

## An Alien Heir

By FRANCIS A. COREY

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Throwing a fresh stick on the fire, Dick Vance gazed approvingly about him. The room which the dancing flames lighted up had a cozy, homelike air delightfully in contrast with his cheerless lodgings in Paris. At last he had one little spot within four walls that he could call his own.

As he stretched his legs comfortably to the blaze he was still tingling with the thrill of amazement he had felt when informed by the village lawyer during their brief interview that afternoon that he was Robert Chilton's heir.

"The estate consists of this old house, which has been in the Chilton family for a hundred years, and \$50,000 in stocks and bonds," Mr. Blackstone had said.

"And it's mine, really mine, to do what I please with?" Dick asked eagerly.

"Nobody can dispute your legal right to it," was the stiff response. "Chilton took care to make a will that would hold. The justice of the bequest is quite another thing."

Although three hours had gone by since then, Dick still almost doubted his great fortune. How often he had gone with empty pockets and nothing to eat!

One blissful thought made his heart leap. He could marry Alice Dale! They had waited two years because of their poverty. There was now no occasion for delay.

The wind whistled around the house, driving great gusts of snow against the windows. Dick laughed at its futile rage and stirred the fire afresh. In fancy he saw Alice sitting on the other side of the hearth, one pretty pink cheek in her palm. How graciously she would smile over the house! He would hasten to her the first thing on the morrow with the wonderful news.

The doorbell rang. Mr. Robbins, the gray haired minister who had officiated at Robert Chilton's funeral that day, was ushered in. Shaking the snow from his great coat, he sat down heavily before the fire, his face wearing a stern expression.

"Mr. Vance, how long had you known the deceased?" he abruptly inquired.

"About six months, sir."

"You met abroad?"

"Yes, sir—in Paris. Mr. Chilton fell seriously ill at one of the hotels. He was alone, and I took care of him. He was pleased to think that my nursing saved his life."

"You traveled with him afterward?"

"I did. I was a poor medical student. I had just taken my degree. I could act as courier and also keep careful watch over his bodily health."

Dick smiled pleasantly, but the clergyman's face grew harder than before.

"Did he ever speak to you of his family?"

"Only once—just before he died. He said that he had betrayed, forsaken him; that he was worse than alone in the world. He made me promise to bury him from his old home, never intimating that I was to be his heir. That came as a complete surprise. Oh, sir," Dick added, with kindling eyes, "this legacy means everything to me—success, happiness, a prosperous career."

Looking at the young man over his spectacles, Mr. Robbins said gravely:

"Then you are not aware that Mr. Chilton left a daughter and a grandchild?"

Dick turned pale, and all at once there was a curious pounding in his ears.

"No! It simply can't be! He would have told me!"

"It seems that he did not. His daughter married against his wishes and he never forgave her. She is now a widow, a confirmed invalid, and very poor. Her child, a girl of twenty, is working beyond her strength for the bare necessities of life. I sent word to them, but it appears they did not receive it in time to come."

There was a silence which neither of the two seemed disposed to break. Dick's forehead glistened with perspiration. He swept a shaking hand across it.

"Of course I understand why you tell me this," he cried huskily. "You think I have no right to the property and should give it up."

The old minister frowned, and was silent. Dick glanced furtively around the room.

"I won't do it!" he cried, with half angry vehemence. "If Mr. Chilton had wanted his daughter to have it, he would have left it to her. It's mine—mine! I intend to keep it!"

Mr. Robbins rose and picked up his hat from the table.

"I regret exceedingly your decision," he said coldly. "Frankly, I'm disappointed in you. Good night, sir." And he walked out of the room.

Dick sat for a long time gazing into the fire. His cheeks were flushed. The discarded daughter was nothing to him. He would be a fool to abdicate in her favor. No doubt she deserved all that had befallen her, and even worse.

Presently his thoughts turned to Alice. She had forbidden him to write to her. He should be free, she had said, since they would be unable to marry for years, if ever. Not a line had passed between them for months. But he felt no misgivings. She loved him; she would remain true.

"How I wish it were morning that I might go to her," he said aloud.

He smiled, and yet a heaviness lay

on his heart. The sad face of the woman whose birthright he had stolen seemed to stare at his reprehensibly from the corners of the room. It even framed itself in the smoldering logs as they blazed up fitfully and fell apart.

The doorbell rang again. After a long delay the door opened to admit Mrs. Burke, the old housekeeper. She was pale with suppressed emotion.

"Another visitor?" he exclaimed with annoyance. "Who is it?"

"Mr. Chilton's granddaughter, sir," was the startling response. Dick sprang to his feet.

"The poor child did not learn of her grandfather's death until today, sir. The storm delayed the mail. She came at once—and alone, because her mother is ill."

"What does she want?" His voice had a strangely harsh, unnatural sound.

"She hoped to be in time for the funeral, but her train was stalled. She is going right away again. I thought, sir," hesitatingly, "you might like to see her first."

See her! Dick felt a sick shivering through all his being. Of course it was a game to wheedle some concession from him. But it would be childish to refuse.

"Where is she?"

"In the kitchen. She would come no farther."

As Dick started in that direction Mrs. Burke laid her hand upon his arm.

"One moment, sir. I'd like to tell you something. The girl loves a worthy man as poor as herself. They can never marry now. I'm sorry for them both."

She turned half fiercely, but before he could speak his anger was swallowed up in pity. The case appealed to him strongly. Was the structure of his happiness to be built upon the ruin of two lives? If he robbed this girl of her inheritance what was left to her?

With these thoughts whirling in his brain he started on again, with heavy, shuffling steps. The girl sat before the kitchen fire, her face in her hands. Dick saw the drooping figure as through a red mist. He began speaking rapidly, in a tense voice, as if half afraid to trust himself.

"I'm a selfish brute. At first I didn't realize the injustice of accepting a legacy that means everything to you"—At his first word a tremor had shaken the bowed figure. She lifted her head suddenly with a startled exclamation.

"Dick! Dick!"

He stood staring. All at once the mist seemed shot through with a dazzling light. He leaned nearer, like one half blinded, and brushed his hand across his eyes.

"Alice! It is Alice!" he said incredulously.

She, the quicker to grasp the situation, looked up at him with a happy laugh.

"Dick! Oh, Dick! Nobody told me the name of the man who had robbed me of my birthright. I never dreamed it was you. I thought it was some adventurer. That is why I meant—to go away—without seeing you!"

The words died in an inarticulate murmur. Her blushing face was pressed against his breast.

**The Slavery of the Match.**

To a nonsmoker a match is a small sulphur tipped stick, useful for lighting the gas. It is kept in a holder on the wall and is no more important than ice water or slippers. To a smoker a match is one of the currencies of comfort. It is indispensable, precious and exceedingly scarce. To him the man who always has a match to lend is a friend worth having—a chronic borrower of matches is a public nuisance. The smoker's life is divided into periods of affluence when his vest pocket is full of matches and of poverty when he has but one match and is not sure that it will light. He dreams at night that he is on a vast prairie, miles from home, with a pipeful of tobacco and no match. He knows every vantage point where matches can be had. He is always greedy for them—always suffering for them. He envies the man who always has two matches left. Try as he may, he can't do the trick himself.—Council Bluffs Nonpareil.

**Original Natural History.**

The Rev. Samuel Peters was the man who made Connecticut's blue laws famous by their publication in his history of that state. In that interesting volume the following original bit of natural history is to be found: "In the Connecticut river, 200 miles from Long Island sound, is a narrow of five yards only formed by two shelving mountains of solid rock whose tops intercept the clouds. Through this chasm are compelled to pass all the waters which in the time of floods bury the northern country. Here water is consolidated without frost, by pressure, by swiftness, between the plashing sturdy rocks to such a degree of induration that an iron crow floats smoothly down its current. Here iron, lead and cork have one common weight; here, steady as time and harder than marble, the stream passes irresistible if not swift as lightning."

**An Indian Fable.**

A woodman entered a wood with his ax on his shoulder. The trees were alarmed and addressed him thus: "Ah, sir, will you not let us live happily some time longer?" "Yes," said the woodman; "I am quite willing to do so, but as often as I see this ax I am tempted to come to the wood and do my work in it, so I am not to blame so much as this ax." "We know," said the trees, "that the handle of the ax, which is a piece of a branch of a tree in this very wood, is more to be feared than the iron, for it is that which helps you to destroy its kindred."

"You are quite right," said the woodman. "There is no foe so bitter as a renegade."

## CAN YOU SOLVE THIS?

**A Problem That Seems Simple, but That Will Invite Discussion.**

How much greater than three-fourths is four-fourths?

At first sight it seems an easy question, but put it to your arithmetical friends and you will probably find that it will divide them into two parties, one contending that the answer is one-fourth and the other as positively affirming that it is one-third, while both will be ready to prove the accuracy of their respective solutions.

The party of the first part (to use a legal phrase) may argue their point to this way:

Five shillings is the fourth part of a pound. If you have 15 shillings, or three-fourths of a pound, and somebody gives you another fourth part you have a sovereign—ergo, your four-fourths is one-fourth greater than three-fourths.

But this will not suit the other party at all, and they will proceed scrupulously to point out that the argument is all wrong, since if you have 15 shillings and somebody is generous enough to add 5 shillings to it the donor is only giving you one-third of the amount you already possess (5 times 3 equals 15), therefore your sovereign is only one-third more than your 15 shillings.

It is a pretty problem, and expert accountants have been known to wrangle over it for hours.—London Answers.

## SCIENTIFIC FARMING.

**The Way Long Tongued Bees Saved Australian Clover.**

A clerk in the department of agriculture said:

"So you think that scientific farming is a bluff? You demand some illustrations of the good that is accomplished by the scientific method? Very well."

"When clover was first introduced into Australia it grew there beautifully, but it never seeded. The soil was all right. The climate was all right. What, then, was the trouble?"

"A scientist studied the matter, and this is what he found:

"He found that the native Australian bees had tongues too short to reach the clover's pollen forming organs. These organs in red clover are hidden deeply in the heart of the tubelike petals and they can only be fertilized by the long tongued bumblebee. If red clover is not visited by bumblebees, who bear the golden pollen grains from one blossom to another, it never seeds—it cannot be grown. The scientist, aware of the fact, soon put his finger on the barren Australian clover's trouble. He imported a lot of long tongued bumblebees. These bees flourished, and immediately Australian clover, which had promised to be a failure, became one of the country's richest and finest crops."—Chicago Chronicle.

## GOLDFISH IN JAPAN.

**The Demand For Them Appears to Be Almost Without Limit.**

Although the goldfish occurs in a wild state in Japan, it is probable that China some 400 years ago furnished the stock from which the wonderful varieties of Japanese goldfish have been bred. It is reported that in feudal days, even when famine was abroad in the land and many people were starving, the trade in goldfish was flourishing.

The demand at present appears to be without limit, and the output shows a substantial increase each year. Many thousand people make a living by growing goldfish for market, and hundreds of peddlers carry the fish through the streets and along the country roads in wooden tubs suspended from a shoulder bar.

The leading goldfish center is Koriyama, near the ancient capital of Nara. Here are 850 independent breeding establishments, whose yearly production runs far into the millions. One farm which I visited was started 140 years ago. At first it was conducted merely for the pleasure of the owner, but it eventually became a commercial enterprise and is now very profitable.—National Geographic Magazine.

## African Grosbeaks.

The social grosbeaks of South Africa live in large societies. They select a tree of considerable size and literally cover it with grass roof, under which their common dwelling is constructed. The roof serves the double purpose of keeping off the heat and the rain, and 400 or 500 pairs of birds are known to have the same shelter.

The nests in this aerial dwelling are built in regular streets and closely resemble rows of tenement houses.

## Talking Rock.

Australia has a postoffice named Talking Rock. The origin of the name is thus stated: Some one discovered in the vicinity a large stone upon which had been painted the words, "Turn me over." It required considerable strength to accomplish this, and when it was done the command, "Now turn me back and let me fool some one else," was found painted on the underside of the stone.

## The Lightning Cure.

"Here's a story of a man who was cured of rheumatism by being struck by lightning."

"I'll risk de rheumatism every time," said Brother Dickey. "I don't want no doctor what's ex quick ez dat!"—Atlanta Constitution.

## His Job.

"What's Stevens doing now?"

"Nothing."

"But I was told he was holding a government position."

"He is."—Milwaukee Sentinel.

Encouragement after censure is as the sun after a shower.—Goethe.

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## "HERE IS THE TRAIL."

Signs Used by Indian Tribes and White Hunters.

First among the trail signs that are used by Indians and white hunters and most likely to be used to the traveler, says a writer in Country Life in America, are ax blades on tree trunks. These may vary greatly with locality, but there is one everywhere in use with scarcely any variation. This is simply the white spot nicked off by knife or ax and meaning, "Here is the trail."

The Oldblows and other woodland tribes use twigs for a great many signs. The hanging broken twig, like the simple blade, means, "This is the trail." The twig clean broken off and laid on the ground across the line of march means, "Break from your straight course and go in the line of the butt end," and when an ax head warning is meant the butt is pointed toward the one following the trail and raised somewhat in a forked twig. If the butt of the twig were raised and pointing to the left it would mean, "Look out, camp," or "Counselors or the enemy or the game we have killed is out that way."

The old buffalo hunters had an established signal that is yet used by mountain guides. It is as follows:

Two shots in rapid succession, an interval of five seconds by the watch, then one shot, means, "Where are you?" The answer, given at once and exactly the same, means, "Here I am. What do you want?" The reply to this may be one shot, which means, "All right; I only wanted to know where you were." But if the reply repeats the first it means, "I am in serious trouble. Come as fast as you can."

**Customs Red Tape.**

Several bits of paint were found among the luggage of an Englishman who was traveling to Monaco. He was in charge of a racing craft and intended to use the pigment to touch up the vessel after its long railway journey. The French customs officials, however, took exception to the paint on the ground that it contained dutiable spirit, whereupon the traveler argued that he intended bringing it back on leaving the country. Asked how he was going to bring it back, he replied, "On the sides of the boat." Even this plea did not suffice, the authorities arguing that the spirit would have evaporated.

## BILIOUSNESS AND CONSTIPATION CURED BY THE FORD'S BLACK-DRAUGHT

Because the liver is neglected people suffer with constipation, biliousness, headache and fever. Colds attack the lungs and contagious diseases take hold of the system. It is safe to say that if the liver were always kept in proper working order, illness would be almost unknown.

The Ford's Black-Draught is so successful in curing such sickness because it is without a rival as a liver regulator. This great family medicine is not a strong and drastic drug, but a mild and beautiful laxative that cures constipation and may be taken by a mere child without possible harm.

The healthful action on the liver cures biliousness. It has an invigorating effect on the kidneys. Because the liver and kidneys do not work regularly, the poisonous acids along with the waste from the bowels get back into the blood and violent contagion results.

Timely treatment with The Ford's Black-Draught removes the dangers which lurk in constipation, liver and kidney troubles, and will positively forestall the incursions of Bright's disease, for which disease in advanced stages there is no cure. Ask your dealer for a 25c package of The Ford's Black-Draught.

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