

THE MAN IN A DREAM.

In an eddy of the great stream which ebbs and flows along Broadway, I found myself one afternoon unexpectedly face to face with my very good friend, Dr. Adolph Mayer. As we stood there talking, suddenly the doctor stretched forth his hand and drew one whom he knew out of the river of strangers. Thus I became acquainted with Mr. Clarence Hall, whom, presently, the current bore away again.

Dr. Mayer had seized rather eagerly, I thought, the opportunity for this introduction, and so I was not surprised that he should ask me, when Hall had gone, what had been my impression of his friend?

"He seemed preoccupied," I thought at first that he might be deaf, because I noticed that you pronounced the introductory form with unusual distinctness."

"His hearing is all right," I answered. "Yes, I soon perceived that the trouble was in his faculty of directing his attention. He gave the idea of a man in a dream."

"You have hit it exactly," exclaimed Dr. Mayer. "That's just what he is."

"Do you mean that he is in love," I asked.

"He is in love," was the reply, "but that is only a part of the dream. It was not even the beginning of it."

"I don't understand."

"Of course you don't; but come, you shall hear the whole story. There's no objection to my telling it to you. This case is the most remarkable in my experience, and the story will be worth your time."

"Hall was poor at twenty-one, when he came out of college," Dr. Mayer began. "He was alone in the world. The best offer of work which he received—and it wasn't a good one by any means—brought him to the city. He had the artistic nature, and, as I believe, great literary ability; but, bless you, he couldn't have made car-fare out of it. So he became a bank clerk."

"He had a great craving for wealth; not for the luxuries it would bring, but for the opportunities. Studious leisure was what he wanted. He was not the man to write poetry in a garret, and he knew it. There was no disguising the fact that dull, hard labor made him wretched, and he was one of those who can no more produce that good thing of which the seed is in them without happiness than a tree can bear its fruit without sunshine. During his two years' servitude in the bank he did not once put pen to paper except in the routine of his daily toil."

"But such an imagination as his would find an expression somehow. In his case the creative power wrought day dreams. We all indulge ourselves in these delusions more or less. He would be a poor creature who would not tell himself a better story than the pointless, thread-bare, barren tale of life. When too much weariness denies us sleep we gain at least a counterfeit of peace by painting restful scenes; we are the stronger, I dare say, for fancied heroisms. This is the natural remedy for the nausea of existence, and it is good, no doubt, in small doses. But Clarence Hall carried the practice to dangerous excess. He was jostled by the crowd in an L train, and at the same time he floated on the Bay of Naples; he worked in the bank at ten dollars a week, and spent his entire revenues with lavish hand in the bright world of fancy."

"I did not know him then, but he has told me that he could banish reality from every place but one, and that was his little room on the East Side. There he led but one life and it was torture. His most wretched moment of the day was that in which consciousness returned to him after sleep. It was then that the dull walls stared at him, and the tawdry furniture mocked him, and the hard truth was like a clenched fist shaken in his face."

"Elsewhere, however, he was not unhappy. His dreams at last had taken definite form; they had become unified into something like a Chinese drama, which requires a month for its performance. He became rich in the first scene, and always in the same way—by inheritance from a relative of whom he had never heard. Then came luxury at home, then travel and finally love. He would 'keep his place' in this dream as one does in a book, and if driven into reality for a few minutes, he would then pick up the thread of dreamland's story where he had laid it down."

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"So that's his case," said I. "He is practically insane, I suppose. Delusions of grandeur and paresis just beginning to get its grip on him."

"Well, as to that," said the doctor, "he really is rich."

"Then his dream came true—at least as to the money?"

"Yes, and the event was surprisingly like the dream. Just as he was ready to move away from Mrs. Rodgers' house his fortunes changed. It was an inheritance, and it ran up into the millions. The legal business was done through Webster & Hathaway. I know Webster well. The demeanor of Hall was such that the lawyers doubted his sanity. In the first place he seemed to know all about it without being told. Webster broke the news to him, and Clarence said that he had been expecting it a long time. Now Webster had never before believed that Clarence had never before heard of the existence of Leonard Hall, the Brazilian merchant, whose fortune had been so strangely laid at the young man's feet. Oh, yes, indeed, already selected bachelor apartments suited to his ample means; he had gone the day before to assure himself that they were still vacant. Webster took occasion to verify this statement the next day. There was no doubt about it. Clarence had called at the Croisic and examined a suite. He had carried his dreams so far into reality."

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"It would have cured him, as you say," replied Dr. Mayer. "The trouble is that he doesn't know it."

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"No; he thinks that it is all a dream. He has no notion that the luxuries by which he is surrounded are realities."

"But does he not believe you when you tell him so?"

"Unfortunately he doesn't believe that I am a reality. He thinks that I am a creature of the imagination. Doubtless he has the same thought of you."

"But other people must be continually contradicting his delusion."

"No; for they are not aware of it. Until I told you, no mortal but myself suspected it. You noted his dreamy air, but it never would have led you to suspect the truth. You see he acts like a sane man; truth."

"Why trouble him at all? Is he not happy?"

"No, Maynard, he isn't. He believes himself to be insane, but that does not grieve him. On the contrary, he is glad of it. His chief trouble is the fear that he will recover his reason and find himself once more a clerk."

"What is your theory?"

"It is simply a habit of thought, hardened into a delusion. Thought is nothing but a phenomenon accompanying certain chemical and physical changes. Something starts it in a certain direction and it tends to keep on. Take a simple natural process as an illustration: Rock candy is made by crystallizing sugar that has been dissolved by water. The crystals will be very small if you let them alone; but put a piece of string into the water, giving the process something to start with, and big, clear crystals result. Some strings of association were dropped into his mind when those little dreams began to form, and behold, they took greater size and new and beautiful shapes."

"And the cure?"

"If you could find just what that string was I might pull it out and start the process going in the other way; but—"

"He paused and shook his head. 'You don't believe that you can find it,' said I."

"Perhaps I may, but shall I dare to lose the knowledge? He might go stark mad. He would unquestionably feel a tendency to suicide. I don't know just what will come of it. At present I am studying him, and doing nothing else in his case."

"You spoke of his being in love."

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"Does she know of his condition?"

"She does not," replied the Doctor. "It is one of the gravest problems of the case. Should I tell her?"

"In honor he should do so. You say he knows that he is crazy, and surely he is a gentleman."

"But, my dear fellow, how can I feel a moral obligation of that sort regarding a creature of his brain? It has never occurred to him that she needed to be informed. She is one of the specters in the ghostly country he inhabits. Why should he talk to her as if she was a visitor from the real world?"

"This is too much for me," said I. "But, then, why should I expect to understand at once a case that you have been studying for months?"

"Almost a year," said Dr. Mayer. "But what do you think of it?"

"I gave it up, as the phrase goes. I could form no opinion as to the probable result. 'Keep me informed of every phase of the case,' said I, in parting with the Doctor. 'I am deeply interested.'"

"Some weeks passed before I again met Dr. Mayer. When we met my first question touched upon Hall."

"Is there anything new in the case?" I asked.

"Everything is new," he replied. "Then he put on the cloak of his professional manner which disguises sentiment. I perceived at once that something unusual had happened to Hall, and that my friend had been deeply affected by it."

"Death," said I to myself, "and probably by his own hands."

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YARMOUTH & ANNAPOLIS R.Y.

SUMMER ARRANGEMENT.

On and after Monday, June 26th, 1893, trains will run daily (Sunday excepted) as follows:

LEAVE YARMOUTH—Express daily at 8:45 a.m.; Passengers and Freight Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 1:45 p.m.; arrive at Annapolis at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 1:45 p.m. Arrive at Weymouth at 4:22 p.m.

LEAVE ANNAPOLIS—Express daily at 1:05 p.m.; Passengers and Freight Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday at 7:30 a.m.; arrive at Yarmouth at 11:05 a.m.

LEAVE WEYMOUTH—Passengers and Freight Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8:15 a.m. Arrive at Yarmouth at 11:05 a.m.

CONNECTIONS—