ogling Milady That, a servant wearing the imperial livery, presented himself at the Russian Ambassador's box, rapped only as an imperial funkay could rap, and then entered the box.

"Her Majesty had noticed the bracelets, and was dumb with admiration; would Milady be so gracious as to allow the Empress to make a personal examination of one of the bracelets?"

In an instant the fair arm was shown of its gems, and with a smothered ejaculation of delight the man wearing the imperial livery bowed himself out of the box, bearing the bracelet that a million of francs could not purchase.

The curtain fell upon the third act, ascended again on the fourth, the notes of the finale rolled through the house, the curtain fell for the last time; and still with well-bred politeness, the wife of the Russian Ambassador waited for the return of her priceless jewels. The imperial party rose and departed, and yet the bracelet was not returned. Then the Duke, with a terrible frown of impatience, rose and drove rapidly to the Tuilleries and demanded the return of the diamonds.

Explanations followed, and the Duke was at last convinced that the Empress had never seen the bracelet, and that the man wearing the imperial livery was one of the daring thieves who infested the Capital. He bade his coachman drive to the office of the Prefect of Police, and ere daylight a hundred of the shrewdest officers were searching Paris for the gems. The Duke, filled with anxiety remained at the office for tidings, while the Duchess restlessly awaited the recovery of her bracelets.

A Policeman's Admiration.

The great clock had just tolled the hour of six, when the bell of the Duke's hotel rang violently and an officer of the police was ushered into the presence of the Duchess.

"Was the bracelet recovered?" and "would they imprison the scoundrel for the rest of his days?" eagerly demanded the Duchess.

With a grave bow the officer stated that the thief was taken, and upon his person was found the bracelet. But the fellow stoutly insisted that he was not a thief, and that the bracelet in his possession had been in his family for many years. Would Madame intrust to him the mate to the missing bracelet that the identity might be complete?

Madame the Duchess, without a word, unlocked her casket and placed in the hands of the trusty officer the second bracelet. The officer, with a profound bow, left the apartment, and Madame retired once more—this time to sleep and to dream of her precious diamonds. When the bell tolled the hour of 9 the Russian Ambassador, haggard and disordered, entered his wife's apartment and threw himself in despair into a chair. Madame opened her eyes, and with a smile of delight asked for the bracelets.

The End of the Bracelets.

"Satan!" exclaimed the Duke, "we can learn nothing of them."

"What!" shrieked the madame, "have you not recovered it?" The officer who came for the other bracelet said the thief had been taken and the bracelet found.

The Duke with an exclamation of amazement, sprang to his feet, and in a husky voice besought his wife to explain. In a few words she told him. And then, with a groan, the Duke dropped into a seat.

"I see it all," said he; "the rascals have robbed you of the second bracelet. There was no messenger sent for the bracelet. The man to whom you gave it was no officer, but a bolder thief than he who robbed you first."

A Nobleman's Lost Heir.

It is not often that the romances of real life are dressed in the bright colors or develop themselves with the dramatic arrangement of orthodox fiction. Italian skies and brigands only come to our matter-of-fact country in the shape of bad paintings and vicious padrones. A true story, then, that will transport the reader to Italy; interest him in a beautiful but unfortunate woman, introduce him to a magnificent villa, and finally transport him back to America in search of the wronged and lost scion of a noble family, bids fair to produce a pleasing and novel sensation. The threads of romance run all about us, in and through our daily lives, but we are seldom able to distinguish a rounded plot set off with the recognized adornments of the professional story-writer.

It may easily have happened that the reader of the article has kindly thrown a coin to the lost heir of a noble Italian house, who is known to have been brought to New York in September last. He is now eleven years old, and his name is Lorenzo Casti, to which he is entitled to add "di Monti." Five years ago he was supposed to have been drowned not far from the villa, in which he was born, situated near

the little town of Carretta, in the neighborhood of Naples. In 1862 or 1863 his mother, then a young and beautiful girl, of noble but not very wealthy family became the wife of Antonio Casti di Monti. Her name previous to marriage was Lucretia Bettinelli. Four years passed away. She lived surrounded by all the comforts and elegance that love and opulence could suggest or procure.

A Young Wife's First Sorrow.

Then her husband died. Devoted to his memory, she determined to give up her whole life to the nurture and education of her son. The property was very large, and by will she received the greater portion, in joint trust with her late husband's brother, for her son. So far, the story is a matter of record. It was obtained by the writer from Andrea Nicolini, who has been sent to this country to make search for the missing boy. What immediately follows does not directly relate to the business he is prosecuting, and was gained by him only from gossip and hearsay. Yet it forms part of the story as a whole, and bears internal evidence of truth. Like most of the gossip that bears the test of time, it is doubtless based on fact. An uncle of Antonio, named Alessandro, a man nearly fifty years of age, and who had spent a large fortune at the gaming-table and in extravagant living, made a proposal of marriage to his nephew's widow. (She, consulting her own inclinations and heeding the warnings of her family, rejected his suit. Whether he had really conceived a passion for the still young and handsome widow, or whether his family pride was hurt, it was certain that he chose to take the refusal as an affront. He at once broke off all intercourse with the lady and her family. Not long after this his second nephew, Antonio's brother, also died. Now came Alessandro's opportunity both for revenge and to retrieve his wasted fortunes. Whether he indeed was active in procuring to be done what followed it would appear to be impossible to show with certainty.

Plotting for Revenge.

For the obloquy which has been thrown upon him, and the detestation in which his name is held in the neighborhood of Carretta, the only foundation that can be pointed out is an evident motive to which is added certain circumstantial evidence, though Nicolini intimates that there are proofs and clues in the possession of the Bettinelli family which point to a clearer solution of the mystery than was publicly entertained. Of the nature of these or as to whether or not they tend to implicate Alessandro, he will say nothing. Antonio's parents were dead, and by the Italian law his property, on the death of his son, would revert to his uncle. Little Lorenzo's life, therefore, was now the only barrier between him and the whole of his late nephew's fortune, except the widow's dower. All that is known—at least, all that is publicly known—is that Lorenzo, when he was about six years old, was missed one day about twilight. He has not been seen by the family since. His hat was found on the shore of a stream, the current of which had been swollen into a torrent by the warm Spring rains. The ribbon which passed under his chin and bound his hat securely on his head was found tied as it had been tied by the maid, but it had been torn from the straw on one side. Not long afterwards a man named Becharia reported finding a small whip with which the child had been playing, about a mile farther down the stream, in the edge of the water. The body was not

found. In the legal investigation which ensued consequent on Alessandro's claim to the property, little opposition was made, because it was generally believed that the little fellow had fallen into the water while playing. The bereaved mother retired from the stately villa where she had experienced so much happiness and so much grief, and took refuge with her family, with whom she still resides, the recipient of a comparatively moderate income.

Evidences of Foul Play.

About a year ago Becharia gave utterance during a drunken spree to certain expressions, which excited suspicions and reawakened interest in a manner which had been dismissed very generally from the public mind. He was arrested and held for several weeks, during which he was subjected to several private examinations before the magistrate and representatives of the Bettinelli family, but it would seem that there was not sufficient evidence to hold him. It was remembered, however, that he had disappeared on the afternoon of the day on which the child was supposed to have been drowned, and was not seen at Carretta for two days afterward. It was his evidence with regard to the finding the whip, that was taken as conclusive in the legal investigation. It was also now urged that the tearing out of the string from the child's hat was not a natural thing for a child of six years of age to do. It had been sewed in very strongly.

Becharia is a man of bad character, and has earned the title of "bully" by his bravado and disreputable exploits. He was supposed at one time to have been in the service of a band of brigands among the mountains. Little Lorenzo was an unusually bright boy, and had already shown himself possessed to an extraordinary degree of the marvelous faculty for playing on musical instruments, which is so often developed in Italy. It is surmised that the temptation to carry him off for the price to be obtained for him from a padrone would have been quite sufficient for a man like Becharia. Whether indeed there were probable proofs of collusion between him and Alessandro is a matter that is known only, if at all, to the officers. Nicolini significantly suggests, on this point, that the first thing to do is to find the lost heir.

The Search for the Lost Heir.

That he was not drowned there are almost positive proofs. A gold ornament, which he wore upon a little scarf about his neck, was advertised for, with the offer of three times its value. It was furnished by a Naples pawnbroker. He received it a year ago from a woman that he did not know, and had never seen since. Through the instrumentality of the Government detectives traces were found of a boy who answered in every respect the description of Lorenzo. He had been purchased about the time of Lorenzo's disappearance by a Neapolitan dealer in these little Italian slaves, who, however, professed not to remember from whom he received him. He gave the name of the padrone to whom he sold him in turn. The latter was found in Marseilles, and had sublet him, as the custom is, to a padrone in Paris. This latter padrone, about six months ago, sailed with him to New York, where Nicolini is now searching for him. It is possible, of course, that the boy is simply the victim of the vulgar cupidity of some ordinary kidnapper; but when Nicolini was asked to give the name of the padrone who last came into possession of him, he shrugged his shoulders and said the name was known to him, but he thought it was not

known to others; the padrone would have to be found secretly; there was much money, and if others should know whom to look for they might find him first, and money would be paid to keep the boy concealed. The search, he says, has not been entirely without result since he has been in America, and he has good hopes of ultimate success.

Humorous.

Epitaph for an aeronaut—"gone up."

Mosquitos are hum in Florida. It is said that before slates were invented people multiplied on the face of the earth.

Why does a sculptor die the most horrible of deaths? 'Cause he makes faces and busts.

There is nothing so effective in bringing a man to the scratch as a healthy, high-spirited flea.

A Western Congressman says he is disposed to shespay-hio-ments and will vote for irredimable green-bax ev' time.

A Philadelphia gentleman advertises a soap that is destined to wipe out the national debt. There is probably some "lye" about it.

A prudent mamma gives the following advice to her daughter. "O marry the man that you love if he is as rich as Croesus."

"Boy, what's become of the hole I saw in your pants the other day?" Young America—(carefully examining his unmentionables.) It's wore out, sir.

An unstamped letter was deposited in an Indiana Postoffice last week, beneath the address was the indorsement, "Let her slide p. m., she's all hunk; inside air one of them post hole keepers."

The other day a certain tailor sent his bill to a magazine editor. He was startled a few hours afterward by its being returned, with a note appended saying: "Your manuscript is respectfully declined."

Old gent—"You don't mean to tell me, waiter, that you can't give me a toothpick?" Waiter—"Well, sir, we used to keep 'em but they almost invariably took 'em away when they'd done with 'em."

"Tell that man to take off his hat in Court!" said a Judge to an officer, the other morning. The offender, a lady wearing the fashionable sailor's hat, indignantly exclaimed, "I am no man!" "Then I am no Judge."

A clerk in a city bookstore, thinking to annoy a Quaker customer who looked as though he was fresh from the country, handed him a volume, saying: here is an excellent essay on the rearing of calves." "Thee had better present it to thy mother, young man," was the spontaneous retort of the Quaker.

A Cayuga county (N. Y.) man sends the following advertisement to the *Syracuse Journal*: "Mr. please publish that Wanted a yung lady from the age of 18 to 22 who would like yuute her self in the locs of ma trimonie I the writer of this am 22 years of age five feet in height in weight 135 of occupation farmer"

"Don't you mean to marry again, my dear sir?" said a boxom widow to her neighbor. "No, my dear widow," said old crasty, "I'd rather lose all the ribs I've got than take another."

Within the last three months the President has appointed thirty Postmistresses. The consequences might have been anticipated. Twenty-seven of them have already notified their husbands that their services are no longer required.