

APPLIED SCIENCE.

(CONTINUED.)

The reformer placed expectantly at Philip. But the latter, looking at the man on his face as he had not changed, "I am not sure but that it is too much," said Mr. Phillips, "but it will only be a little while before I shall pay up the debt." There was no use in stopping the enthusiastic old gentleman, whose great heart was a fountain of human kindness. It would be time enough for Philip to tell him that he had changed his plans later.

"But I shall also shorten the hours of work. Six hours of confinement in the mills is enough, and without losing all the advantage I can give my work people will be of little avail. I can let different sets of hands relieve each other if it seems necessary, or build new mills and take in a thousand more hands to share the blessings of justice."

Mr. Phillips looked back in the chair and a great light of benevolence shone in his face. It was a pity to disappoint him.

"This is an opportunity I have hoped for a whole lifetime. I can show the world that labor ought not and need not be wretched and famished. It is more blindness than willful cruelty that delays great reforms. I can show the world that justice is not a word, but a thing that will be long before."

"But, my dear friend," said Philip, dropping his eyes to the floor, "I will tell you that I am not going to sell. You will have to select some other spot for your Utopia. The young man spoke bitterly. Unconscious of his selfishness, he degraded the rest of the world. The happiness he had missed.

There came a moment of intense silence which was broken at last, not by a voice, but by the loud ringing of a door bell. It was so violently the great silent house echoed again. Had the end come then? Philip looked at his feet. Wild thoughts of desperate expedients rushed through his feverish brain, but he yet stood like a statue when the study door opened behind him. He tore open a telegram and read:

"Steamer Salvador delayed till to-morrow morning at 4."

For a moment he did not take in its meaning. Then he caught Phillips's arm so tightly the old gentleman almost cried out. "Do you want the mills as you said? You were not joking, oh, you were not joking!" Phillips gazed at him in astonishment. Fully conscious in such a terrible moment, he saw that his eyes had been so full of the magic writing faded away in the very light of the setting sun.

A moment after, the tea bell rang. This over, young Mr. Franklin said, "I must go out for this evening constitution." He walked away, and the events of the day, the discoveries he made, and more than all, Alma's grief and silence at the supper table, came back to him. He wished more air, more freedom to think over these things, and to devise some plan for future action.

Alma. What of her? Was he not growing to like her—perhaps love her? And she was engaged to Dick—there he could not think of him with patience. The chimney, the two chimneys, the strange paper; what did they all mean? Why were both father and daughter in such evident distress? He pondered them. Things as he walked through the shadowy lanes, and then, about 8 o'clock, he returned, in a measure composed and serene.

There was a light in the parlor, and he went in and found Alma alone.

"Oh, Elmer! I'm glad you've come. It's very lonely here. Dick has gone to bed quite ill, and Lawrence asked me to sit up till he returned. He's gone down to the village to see his business."

"Can't see why he should. The stores are closed and the last train has gone."

"She made a place for him on the sofa, and he sat down beside her. For some time they talked indifferently upon various matters—the weather, the day and the like trifles."

Suddenly she turned upon him and said, with ill-suppressed excitement:

"What did you do with it, Elmer?"

"Do with what?"

"The picture."

"Oh, yes—the lantern slide. I wish I had never made it. If it stays in my room."

"You didn't know it was Alma's?"

"No. How should I? I did not know who either of the people was till the picture was thrown upon the wall."

"Do you know now—know both of them, I mean?"

"Yes, I think I do. One was Mr. —"

"Yes, Elmer, you may as well say it. It was Lawrence."

Elmer could think of nothing to say, and wisely said nothing. After a brief pause Alma said slowly, as if talking to herself:

"It was a cruel thing to do."

"I did not mean to be cruel."

"Oh, my dear cousin, don't think it in that way. It was Lawrence who was so cruel."

"Yes. It was not very gentlemanly; but perhaps he does not care for this person."

"He does. The picture was only confirmation of what I had heard before. I've done with him. He added, in a sort of suppressed desperation, "I'm going to break our engagement this very night. I know it will nearly break my heart, and father will be very angry; but Elmer, come nearer, let me tell you about it. I'm afraid of him. He has such an evil eye, and you remember the chimney—the day you came—I thought he would kill you, he was so angry."

Evidently she was in sore trouble. Even her language was marked by doubt and difficulty.

"Advise me, Elmer. Tell me what to do. I hardly know which way to turn, and I'm so lonely. Father is here every day, and I can't talk to him. And Lawrence—I dare not trust him."

Here she began to cry softly, and hid her face in her handkerchief. The son of science was perplexed. What should he do or say? All this was new to him. That a young and pretty girl should appeal to him with such earnestness disconcerted him, and he did not know how to act. A problem in physics would have charmed him and braced him up for any work. This was so new and so peculiar that he said:

"Don't cry, cousin, and repeated it at once as a silly speech."

"Then I would."

"Thereupon they both laughed heartily and felt better. He recovered his wits at once."

"Do you think you really love him?"

The man of science is himself again.

"No, I don't."

"Then—well, it's hardly my place to say it."

"Then break the engagement. That's what you mean. I intend to do so; but, Elmer, I wish you could be here with me."

"It would be impossible. Oh! I've an idea."

"Have you? There! I knew you would help me. You are so bright, Elmer, and so kind!"

He suppressed her enthusiasm in the bud.

"Do you think you could telegraph to me from your pocket?"

"I don't know what you mean."

"You know the letters now perfectly, and if you had your hand on an armature you could send off messages quickly!"

"Yes. You know I learned the alphabet in one day, and it's nearly a week since you put up that line to my room. Think how we have talked with it already. And you remember the tea table, when the Lawsons and the Stebbens were here. Didn't I answer all your questions about Minna Lawson while I was talking with her by tapping on the table with a spoon?"

"Yes. So far so good; but now I'm going to try a most dangerous and difficult piece of scientific work, and you must help me. My plan is for you to keep in telegraphic communication with me while the interview goes on. Then, if he is insulting or troublesome, you can call me."

"How bright of you, Elmer. If Lawrence had been half so good and kind and bright—if he knew half as much—I might have loved him long ago."

"Wait a bit and I'll get the lines."

"May I go, too?"

"Oh, yes, come."

The two went softly up the hall stairs, through the long entry to the L, and into Elmer's room. They set the lamp on a table, and Elmer dragged forth from the scientific confusion of shelves a collection of telegraphic apparatus of all kinds.

"There's the battery. That'll keep here. There is the recording instrument. That'll keep here also. Now you want a small armature to open and close the current. Wait a bit! I'd better make one."

Alma sat down on a box, and her new Lehenrin set to work with shears and file to make something that would answer for an armature and still be small enough to hide in the hand. Cutting off two small pieces of insulated copper wire, he bound them together side by side at one end. The loose ends he separated by providing a bit of rubber between them, and then with the file and his knife he removed a part of the insulating covering till the bright copper showed at the tips of each wire.

"There! You can hide that in the pocket of your dress, or hold it in your hand even. When you wish to close the circuit, pinch the wires, and they will touch each other. When you withdraw the pressure that rubber will push them apart."

Alma declared she could do it easily, and the armature having been connected with the wires and the battery, they both prepared to go to the parlor.

Alma sat in the chair, always unwinding her delicate coils of insulated wire as they went, and pushing them back again when they had done their work. When they came to the table Alma lifted them up, and Elmer laid the wires down, and then the two covered them from sight.

"Now you sit here in a comfortable chair, and hide the wires in the folds of your dress. I'll lead them off over the carpet behind you, and unless the — Lawrence is brighter than I think he is, he'll not find them."

These mysterious operations were hardly completed when the door opened, and Lawrence came in. He found Mr. Franklin sitting up with Alma, and the meeting was not very cordial. After a few unimportant remarks Mr. Franklin said that he must retire.

"I'd like to know, miss, what that puppy said to you. He's been here all the evening, I suppose."

"He has, Lawrence, but I'll not have my friends spoken of in that way."

"Your friends indeed! What do you intend to do about it?"

Meanwhile he had persistently kept in her pocket, nervously moved the electric armature, and a sudden twinge of pain startled her. Her fingers caught between the wires, felt the shock of a returning current. Suddenly the pain faded again, and she understood it. Elmer was replying to her. She forced herself to read his little by the pale light she carried with her, and she spelled out:

"Keep cool. Don't fear him."

"Seems to me you're precious silent, miss."

"One might well keep silence while you use such language as you do, Lawrence."

"What a better right?"

"No man has a right to be a gentleman, and as for your right, I have defied to withdraw it from you."

"What do you mean?" he cried in sudden anger.

She drew her hand out of her pocket, slowly took off her engagement ring, and said, merely some stray visitor, and that at least it did not concern him, he turned to his books and made another attempt to read.

After some slight delay he heard the carriage drive away, and the old house became very still. Then he heard a door open down stairs, and a moment after one of the maids knocked at his door.

"What's that?" he asked. "A great affliction has fallen upon us, and I wish you, as our guest, to be prepared for it. I think I can trust you, Elmer Franklin. I remember your mother, my boy. You have her features—well, I'll trust you for her sake. We are ruined!"

"How, sir? How is that possible, with all your property?"

"Not one cent of my property—not a foot of ground, a single brick, piece of shuffling in the mill—belongs to me. This is terrible, sir. How did it happen?"

"It is a short and sad story. I was my father's only child, and there were no other heirs. My father's last illness was very sudden, and he left no will. He told me when he died that he had left everything to me. We never found out why that would bear out this assertion. However, the ordinary process of law gave me the property, and I thought myself secure. Suddenly a will was found in which the property was left to a distant relative in New York, and I was merely mentioned with some trifling gift. I contested the will and lost the case. It was an undoubted will, and

"Oh, come away! come away, Elmer!"

"None of your business, you puppy."

"There is no need to ask what you said, sir. I know every word and have made a copy of it."

"Ah! Listening were you?"

"No, sir. Miss Denny has told me. Do you see those wires? They will entangle you yet and trip you up."

"Come away, Elmer. Come away!"

"For the present I will retire, sir; but mark me, your game is nearly up."

"By, by, children. Good night. Remember your promise, Miss Denny. The carriage will be all ready."

Without heeding this last remark, Elmer, with his cousin on his arm, withdrew. As they closed the door the telegraph wires caught in the carpet and broke. The man saw them, and picking one up, he examined it closely.

Suddenly he dropped it and turned ashen pale. With all his bravado he quailed before those slender wires upon the carpet. He did not understand them. He guessed they might be some kind of telegraph, but beyond this everything was vague and mysterious, and they filled him with guilty alarm and terror.

CHAPTER II.

The events of the last chapter happened on the night of Friday, July 17, 1874. The following day, Saturday, the sun shone clear and warm. Elmer awoke early, carefully looked out of a crack in his window curtain, and found that the chimney builder's room was empty.

"The enemy has flown. I wonder if Alma is up?"

He uncovered a small telegraphic armature, and made something that would answer for an armature and still be small enough to hide in the hand. Cutting off two small pieces of insulated copper wire, he bound them together side by side at one end. The loose ends he separated by providing a bit of rubber between them, and then with the file and his knife he removed a part of the insulating covering till the bright copper showed at the tips of each wire.

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in my father's own handwriting, and dated more than a year before he died, and when I was rusticated from college, I thought I must needs sow my wild oats, and day after to-morrow I pay for them all by total beggary. The device, by the way, acted very strangely about the property. He did not disturb me for a long time. He probably feared to do so; and then he made a mortgage of \$100,000 on the property, took the money, and went abroad."

"And he left you here in possession?"

"Yes. The interest on the mortgage became due. There was no one to pay it, and they even had the effrontery to come to me. I refused again and again, and every time the interest was added to the mortgage till it rolled up to an enormous amount. Meanwhile the device died, pen-palises, in Europe, and on Wednesday Abrams, the lawyer who holds the mortgage, is to take possession of everything—and we—we are to go—I know not whither."

For a few moments there was a profound silence in the room. The older man mourned his dreadful fate, and the son of science was ready to shout for joy. Restraining himself with an effort, he said, not without a tremor in his voice:

"And have you searched for any other will?"

"That is an idle question, my son. We have searched these years. Then, too, just as I need a staff for my declining years, it breaks under me."

"You refer to Mr. Bedford, sir?"

"Yes. Since I injured my foot in the mill, I have trusted all my affairs to him, and now I sometimes think he is playing me false. Even now, when all this trouble has come upon me, he is absent, and I have no one to consult, nor do I find any to aid or comfort me."

"Perhaps I can aid you, sir."

"I do not know. I fear no one can avail us now."

"May I be very frank with you, sir?"

"Certainly. I am past all pride or fear. There is nothing worse now than this."

"I think, sir, you have placed too much confidence in that man. He is not trustworthy."

"How do you know? Can you prove it?"

"Yes, sir. You remember the new chimney?"

"Yes, but he explained that, and collected all the money that had been paid on the supposed extra height of the chimney."

"That was very easy, sir, for he had it in his possession. I must some of the work people in the village, and casually asked them how high the chimney was to be, and every man gave the real height. Mr. Bedford lied to you about it, and pocketed the difference between his measurements and mine. Of course, when he detected he promptly returned the money, and thought himself lucky to have escaped so easily. More than that, he claimed that the chimney was capped with stone. I was so sure of it, that I had the cap removed, and the upper courses were rubbed over with colored plaster."

"I can hardly believe it. Besides, how can you prove it?"

"That will, sir. Look at it carefully."

So saying, Elmer produced a photograph from those on the table and presented it to the old gentleman.

The old gentleman looked at it carefully for a few moments, and then said with an air of conviction:

"It is a perfect fraud. I had no idea that the man was such a thief."

"Yes, sir. Look at that bare place where the plaster has fallen off. You can see the brick."

"Oh, I can see. There is no need to explain the picture. Have you any more?"

"Yes, sir. Another. I'm glad I brought them with me."

Mr. Denny turned them over slowly and commented heavily upon them.

"That's the house. Very well done, my boy. That's the mill. Excellent. I should know it once. And the saw-mill at once as if weary."

"What is it, father? Any new troubles?"

"Were you with your cousin when he took this photograph?"

She looked at it a moment, and then said wearily:

"Yes. It's the bathing mill."

Just here the door opened, and Mr. Bedford, on an ivory leg, came in, as if just from the station, entered the room. The two men looked up in undisguised amazement, but Alma hid her eyes upon the floor, and her face seemed to put on a more ashen hue than ever.

"Ah! excuse me. I did not mean to intrude. I'm just from New York, and I have been so successful that I hastened to lay the news before you."

"What have you to say, Mr. Bedford?" said Mr. Denny, coldly. "There are none but friends here, and you used to be a friend—no, not much."

"I have arranged everything," said Mr. Bedford, with sublime audacity. "The note has been taken up. I have even obtained a release of the mortgage, and here is the cancelled note and the release. To-morrow I will have it recorded."

"We are in no mood for pleasantness, Mr. Bedford. The sheriff was here today, and Abrams is to take possession on Wednesday."

"Oh, I knew that. He did not get my telegram in time, or he would have saved you all this unnecessary annoyance, and now everything is all serene, and there is Abrams' release in full."

He took out a carefully folded paper and gave it to Mr. Denny. He read it in silence, and then said:

"It seems to be quite correct. We"—

Alma suddenly dropped her head upon her breast, and hid to the door in a confused fear of her death warrant. Nature rebelled, and mortally took away her senses.

Elmer sprang to her rescue, but Mr. Bedford intruded himself.

"It is my place, Mr. Franklin. She is to be my wife."

The deadly day crept to its end. Alma recovered, and retired to her room. Mr. Bedford, overcome by the excitement of the interview, was quite ill, and the visitor, oppressed with a sense of partial defeat, took a long walk through the country. The enemy had made such an extraordinary

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