

The blue eyes twinkled under bushy, white eyebrows, as they looked quizzically and affectionately at this earnest searcher into nature's secrets.

In Harley Street the young specialist was put down, and the big car hummed away to Wimpole Street.

A quick luncheon, a couple of hours for consultations, and a long round of visits finished the working day. Arnold Bassingbroke ate a frugal dinner, wrote an article for a medical journal, changed into an old tweed suit, and went into his laboratory to continue some research work in which he was deeply interested. It related to a new drug imported from Japan and almost entirely unknown. He had been conducting experiments with it.

Arnold Bassingbroke had a most sympathetic nature; it gave him poignant pain to witness suffering, especially in a woman or child. He once had the horror of seeing a delicate woman face a terrible operation without the aid of chloroform. His indignant protest was met by the assurance that her heart was too weak to stand chloroform—it would be certain death to give it to her.

The horror of it remained with him. Could nothing be found as a substitute for such wonderful, but often uncertain and dangerous, conquerors of pain? The new drug offered possibilities. It was an opiate of great strength, but its action was gentle and gradual. There was no sudden stopping of the brain's activity, no violent cessation of consciousness, just a dropping asleep as of a drowsy child.

It required time to act—rest, quiet—and the result was complete drugged unconsciousness to pain—to everything—and it lasted; no hurried, frenzied rush was needed to get an operation over before the senses were again unchained. The patient slept its effects off, and woke refreshed. Surely a nepenthe such as this could be made a boon and a blessing to thousands of sufferers!

Arnold's clever brain was bent upon it, while the servants in Harley Street slept peacefully in their beds. All lights were extinguished except the solitary lamp in the laboratory and the electric globes in the surgery.

"After all, how can one gauge the effect by experiments upon animals?" he exclaimed impatiently. "I shall try it to-night upon myself. I have not slept properly for a week. Goss was right, that operation was a ticklish thing, a mere touch and go. It has frayed my nerves; I'm glad it's over. Heavens! To lose one's reason for three years, and wake up sane. What an experience!"

Arnold looked at his gold repeater lying on the table, then, taking up a small phial, proceeded to drop some of the precious, new drug into a wine-glass full of water. Then he drank it off.

"Let me see: one hour after taking, a pleasant, drowsy sensation, followed by six hours of complete unconsciousness, during which nothing matters. That will be all right. I shall wake up fit and refreshed by the time Benson brings my shaving water."

He stood for a moment, sampling the taste upon his tongue, then he threw himself into an easy chair.

"Better not smoke," he muttered, "it might fight against the drug; I don't want that. But I positively cannot go to bed yet, I am too wide awake. My brain feels on fire."

He sprang up and began to pace the room, trying to analyze his sensations, glancing occasionally at his watch as he passed the table.

"As soon as I feel drowsy, I shall tumble into bed and keep perfectly quiet, that is essential."

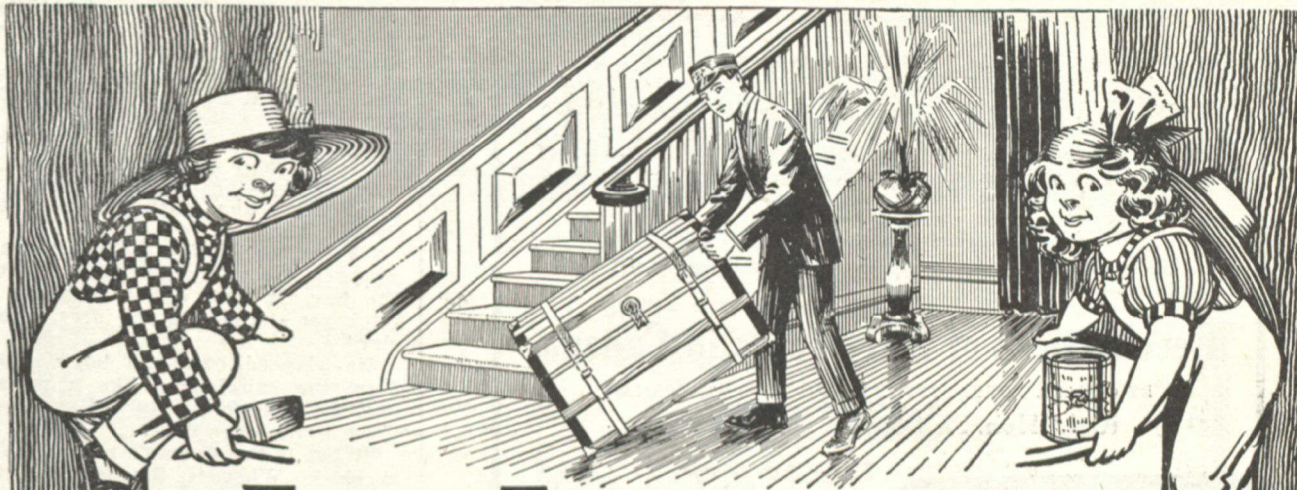
At that moment the night-bell rang, clanging loudly through the dark and silent house.

CHAPTER II.

A Night Call.

THE young specialist stood for a moment alert and listening. He heard the grating sound of wheels against the kerb, and again the bell pealed clamorously with its impatient summons.

"Who on earth can that be, at this time of night?" he muttered with an-



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