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CHAPTER I.

"Egan—Why look you cold on me? You know me well."

"Ant S.—I never saw you in my life till now."

—Comedy of Errors.

HE Clement house, sir! Here you are."

The hackman, descending nimbly from his elevated perch to the smooth white pavement of flags to stones, threw open the carriage door and stood surveying the solitary fare whom he had triumphantly captured at the railway station fifteen minutes before.

The fare started up as if from a fit of profound abstraction.

"The Clement house?" he repeated, glancing up at the hotel with its wide stone portico supported by massive pillars and ornamented with its usual quota of smoking, staring, well-dressed idlers.

"Well, driver, what did we agree upon? Seventy-five cents—and here it is."

The money, in glittering silver pieces, was handed out and eagerly transferred to the hackman's pocket; then the gentleman, with a small portmanteau in his hand, emerged from the carriage and walked leisurely up the steps of the hotel.

He was a handsome man, tall, slender and elegant in figure, and he carried himself with a condescending air, as very handsome men are apt to do. He was enveloped in a long, loose ulster, evidently donned to protect his expensive broadcloth from the dust of travel; a soft black hat rested upon his auburn curls. His dark gray eyes were keen and slightly quizzical in expression; his whole countenance, though delicate in features and complexion, denoted strength, determination and reckless daring, with a touch of genuine mirthfulness to which, however, the dark sweeping mustache that he wore gave an odd contradiction by the indescribably mournful droop that it took.

He had scarcely ascended the hotel steps when he was accosted on all sides by the assembled gentlemen.

"North! North! Ye gods and little fishes, if it isn't North back again!" arose a chorus of astonished voices as the group of idlers suspended all other conversation in order to question the newcomer.

"What, what does this mean, North? Back before anyone has had time to miss you!" said one, as he held his cigar aloft and hastily adjusted his eyeglasses.

"Come back to get a better start?"

"Afraid your friends wouldn't be able to survive your absence?"

"Forgot something, perhaps?" suggested one brilliant genius, thus bringing himself out in bold relief against the background of vague and unsatisfactory conjecture.

"Was it your heart, North? Inquire up on Delaplaine street, and it will no doubt be returned and no questions asked!"

Thus the running fire of banter went on. The victim of it, halted thus unceremoniously on the very steps of the hotel, stood in bewildered silence for a moment without attempting any response. But after the first pause of utter astonishment he recovered himself and found voice to speak.

"Gentlemen," he exclaimed, in tones that expressed a well-bred surprise and annoyance, "this is a curious misapprehension! I assure you it is a case of mistaken identity. I am not the person whom you evidently think me to be. I have not the honor of knowing you, and indeed I never saw you before."

The gentlemen, addressed, looked blank in their turn for an instant; then a derisive laugh swept around the circle.

"Hear! hear!" cried two or three, applaudingly.

"Mistaken identity"—not the person we think him to be!" echoed mocking-ly from lip to lip.

" Didn't we bid you good-by only four hours ago, fairly bowed down with grief because you assured us that you would be gone for two whole weeks? And now here you are back again like the proverbial penny!"

"What do you mean?" demanded the newcomer, with a perceptible increase of bewilderment and indignation. "I never was at the Clement house, never was in X—before in my life!"

Upon this declaration the laughter and protests broke out afresh.

"Oh, I say, North, you've carried this far enough!" cried the brilliant genius who had previously distinguished himself. "Have you suddenly lost your senses, or do you imagine that we have all taken leave of ours? It is no use, you know, your trying to deny your own identity, when here are a dozen of your daily associates and intimate friends all ready to swear to it."

"I assure you, gentlemen—" the voice had the inflection of rising anger, but it was quickly drowned in the laughing comments of the others.

"Come, come, North," testily interposed the gentleman with the eyeglasses. "You've perjured yourself quite enough. Where's the use, you know? You surely can't think of carrying this poor little farce any farther. Aren't you Olin North, attorney at law? Answer me that!"

impossible to stem, and let the results take care of themselves. It cannot do any harm. How could anyone blame me for it, under the circumstances? And, really, I might as well combine a little innocent amusement with the important business that calls me to X—Unless I am vastly mistaken, this promises to be the most diverting experience I ever happened upon!"

This soliloquy flashed through North's mind in a very brief time, during which he stood abstractedly in the center of the group whose chaffing remarks he only half heard or comprehended; and as it reached this definite conclusion he resigned himself to his fate with a sense of reckless enjoyment.

"Certainly, colonel," he said, having caught the title, though the name of the gentlemanly manager had escaped him, "the same rooms, by all means. By the way, shall I register?"

"As you please, Mr. North; as you please. When will you leave off jesting?" And the expression of vague uneasiness again appeared on Col. Dayton's round, rosy face. "Just step into the office a minute, anyway. The clerk's got a letter that was sent up after you left this morning. You didn't tell us where your correspondence should be forwarded to, so we were in something of a puzzle to decide." The rest of the sentence was lost in the colonel's puffing endeavor to open the heavy swing-door.

Allan North, attorney at law, was glad to escape from the hilarious crowd on the hotel steps and followed the colonel into the office. But here another difficulty confronted him, when a dainty missive bearing a lady's chirography was placed in his hand.

True, the envelope was addressed simply to "Mr. North, Clement House, City," and was not he that gentleman? But then, very probably at the time the letter was written he was not within one hundred miles of the Clement house and had never even heard of the place.

It may appear to the cool, dispassionate reader that North's proper course at this point was too obvious to admit of any hesitation or mental debate. Nevertheless he did hesitate; and he did argue within himself what line of action he should adopt. Refuse to take the letter? That would give rise to renewed questions, explanations and ridicule, which, in view of his late trying experiences, he did not wish to provoke. How would it do, for instance?

His reflections were suddenly arrested by the discovery that the envelope was not sealed. A vague sense of relief came to his mind, as if he now saw an easy and justifiable solution of the difficulty.

"An oversight, of course," he thought, still contemplating the creamy envelope that he held, from which arose a faint exquisite perfume as of withered rose leaves; "but there cannot be anything very private or personal about this correspondence or the fair writer would not have been so careless. After all, whom is it for if not for me? Who is the man whose perfect counterpart I seem to be?"

He paused in his speculations. A sudden suspicion darted like lightning into his mind, then as suddenly was dismissed.

"Oh, no, that is impossible!" he mentally declared the next instant. "Quite out of the question. And yet the name—No, no! It cannot be! There must be some other explanation of the mystery. I will glance over this letter when I get to my room and see if it affords any clew to the solution."

With this decision he turned to the books and registered in dashing but somewhat illegible characters:

"A. North, New York."

"And now, colonel," he said, turning around to that gentleman, "where are you going to put me?"

"Where am I going to put you?" The colonel's amazed countenance was a study as he repeated the question. "What on earth are you thinking about, Mr. North? Your rooms are precisely as you left them this morning. Here Sam," summoning a colored porter, "take Mr. North's valise up to 54."

A few minutes later North found himself in the suite assigned to him, evidently the apartment of his mysterious double. He proceeded with much curiosity to survey his new domains.

There was nothing in the appointments that especially attracted his at-



HE SUDDENLY RECOLLECTED THE LETTER.

tention, except a large black walnut writing table. The many drawers that it contained were locked, as he discovered when he attempted to open them. The pigeonholes were empty; a few books were ranged neatly beneath them. Everything indicated a careful preparation for the absence of the owner.

Having ascertained that his surroundings were entirely non-committal, North surrendered himself once more to baffled speculations, which he pursued from the depths of a luxurious lounging chair.

"If a man is not what he thinks himself," he began, speaking aloud, as he frequently did in soliloquy, "but what the world thinks him to be, then I am entitled to the possession of this room, the use of all it contains, all the prerogatives of the rightful tenant. And yet I solemnly affirm that I never was in this deluded place before in the

whole course of my natural existence!

Isn't that a curious contradiction of facts and appearances? However, this will all come out right some time. There is nothing so crooked that time cannot make it straight; and why should I trouble myself about a misapprehension for which I am in no degree responsible?"

"I will pursue the even tenor of my way, neither aggressively asserting my own identity nor endeavoring to assume that of my mysterious double; and, come what may, the dear public, and not I, will be to blame."

At this point in his soliloquy he suddenly recollected the letter in his pocket.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, drawing it forth hastily and once more examining the address: "this is one of the prerogatives! An open letter is supposed to be designed for the perusal of the general public. 'Mr. North, Clement House, City.' Well, I am certainly that gentleman, so here goes! I shall see what my fair unknown correspondent has to say."

Very little, but entirely to the point, as he discovered on glancing hastily over these delicately traced lines:

"Mrs. Maynard will be at home this afternoon at two o'clock. Will it be convenient for Mr. North to call at that hour?"

At the top of the sheet he now noticed the handsomely engraved address: "No. 33 Delaplaine street."

"Maynard—Mrs. Maynard," mused North, abstractedly, dropping the hand that still held the perfumed sheet in its listless grasp and frowning at the carpet as he expected to find somewhere amid its warp and woof the thread that should unravel this mystery. "Where have I heard that name lately? It seems to me I ought to know. Two o'clock—this afternoon at two o'clock?"

He drew out his watch suddenly and consulted it. "It is now precisely 12:30. H'm! 'No. 33 Delaplaine street.' (And pray, where may that be?) 'Will it be convenient' (oh, very convenient, but how about the expediency?) 'for Mr. North to call at that hour?' Short and sweet; and eminently unsatisfactory. No light whatever from this source. The mystery only grows deeper my position more involved. Shall I call on Mrs. Maynard, or not? It would be a piece of unparalleled daring! To go, or not to go; that is the question!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

YOUNG AT EIGHTY YEARS.

A Chilian Woman Who Is Remarkably Well Preserved for Her Age.

"Perhaps the most remarkable woman in the world lives in Santiago, Chili," said Robert A. Bonham, an American who has spent several years in South America, to a Boston Globe reporter. "She is apparently a well-preserved woman of thirty-five, rather good looking, spry as a girl and a pronounced coquette, yet it is known positively that she is eighty years old, and may be much older. She has a granddaughter who looks old enough to be her mother. This remarkable woman is of Spanish extraction, a native of Peru, and her name is Boeckman, her second husband, now dead, having been a German. Middle-aged people aver that she was a grown woman when they were children and that she does not look a day older now than she did then. She is regarded with superstition by the more ignorant of the natives, over whom she could undoubtedly exercise great influence were her morals not so notoriously bad. She is passionately fond of dancing, has a musical voice, snapping black eyes and a beautiful set of teeth. She claims that she owes her wonderful preservation to a charm which an old half breed Indian doctor exercised over her when she was a child. She says she will neither grow old nor die until the charm is broken. Some of the natives express the belief that she is in league with the devil. She got into an altercation with a young woman not long ago and cut her seriously, but the latter was afraid to enter a complaint against her lest she should exercise some malevolent influence over her. It is said that she has many admirers and is soon to be married to a young Chilian of considerable wealth."

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WHAT IS SOCIALISM.

It is Neither Anarchy or Revolution—Appalled Christianity.

The following brief extracts are taken from an excellent article on socialism written by a contributor to the Los Angeles Express:

"Probably no word in the English language has been so persistently abused, slandered and misused as the word socialism. Derived from socio—a friend; it distinctly refers to a social system founded upon the friendly feelings of humanity, justice, fraternity, and a common equality of opportunity."

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[TO BE CONTINUED.]

That is the theory and practice of interest.

The exclusive use as money of either gold and silver, or both gold and silver, places the world in absolute slavery to the holders of these metals. There are \$1,400,000,000 in gold in circulation throughout the world. In the United States alone farmers have promised to pay \$15,000,000,000 in gold. There is not gold enough in existence to pay interest on debts owed in the United States.

The Baring failure, the Russian famine and the steady closing in of the contraction policy have all combined to bring about a foreclosure of these obligations, with the shipments of gold to Europe and financial distress in this country as the disastrous result.

The facts alleged in the above joint resolution are apparent to anyone. They are beyond dispute. The remedy is the issue now. The rapid and continued export of our money is a cause of grave alarm in all parts of the country and among all classes. It needs no profound knowledge of finance to see the danger, and the effects are becoming distressing.

The dominant parties offer no remedy. Here is a plan that will not only give relief, but will put our finances on the bedrock of justice and business common sense. It will break the backbone of interest.

It will be urged by bankers and their henchmen that the money to be issued as above will not be good. But they will be on exactly the same footing as a national bank note—bonds issued regularly and deposited with the treasurer of the United States. The difference will be that the currency is issued directly to the people for labor without the intervention of private corporations. On the bonded indebtedness of the city of Spokane we would be paying one-twelfth the present tax, and paying it as a public tax instead of into the pockets of some idler. It would cut the rate of interest on private loans and set the wheels of industry in motion.

The legislators at Olympia this winter, of whatever party, will be put on record on this measure, and if one of them votes for a senatorial candidate who will not pledge himself to this measure, the fact will be known and advertised.—Spokane (Wash.) Industrial World.

WHY PEOPLE ARE POOR.

The Enormous Tribute Paid By Labor in the Past Twenty Years.

It seems curiously paradoxical to say that the people of the richest country on earth are poverty stricken, and yet it is true. The "nine million mortgaged homes," disclosed to view by the eleventh census of the United States, is proof enough of that fact, without citing more. Yet any one who will take the trouble to study the conditions which have prevailed during the past twenty years will not be surprised, after investigation, that it is so.

During that period the productive forces of this country have been called upon to pay tribute to foreign speculators, to the amount of almost \$2,000,000,000, of which we have positive knowledge, and perhaps twice as much more, concerning which, having been reinvested here, we are unable to get complete information. They have paid over \$1,500,000,000 on the principal of a war debt, and about \$1,600,000,000 of interest on the same. There has been consumed by fires \$1,500,000,000, according to the best estimates obtainable. Not including the payments on either the principal or interest of the debt, it has cost \$4,000,000,000 for those purposes. The interests and dividends on railroad bonds and stocks, including that on "water," has been about \$4,000,000,000 more. The interest on the \$9,000,000,000 of real estate mortgages which Mr. Porter's census agents reported at 8 per cent, would amount in that time to \$14,400,000,000, and the interest on other individual debts, including the real estate mortgages not reported by the census,