
The Kidnapped Plumber

tom of the ladder, he had in twenty years of practice as an operating plumber raised himself to the top of his profession. There was much in his appearance to suggest the underlying reasons of his success. His face, as is usual with men of our calling, had something of the dreamer in it, but the bold set of the jaw indicated determination of an uncommon kind. Three times President of the Plumbers' Association, Henry Thornton had enjoyed the highest honours of his chosen profession. His book on *Nut Coal* was recognised as the last word on the subject, and had been crowned by the French Academy of Nuts.

I suppose that one of the principal reasons for his success was his singular coolness and resource. I have seen Thornton enter a kitchen, with that quiet reassuring step of his, and lay out his instruments on the table, while a kitchen tap with a broken washer was sprizling within a few feet of him, as calmly and quietly as if he were in his lecture room of the Plumbers' College.

"You never go into a cellar?" asked Fortes-