

Watch This Space

The Girl With Titian Hair

And How I Secured an Introduction to Her

By WILLIAM CHANDLER

Before settling down to my profession I concluded to spend some time abroad. I reached Naples in January and stayed there long enough to visit Pompeii, climb Vesuvius and pass a great deal of time in the National museum, containing the esteemed treasures of the buried cities.

During my stay in Naples I met on several occasions a family consisting of a father, a mother, a daughter about fifteen and a boy of twelve. I often heard them talk together. They spoke English, and I know by their accent that they were Americans. I would have liked to make their acquaintance, indeed, I endeavored to do so one day when I was near the father in the National museum by addressing him a remark. But he did not respond very cordially, and I refrained from another attempt.

My object in making this family's acquaintance was that I wished for companionship with my own countrymen, especially the young lady, about whom there was something to me very attractive. While her complexion had little color, the combination of eyes, hair and skin made up a peculiar style of beauty, the eyes being a dark brown and the hair what is usually called Titian from the fact that the artist used it so often in his pictures.

Having seen the sights at Naples, I took my departure for Rome, where I occupied rooms on the Via Nazionale, opposite the Piazza Venezia. I had been there out a few days when I saw at dinner the American family I have mentioned. If I had been very near them I think I should have made another attempt to form their acquaintance, but as such was dinner was over they refused to talk to me and the next morning went off to another town in another.

My bed at the hotel was uncomfortable, and after getting on my feet in the morning I thought I would have a look at the mattresses to see what was the matter. Throwing back the top mattress, there on the one beneath it was a brooch set with valuable gems.

There were many possible reasons for the brooch being there. First, some guest of the hotel might have put it there temporarily for safe-keeping and forgotten it. But this was not probable for I had occupied the room for a week, and the maid who made the bed would surely have discovered it. The most likely cause for its being there was that some one had stolen it and placed it there temporarily to be safe.

I took it to me and the morning being dark, carried it to a window to have a better look at it. Feeling something I could not see I took the back of my hand. I felt for it with the other hand and clasped a hair between my fingers. It was clinging to the brooch, and I engaged it. I held it up between me and the window. It seemed to be yellow or golden and, lighting a gas jet, I saw that there was a trace of red about it. Further examination showed me that it was very like the hair of the young lady whose acquaintance I was desirous of making.

Could the brooch have been stolen from her? If so, I might come to know her in either a favorable or an unfavorable light. If I could restore her property I should have an advantage if I should stand in the position of the thief. It might be hidden in jail, it would seem that above was not the situation of my reporting my find to the police at the hotel. But while studying my profession the day after I had attended a number of criminal trials whereby I had learned that it might be a very easy matter for me perfectly innocent to be placed in the position of a thief. I was in possession of a valuable piece of jewelry, and I was the only person, except the thief, who knew that I had not stolen it.

Quite probably the shopkeeper was the thief. She could make up the bed during the morning and if her suspicion was correct, would look for the property she had placed between the mattresses. If she did not find it there she would suppose I had stolen it. What would she do? What might she do? One of the things she might do was to direct the person who had put the brooch in the bed to the thief. I must keep her from making the bed till I had determined what course to pursue.

I detached the hair from the brooch and put it in an envelope. Then I put the brooch back between the mattresses as where I had found it and covered it again. After my hour had passed and I had come to my senses what to do to the matter I went for a water and told him to bring up my brooch. He took as the stolen property was where it had been placed by the thief he or she would not be likely to take any action involving me.

Some time later I was one morning for me to do to this for the landlady and show him the brooch between the mattresses. But my judgment was warped by finding the hair that made me suspect the property belonged to the American girl I have referred to. I wished to return the brooch to her myself since this would give me the acquaintance I desired and not under some obligation to me. By such

a course I was liable to be troubled, but given a young man and a pretty girl the result is risk when there is anything to be gained or lost by risk. I lay in bed on the treasure till noon trying to form a plan which would gain me what I desired. I came to no conclusion as to my definite action with regard to the disposition of the property I had found, but decided to change my room. I called for the landlady and told him that I wished for a room where I would get more light. He gave me one facing the street. A porter came and transferred my baggage, and I took myself with the brooch to my new quarters. I thought I saw some advantage in this removal in the fact that in case of my being accused I could claim that the stolen property had been taken away after I had left the room. I remained in my new quarters but a few minutes, when, taking the brooch with me, I went out to my banker and asked him to deposit it with some other articles I had made a bundle of all—in his safe.

I now felt better about the situation, for I could take my own time about the return of the brooch and could not see that there was any evidence against me that could be made available by the thief. At any rate, I was ready to take the risk of becoming involved, and since the property could not be found on me and I could establish my respectability I had not much to fear.

I did not return to my hotel till evening and went at once to bed. The next morning I looked about the hotel, keeping my ears open for any word about stolen property, but I heard nothing and did not dare ask any questions lest my showing a knowledge of the loss should implicate me. While I was in the reading and writing room of the hotel I saw my American friends come downstairs ready to go out. The father had a long conference with the landlady, which, with other evidence I possessed, tended to the theory that the brooch in my possession belonged to the former's daughter. He saw the landlady, saying to her, "I have found it for you. You may have 10,000 francs."

This settled the matter with me. It occurred to me to make a confession then and there, but before I could bring myself to do so the four members of the family left the hotel, entered a cab, and I saw them go out directly behind them. I found the man direct the driver to take them to the baths of Capri.

Turning into the Corso Umberto, I walked to the Piazza Colonna and, taking a seat at one of the sidewalk restaurants to be found there, I called for a "beer of wine and chicken and something to eat, but I did not know what to do. After waiting on my mind I returned to the hotel, looked at the register and saw the names Edward J. Larned, Mrs. Larned, Miss Larned and Ned Larned. Going to my room I wrote to Mr. Larned, stating that a valuable brooch had come into my possession which I believed had been stolen. A hair had clung to it of a peculiar shade, and I noticed the shade of hair of the young lady belonging to the party and since the one clinging to the brooch appeared to be of the same hue I suspected that both might be hers. I was sure, however, that my suspicions was correct if I should be happy to restore the lost article.

I guttered myself that I had the advantage of the gentleman in not asking him to prove property. I took my brooch down to the landlady for delivery, then left the hotel and did not return to it till after 11 o'clock the same night.

I found Mr. Larned in my waiting room. I had no sooner entered the hotel than the landlady pointed the way out to him, and, approaching me, he told me that he had received my note and that my suspicion was correct. His daughter had left the brooch in her room without locking it in her trunk, as was their custom with their valuables, and it had doubtless been stolen by a servant. I told him that I was very happy to be able to restore the lost property, but could not do so till the next day since I had taken it to my banker for safe keeping. He summoned something about having offered a reward, but I hesitated not to hear him, and, telling him that I could meet him with the brooch in the evening room the next day at noon, we went up to our respective rooms in the same elevator.

When I descended the stairs the next day Mr. Larned called me and his daughter desired an opportunity to thank me for returning it, and he invited me to lunch with his family. It is needless to say that I accepted the invitation and received a charming smile from the young lady as well as her thanks.

"How lucky," she said, "that one of my hairs clung to the brooch. Had it not been so I presume I could not have recovered my property."

"She certainly did not consider that it was my property, and in bringing the brooch to you it was only to the thank you and I did not mention her."

"I had, however," I said, "the misfortune of your hair to that in Titian's portraits, and since the single hair was the same I was sure the property was yours."

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No.	Arriving From	Time
20	Greenville and Belton..	3:30 a. m.
22	Greenville and Belton..	11:50 a. m.
16	Charleston, Columbia and Belton, through sleeper to Belton..	11:50 a. m.
12	Atlanta, Walhalla and Greenville..	8:31 a. m.
23	Greenville and Belton..	1:25 p. m.
10	Atlanta, Walhalla, and Seneca..	4:52 p. m.
17	Charleston, Columbia and Belton, through coach from Columbia to Walhalla..	6:03 p. m.

Leaving For

No.	Destination	Time
23	Belton, Greenville..	7:40 a. m.
24	Belton and Greenville..	9:30 a. m.
24	Belton and Greenville..	2:25 p. m.
20	Belton, Charleston, Greenville and Columbia..	4:52 p. m.
11	Belton, Columbia, Charleston and Greenville..	8:31 a. m.
9	Seneca, Walhalla and Atlanta..	11:50 a. m.
11	Seneca, Walhalla, through coach from Columbia..	6:03 p. m.

No baggage will be handled on motor cars Nos 20, 24, 21, 25, 22, 23. Connection is made at Belton for Southern trains and at Seneca for trains to Atlanta and beyond. For further information, apply to ticket agents.

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