

concerning it. I would not mind Mr. Bedford used the language he did. Mr. Denny ran his eye over the figures in the book, and then, with a pained expression, he said briefly:

"Everything seems to be correct."

"Damnation! I'll break his head for him, the intermeddling fool!" This language was not actually used by Mr. Bedford, but he thought as much. His eyes flashed, and he clenched his fists under the table. Alma's presence alone restrained him from something more violent. He appeared calm, but inwardly he was angry. This unexpected announcement concerning the chimney he had built cast a heavy shadow over him, and his conscience awoke with a sudden smart.

Alma was greatly disturbed, and ready to cry for shame and vexation. She did not, for she felt sure this was only the beginning of a new trouble, and she would know that heavy sorrow had already invaded the house. They needed no more. Mr. Franklin glanced from one to another in alarm. He saw that he was treading upon uncertain ground, and he wisely held his peace. After a brief and awkward pause Mr. Bedford rose, and, pleading the calls of business, went out and the unhappy letter came to an end.

It was a strange room. Its belongings were strange. A large square chamber, with windows on three sides and a door and a fireplace on the other. Just now the fireplace had fallen from its high estate and had become a catch all for the wrecks of much unpacking. There was a small single bed, two chairs and an impossible number of tables. It was impossible to say how many, for they were half covered by numberless things scientific, microscopes, a retort, small furnace, two cameras, galvanic battery, coils of wire and rubber tubing, magic lantern, books, photographs and papers; on a small desk a confused pile of papers; on the walls a great number of pictures and photographs. The very center of a student of science. Hardly room to walk among the wilderness of traps, boxes and trunks. At the window, the young man, just dressed, and taking a view of the mill and its new chimney.

"Gad! how mad the fellow was over my little measurements. Wonder what it all means! The girl's in trouble, the father has a grief and the clerk—I can make nothing of him. What a mess! My duty is with my books, that I may pursue pure science. The moment things become practical I drop 'em."

She turned and looked out of the next window.

"This view of the river. I must have another try at it with the camera."

He crossed the room, and standing in the bright morning sunshine he looked about to examine the other that had been thrown out from the back of the main building.

"That's Alma's room, and the next is the clerk's, the chimney man, and now is open, and the place looks as dark as a cave. I've a mind to light it up."

So saying he took a small hand mirror from a table near by. Holding it in the full sunlight he moved it slowly about till the dancing spot of reflected light fell upon the open window and leaped in upon the opposite wall of the room. The observer, with steady hand, moved the spot of light about till he had probed the room and found all it contained, which was nothing save a bed and two chairs.

"Applied science reports the man is fit for trousers, spools and that sort of thing. He has no pictures. His room is a sleeping den. The man is a—Hallo! Steady there!"

The door in the room opened, and the student of applied science turned quickly away with his back to the wall beside his window. Cautiously raising the mirror, he held it near the window in such a way that in it he could see all that went on in the other room, without being himself seen.

Suddenly he saw something in the glass. Some one appeared at the window, looked out as if watching for something, and then withdrew into the bare little sleeping room. Then the figure in the mirror returned to the bed and carefully turned all the clothes back. The student of science watched the mirror intently. The figure bent over the unmade mattress and something out. It sat down on the edge of the disordered bed and proceeded to examine the box or bundle, whatever it might be, that it had found in the bed.

Just here there was a distant sound of a distant door opening and closing. The figure crouched low on the bed, as if fearing to be seen, and walked all over the room. Then it slowly opened the box or package, and took out a folded paper. The student bent over the mirror with the utmost interest. What did it mean? What would happen next? Nothing in particular happened. The figure closed the box, retraced it to its hiding place in the bed, and then crept out of the range of reflected vision.

Why should the confidential clerk hide papers in his bed? What was the nature of the documents? A strange affair, certainly, but it did not concern him, and perhaps he had better drop the subject. He turned to his books and papers, and for an hour or more was too much occupied with them to heed anything else.

Suddenly there was a brisk series of taps at his door, like this:—

"Come in."

Alma, the light on, entered.

"What a noise! Such disorder, Elmer!"

"Yes. It is quite a comfortable den. I've unpacked everything, and—mind your steps—feel quite at home—thank you."

"I should say as much. Do look at the dust. I must have Mary up here at once."

"Madam, I never allow any female person to touch my traps. Mary may make the bed, but she must not sweep, nor dust, nor touch anything."

"Oh! really. Then I'll go at once."

"Better not."

"Because I've many things to show."

"Oh, Elmer! What is that—that queer thing on the table? May I look at it?"

"That's my new camera."

"How stupid. I might have known that. Do you take pictures?"

"Photos? Yes. Will you sit?"

"Oh, dear, no, I hate photographs. It's so disagreeable to see oneself sitting with some impossible expression, and sitting in an impossible place, with a distant landscape and drapery curtains."

"Then I'll take a view for you. Please sit somewhere while I rig things. See those two people sitting on the little bridge that crosses the race beyond the mill? I'll photograph them without their permission."

Alma looked out of the window when Elmer had raised the curtain, and declared she couldn't see anything.

"They are very far off. Take the field glass, and you'll see them."

Alma took the glass from the table, and looked out on the sunny landscape. "I see what you mean, but I can't make out who they are, even with the glass. It's a man and a woman, and that's as much as I can see."

"You shall see them plain enough in a moment."

So saying, Elmer placed a long brass telescope upon a stand by the open window, and through it he examined the telescope on the table. Meanwhile Alma gazed round the room and examined with strange content with the greatest interest.

The moment the focus of the glass was secured, Elmer hastily took the little camera, and adjusting a slide in it from a table drawer, he placed it before the telescope on the table and close to the eye-hole. Then, by throwing a black cloth over his head, he looked into it, turned a screw or two, and in a moment had a negative of the distant couple.

"Aren't you almost ready?"

"In one moment, Alma. I must fix this first. I'll be right back."

So saying he took the slide from the little camera, and went out of the room into a dark closet in the entry.

Alma waited patiently for a few moments, and then she took up the field glass, and looked out of the window. Who could they be? They seemed to be having a cosy time together, but beyond the fact that one figure was a woman she could learn nothing. She wanted to take a look through the little camera that stood before it.

"Here's the picture," said Elmer, as he entered the room.

Alma took the bit of glass he offered her, but declared she couldn't see anything but a dirty spot on the lens.

"That's the negative. Let me copy it, and then I'll throw it up with the stereopticon."

He selected another bit of glass from a box, and in a few minutes had prepared and the two put together and laid in the sun on the window seat.

"Yes, I'm almost ready. What can I do for you?"

"No, I can't today. The fact is, I've a bad tooth, and smoking troubles it."

"Indeed. Let me see it. I'm a bit of a dentist."

"Are you? That's fortunate, for it aches awfully, and my nearest dentist is five miles off. I'm sure, if you'll only sit right here by the window, where I can have a good light."

"But, a physical coward, could not bear pain; and though he was unwilling to be under obligations to one whom he considered a mere boy, he was obliged to the proffered chair, and opened his mouth dutifully.

"—Dentes sapientia. It's quite gone. Shall I take it out for you?"

"No, I'll be paid for it."

"I'll give you nitrous oxide. Without it it might be very painful, for the tooth is a bad one. Having said this, Mr. Bedford hesitated. Had he better place himself so utterly at the mercy of one who looked so young and healthy?

"It will pass off in a moment, and leave no ill effects behind. You had better take it."

"Well, I will; but make it very mild, for I am afraid of these new fangled notions."

"You need have no fear," said Elmer, bringing up his iron box of nitrous oxide, and turned back his coat and from the inside pocket he drew forth a folded paper. He had caught a glimpse of it when he looked in the man's mouth, and on the spur of the moment he had conceived and put into practice the idea of spreading it with the gas, he opened the paper and in the full sunlight. The patient stirred restlessly. With a breathless motion Elmer piled him with more gas, and he sighed softly and slumbered deeper than ever. With a spring he reached the camera, rolled it up before the paper and set in a new slide. It copied the paper and the patient, and then, without reading it, Elmer folded the paper up again and restored it to his patient's pocket.

The patient revived. He put his hand in his mouth. The tooth was still there.

"No. I was delayed a bit. Take the gas again; examine the shadowy picture thrown upon the wall. It represented a young man and a young woman seated upon the wooden rail of the bridge in the open air, and in most loving embrace. His arm was about her waist, and he was looking in her face. His straw hat hid his features, but the face of the young woman was turned toward the camera that had so perfectly mirrored them both. She seemed to be a young and pretty girl in the more lovely walks of life, and her lover seemed to be a gentleman. What a pity he hadn't looked up! Who could he be? And what Alma's remark plainly showed that she at least knew the girl, and for some reason was highly indignant with her.

"Thinking he had made trouble enough already, Elmer took one more good look at the picture and then prepared to destroy it. Something about the young man's hat struck him as familiar. It was a Panama hat, and had two ribbons wound round it in a fanciful manner that was not exactly conventional.

"He silently opened a shutter, and the picture faded away. He drew up the curtain and looked out on the bridge. Innocents! They little knew how their pictures had been taken spite of their smiles, and they little knew the tragic and terrible consequences that were to flow from the stolen photograph so sootily made. Elmer took the little slide from the lantern, and was on the point of shoving it into one of the heartstons when he passed in deep thought. Was it wise to destroy it? Had he better preserve it? Perhaps he could some day solve the mystery that hung about it, and find out the cause of Alma's grief and anger. Perhaps he might help her; and there

seemed both new and wonderfully scientific.

Shortly after this the dinner bell rang, and he went down to the dining room. Alma sent word that she had a severe headache and could not appear. Mr. Bedford was already there, and he looked at Mr. Franklin with an expression that made the young man uncomfortable in spite of himself. Mr. Denny was unusually thoughtful and silent, and conversation between the younger men was not particularly brilliant or entertaining. At last the dinner was finished. Mr. Bedford rose first and went into the hall. Mr. Franklin followed him, and saw something that quite took his breath away.

"There lay the hat of the photograph, doubtless and all. Mr. Bedford quickly took it up and put it on, and it fitted him perfectly. Elmer stopped abruptly and looked at the man with the utmost interest. The confidential, chimney builder, paid no attention and quickly passed on to the front door.

"Mr. Franklin, you have made a discovery. The pursuit of pure science never allowed anything half so interesting as this. You had better raise a cloud on the subject. Gad! it's doubly enough, really."

"This to himself as he slowly went up stairs to his room. Selecting a pipe, he fired up and prepared to examine mentally the evening's doings.

"It was the confidential, making love to some village beauty, supposed to be 'green,' by name, if not by nature. He loved him. That's a bit. Perhaps she's engaged to him. Has she a ring? Yes—saw it the other day. The fact is, I'm a bit of a dentist. Blessed if I don't keep that lantern slide! It is bound to use some day. Come in."

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"There lay the hat of the photograph, doubtless and all. Mr. Bedford quickly took it up and put it on, and it fitted him perfectly. Elmer stopped abruptly and looked at the man with the utmost interest. The confidential, chimney builder, paid no attention and quickly passed on to the front door.

"Mr. Franklin, you have made a discovery. The pursuit of pure science never allowed anything half so interesting as this. You had better raise a cloud on the subject. Gad! it's doubly enough, really."

"This to himself as he slowly went up stairs to his room. Selecting a pipe, he fired up and prepared to examine mentally the evening's doings.

"It was the confidential, making love to some village beauty, supposed to be 'green,' by name, if not by nature. He loved him. That's a bit. Perhaps she's engaged to him. Has she a ring? Yes—saw it the other day. The fact is, I'm a bit of a dentist. Blessed if I don't keep that lantern slide! It is bound to use some day. Come in."

This last was in response to a knock at the door. Mr. Bedford entered, Panama hat on, and in a few minutes had prepared and the two put together and laid in the sun on the window seat.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Franklin, I thought I might find you here."

"Yes, I'm at leisure. What can I do for you?"

"No, I can't today. The fact is, I've a bad tooth, and smoking troubles it."

"Indeed. Let me see it. I'm a bit of a dentist."

"Are you? That's fortunate, for it aches awfully, and my nearest dentist is five miles off. I'm sure, if you'll only sit right here by the window, where I can have a good light."

"But, a physical coward, could not bear pain; and though he was unwilling to be under obligations to one whom he considered a mere boy, he was obliged to the proffered chair, and opened his mouth dutifully.

"—Dentes sapientia. It's quite gone. Shall I take it out for you?"

"No, I'll be paid for it."

"I'll give you nitrous oxide. Without it it might be very painful, for the tooth is a bad one. Having said this, Mr. Bedford hesitated. Had he better place himself so utterly at the mercy of one who looked so young and healthy?

"It will pass off in a moment, and leave no ill effects behind. You had better take it."

"Well, I will; but make it very mild, for I am afraid of these new fangled notions."

"You need have no fear," said Elmer, bringing up his iron box of nitrous oxide, and turned back his coat and from the inside pocket he drew forth a folded paper. He had caught a glimpse of it when he looked in the man's mouth, and on the spur of the moment he had conceived and put into practice the idea of spreading it with the gas, he opened the paper and in the full sunlight. The patient stirred restlessly. With a breathless motion Elmer piled him with more gas, and he sighed softly and slumbered deeper than ever. With a spring he reached the camera, rolled it up before the paper and set in a new slide. It copied the paper and the patient, and then, without reading it, Elmer folded the paper up again and restored it to his patient's pocket.

The patient revived. He put his hand in his mouth. The tooth was still there.

"No. I was delayed a bit. Take the gas again; examine the shadowy picture thrown upon the wall. It represented a young man and a young woman seated upon the wooden rail of the bridge in the open air, and in most loving embrace. His arm was about her waist, and he was looking in her face. His straw hat hid his features, but the face of the young woman was turned toward the camera that had so perfectly mirrored them both. She seemed to be a young and pretty girl in the more lovely walks of life, and her lover seemed to be a gentleman. What a pity he hadn't looked up! Who could he be? And what Alma's remark plainly showed that she at least knew the girl, and for some reason was highly indignant with her.

"Thinking he had made trouble enough already, Elmer took one more good look at the picture and then prepared to destroy it. Something about the young man's hat struck him as familiar. It was a Panama hat, and had two ribbons wound round it in a fanciful manner that was not exactly conventional.

"He silently opened a shutter, and the picture faded away. He drew up the curtain and looked out on the bridge. Innocents! They little knew how their pictures had been taken spite of their smiles, and they little knew the tragic and terrible consequences that were to flow from the stolen photograph so sootily made. Elmer took the little slide from the lantern, and was on the point of shoving it into one of the heartstons when he passed in deep thought. Was it wise to destroy it? Had he better preserve it? Perhaps he could some day solve the mystery that hung about it, and find out the cause of Alma's grief and anger. Perhaps he might help her; and there

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