

**AN AMERICAN
POLITICIAN: A NOVEL; IN
TWO VOLUMES, VOL. II**

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An American Politician: A Novel; In Two Volumes, Vol. II by F. Marion Crawford

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F. MARION CRAWFORD

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AN AMERICAN POLITICIAN.

VOL. II.

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BY
F. MARION CRAWFORD

AUTHOR OF
"MR. ISAACH," "DR. CLAUDIUS," "A ROMAN RINGER,"
"TO LEWARD," ETC.

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VOL. II.

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1884

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W H R G R Y :
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AN AMERICAN POLITICIAN.

CHAPTER I.

A COUNCIL of three men sat in certain rooms, in Conduit Street, London. There was nothing whatever about the bachelor's front room overlooking the thoroughfare to suggest secrecy, nor did any one of the three gentlemen who sat in easy chairs, with cigars in their mouths, in any way resemble a conspirator. They were neither masked nor wrapped in cloaks, but wore the ordinary garb of fashionably civilised life. For the sake of clearness and convenience, they can be designated as X, Y, and Z. X was the president on the present occasion, but the office was not held permanently, devolving upon each of the three in succession at each successive meeting.

X was a man sixty years of age, clean-shaved, with smooth iron-grey hair and bushy eyebrows, from beneath which shone a pair of preternaturally bright blue eyes. His face was of a strong, even, healthy red; he was stout, but rather thick and massive than corpulent; his hands were of the square type, with thick straight fingers and large nails, the great blue veins showing strongly through the white skin. He was dressed in black, as though in mourning, and his clothes fitted smoothly over his short heavy figure.

Y was very tall and slight, and it was not easy to make a guess at his age, for his hair was sandy and thick, and his military moustache concealed the lines about his mouth. His forehead was high and broad, and the extreme prominence between his brows made his profile look as though the facial angles were reversed, as in certain busts of Greek philosophers. His fingers were well shaped, but extremely long and thin. He wore the high collar of the period, with a white tie fastened by a pin consisting of a single large pearl, and it was evident that the remainder of his dress was with

him a subject of great attention. Y might be anywhere from forty to fifty years of age.

Z was the eldest of the three, and in some respects the most remarkable in appearance. He was well proportioned, except that his head seemed large for his body. His face was perfectly colourless, and his thin hair was white and long and disorderly. A fringe of snowy beard encircled his throat like a scarf, but his lips and cheeks were clean-shaved. The dead waxen whiteness of his face was thrown into startling relief by his great black eyes, in which there was a depth and a fire when he was roused, that contrasted strongly with his aged appearance. His dress was simple in the extreme, and of the darkest colours.

The three sat in their easy chairs round the coal fire. It was high noon in London, and the weather was moderately fine; that is to say, it was possible to read in the room without lighting the gas. X held a telegram in his hand.

"This is a perfectly clear case against us," he remarked in a quiet, business-like manner.

"It has occurred at such an unfortunate