

a word to the clerk, and then he dodges down here and slams the door behind him. Seen you through the window, I guess — ”

“ Well, I ’ll just step in and have a look at him, Mr. Callery. Excuse me a minute.”

He rapped on the closed door and called in a loud cheery voice: “ Mr. Higginson.”

“ Come in,” said a voice from within — a rather agitated voice which had a curiously familiar ring in the young man’s ears.

Varney swung open the door, stepped into the small parlor, and (greatly to the disappointment of Mr. Callery) closed the door behind him.

In the middle of the room, staring nervously toward the door, stood a handsome elderly gentleman, of distinguished presence and clothes of a rather notable perfection. At sight of him the young man’s advance halted in utter bewilderment, and he fell back limply against the shut door.

But the elderly gentleman came running toward him with a suppressed cry, and seizing the young man’s hand disarmingly in both his own, threw himself almost hysterically upon his apologia.

“ Can you forgive me, my boy? Ah, I ’ll confess that I ’ve dreaded this meeting, while longing for it, too! You look badly — ah, very badly! — yet — not bitter, not resentful — thank God, not unhappy! My boy, can you find it in your heart to forgive an old man who has suffered deeply for his sins? ”

Out of his whirling confusion, his insane sense of the world suddenly gone upside down and the familiar

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