

sure to be in the last place we search, I decided to begin at the top, and continue my journey of discovery downwards, and stepped into the lift to avoid mounting the numerous stairs that led to the highest floor. This lift, chiefly employed for goods, was moved by steam—the powerful workman in that vast pile—and was so constructed that the person who was in it could cause it to descend at will, not, as in most cases, requiring the extra service of another below.

“When I went up with Mr. Furton and party I had of course not touched the ropes; but seeing no one about the place to assist me, and not deeming it as hard to move the lift as to climb the stairs, I jumped in, pulled, and it began to raise from the ground, though but gently and slowly not with the same speed as it did a few hours back.

“I ascribed this to my want of practice in guiding the machine, and after what seemed a very long time, arrived at an open, light space, near which the figure ‘P’ was painted in dazzling white, denoting that the first floor was gained. ‘He who goes softly goes safely,’ I thought, and I proceeded to pull, but the contrivance began to go slower and slower. I tugged, I dragged with all my might at the cords, but nothing would induce it to hasten its pace; it was gradually slackening its speed, and at last to my astonishment and dismay, it stopped altogether, leaving me in almost total darkness between the first and second floor.

“At first I felt inclined to treat the matter lightly, thinking my strength was a little exhausted, and that after a few minutes rest I should recover, and the ponderous lift, more like a small room than ought else, again be set in motion; so I sat down on the hard, bare floor, and endeavored in this uncomfortable posture to rest myself from the fatigue of my labors.

“I certainly must have ascended very slowly, for though I had spent much power, yet here was I not up to the second story, and quite tired out already. ‘When I get there I will walk the rest of the way,’ I soliloquised, ‘for at this rate I will be worn out with fatigue by the time I reach the sixth floor.’

“I spent a few moments meditating thus, when suddenly I leapt to my feet; my blood rushed to my head; I felt I knew not how, for it had just flashed across my brain why the lift had stopped, and with it another fearful idea.

“Idiot that I was, not to remember that the speed of the wheels had been already lessening when I was in the work-rooms, that this lift was also worked by steam, that it was expended, and (oh, horror!) that it might be my wedding morning before I could see a chance of being released from my enforced confinement. Had I only bid Mr. Furton wait for me, my long absence would have caused him uneasiness, but as it was he had gone home, and would doubtless not think much of it if he did not see or hear from me in the evening.

“Should I be able to survive the long fast my imprisonment would necessarily impose upon me? next rushed through my brain; and then, putting myself out of the question, what would my affianced wife—what would her father and mother, her friends and relations—think of my non-appearance? They might think I had been base enough to change my mind at the last, and decamped. No, they would not—she, at least, would not—think so hardly of me. But then the world is so uncharitable; and, if nothing else, the anxiety they would endure, and the thought of it, redoubled my own anguish.

“Vainly I tugged again at the ropes, knowing it to be useless, and yet upheld by the hope that the lift might move a little—I could not surely be more than four or five feet from the next story. At last I had to abandon it in despair, and flung myself on the hard boards in anything but a happy mood, as you may well imagine. Mahomet’s coffin, suspended between heaven and earth, occurred to me, and my position seemed to bear some resemblance to his.

“The anguish and *ennui* of that evening and night, the dead silence, unbroken save by some wretched dog howling dismally in the neighborhood, the darkness, the discomfort, and last, but far from least, the already very keenly sharp hunger, I shall never forget. But to talk of it recalls it in all its fearful vividness. The hours crept on so slowly, I seemed to have been