

covered, but when your picture is to be taken and handed down to posterity, you may as well look respectable. Well, just as I was screwing my face first to one side and then to the other, and turning my eyes to see what was the best way to get a pleasant expression, I got a glimpse over my shoulder of something like a full moon, and, turning round, there was Betty at my back.

"Get away, James," she said, "I did not think you were so foolish; let me in to the mirror, for my bonnet's all twisted."

I at once stepped to the rear side, as in duty bound, and busied myself for a little arranging my pocket handkerchief just so as to let two or three inches hang gracefully out, by accident, you know. By and by our names were called out, and away we went up a lot of shaky, wooden stairs, to the very top of the house past the top, I think, for it was a glass house, no slates or shingles at all, and an extraordinary smell of medicine and vitriol pervading the whole place.

Having explained that we wanted a group—for I had made enquiries and found that a group was a little cheaper than two single ones—the photographer got a hold of me and placed me, with my one hand holding gracefully on to the back of the chair, and my other thumb in my waistcoat, while Betty was set down in the chair with her hands in her muff. All being ready, the man went off into a dark room, and all was silent for a minute or two. Betty then whispered to me:

"James, there's a fly on the tip of my nose, you might give it a 'shoo' off."

"Woman," said I, sternly, but trying not to move my lips, "if it was a humble bee itself you must just bear it, or you'll spoil the picture. You must not move, remember."

Betty, however, took one of her hands out of her muff and rubbed the fly away; and then, just as the man came back, she cried out:

"Gracious me! I forgot to take off my spectacles" and off she tore them with a jerk into her pocket, but just as she did so the man said:

"Ah! you're moving."

"Moving," cried Betty, "I should think so! I would like to see you take off your spectacles without moving."

We got all right again, but just as the man came out the second time, Betty said:

"My foot is asleep."

And with that she gave her foot a kick out, and I could not hinder her from getting up and hopping around the room, making a downright fool of me. The man got a little angry at this, but I said, to pacify him, you know:

"Now, well sit quiet, and see you turn on your machinery as quick as you can, and be done with it."

So in he went again.

"What's that kind of trumpet-looking thing on the three legs, James, with its nose pointing straight at us?" said Betty.

"Well," I said, "I'm not very sure. I should not wonder if it is some new-fashioned kind of Armstrong gun. It's desperate like it, anyway. Perhaps he invents guns in his spare moments. I would just as soon, however, have its nose pointed the other way," and I slipped over and had its nose just pointing to the other window, when in ran our friend again from the dark room.

He looked rather dumbfounded when he saw the gun turned round, and seized it to turn it back again as it was.

Said I to myself: "This doesn't look well, and I began to observe that the man was somewhat excited. His hair was long and flying in the air. His eyes rolled

about in an alarming manner. He had a moustache, but no whiskers, and his cheeks were blue black with shaving. That's a thing I cannot say I like to see. It looks too much like an actor, you know.

"Faith, I wish we were safe out of this," I whispered below my breath, but I said nothing to Betty, for fear of frightening her. However, I determined to watch narrowly all that passed, and to spring on him when I thought he became dangerous.

"Of course, you understand, we came to have our portraits taken," I remarked.

"Good gracious," he said, "you don't suppose I think you came to be shot," and with this he looked daggers at me, and dived in once more to the dark room.

"James," said Betty, "do you think it is all right?"

"Faith," said I, "I am not sure of it, at all. You see that shooting is running in his mind, and that confounded gun is always pointing this way yet. I wonder what the blamed thing is doing there at all. I just think we would almost be as well to slip away downstairs before he comes out. We might be murdered up here, and nobody would be a bit the wiser. Besides, what makes him always run into that dark room? If he is after no mischief, surely he need not hide himself away like that."

"You bet he's gone for some liquor," said Betty, "I hear lots of bottles and glasses clinking when he is in there."

"I only wish that may be all he has gone in for," I said. "Maybe it is the powder he keeps in there."

However, before we could do anything, out he came once more, and took off the front of the gun, slipping in behind at the same time a very suspicious-looking thing. Now, all the cannon balls I ever had seen were *round*, and this was *square*, so I felt somewhat reassured. He then began, however, to peep at us along the top, like taking aim. I watched to see whether it was my head or Betty's that he was aiming at, but so far as my judgment went it was right between us.

With all this, remember, I gave the poor fellow the benefit of the doubt, and was inclined to think him silly more a fool than a knave. But just then he drew a black cloth over his head, so as to disguise himself that we should not be able to swear to him in a court of justice.

This was too much. As he stooped down and cried "Steady," I on with my hat, and screaming to Betty:

"Run, woman, run! or in five minutes you'll be as dead as a herring!" I dashed down the stair and Betty after me, head over heels, with her muff flying down ahead of us, and the poor wooden stairs cracking and screeching under our feet. The young ladies ran to see what was up (or down rather), and with one spring I drove one of them through a large glass case of portraits, while Betty tripped over another and nearly smothered her.

Up, however, I pulled poor Betty, and managed to drag her down—down two, three, four steps at a time, round the corner, and never stopped till we got into the West End Car, and away up to the head of it, out of sight.

I gave one sigh of relief, taking off my hat to wipe my brow. Betty laid her head on my shoulder and murmured:

"Oh! James, this is an awful world. I never was as near being killed as I was just there."

The conductor thought we had been at a funeral, we were so dejected, and he never asked for his five cents, and I quite forgot to pay him. But I'll pay him yet. He knows me well.

The next time we go to have our portraits, we'll go to some place that's recommended to us, and not just into the first place we see.