

# A Political Vendetta

By

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HIS is a new and engaging work of fiction from the pen of a popular western author. It is a story of the hour and deals with themes and incidents of every-day national life as we find it about us. It is a story that goes into the depths of tragedy and rises to the heights of strong emotion. It is sentient with powerful humanity. Its central figure is such a man as has been the model theme of many a timely pen. The heroine is a lovely girl whom circumstance and fate arm with the power to meet her destiny with a strong devotion that gilds this great story with rare closeness to the truth and courage of a noble nature.

The political element of the story is well devised and handled in a masterly manner, showing how the field of politics is one that can be used to advantage to themselves and disadvantage to others, by schemers who know how to control the voters of a community. The timeliness of the theme will appeal to all readers, who at the present time are interested in the great national issues now so prominently before the public.

The reader will find this serial very entertaining in its details and its plot motive is strong and intensely dramatic. We commend the story for its peculiar originality of treatment and the satisfactory ending, while true worth is rewarded and the plots of the schemer defeated. All should read it. It is a rare work of fiction.

**CHAPTER I.**  
The great city was looking for a man—a missing man. The newspapers had published columns concerning his mysterious vanishment and printed his picture times without number. Friends and acquaintances had searched everywhere for him, and the police department, powerful, on-pressing, had brought into play all its efficient machinery—for back of the impelling motive were the mandate, the direction, the influence of the master-will of a great political organization.

It was Gideon Hope's brother, Everett Hope, aged 25, bright, buoyant, on the threshold of smiling yet majestic manhood, who had dropped from view as though abruptly blotted out of existence. He had left no trail—like a bird in the air, a stone in the water, a smoldering breath in desert wastes. In the midst of bustling activity, in the very heart of the mighty metropolis, in broad daylight, he had walked to some mysterious doom that had buried, had obliterated him completely. From certain obscure street corner at a minute past nine and minute, he had been lost to the sight of man and man, and there was no clue to motive, whereabouts or fate, although a full week had passed by.

They were men of strength, courage and character—these Hopes. Gideon had come to the city twelve years before, a brawny, bronzed son of toil—from the northern rolling mills district, it was said. Ramor had it, that the scion of a millionaire king of industry, he had dropped with a single blow to the pit of hard, manual labor. He had won, with the same appearance, the dignity of a man, who with equal grace and fitness, could deal an anvil stroke that would split a ten-inch steel beam, or clasp a diamond bracelet about the dainty wrist of a duchess.

Gideon had become the timekeeper for a great iron shop in the city, then its superintendent, and then a man with a nameless position, but extravagant salary—the censor, the directing magistrate, who his hand, his discretion, his will, to the core of every political movement, to hold the strings that controlled men and millions—his puppets. His word was law, his will supreme.

This man, with his harsh, hard face and crisp, repellent manner, however, had one tender spot in his nature—his brother, Everett. His fellow had noted his cold eye flicker when he spoke of him. Who knew he was produced among them a fair, beauteous, fire-haired youth, all gentleness and courtesy, strong contrast to himself—there were pride in his eye and devotion in his smile. It seemed impossible that he could be of kin, so widely dissimilar were they.

"My brother was there that day?" he half-consciously murmured.

"We don't know that," explained the chief; "and, perhaps, hardly. You see, it was shut up tight—practically abandoned. Some of the officials were fitting about the premises off and on during that day, but we have no reason to think your brother really was there. He visited the place. It's empty enough. They haven't found a thousand dollars in assets."

"The same—a stench in the nostrils of every honest man! You know the game?"

"They hired a big vacant factory, fenced it in mysteriously, and proceeded, according to popular supposition, to make silver to order. They were closed up the day after your brother had them on his list—next evening, officers and manual equipment disappeared, leaving a few useless machines, some 'bogus' metal mixtures, and a big load of debts."

Gideon had, however, the public record to his credit. The public

had details of the giant failure in a spectacular way, and the particulars were still fresh in his mind.

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