

He sat up in bed, yawned, stretched his arms once or twice, and then, flinging the covering aside, he leaped to the floor. He fell, and hurt his arm somewhat. Strange that he should have miscalculated the distance! The bed seemed more than twice as high from the floor as it should be. It was too dark to see distinctly, so he crept to the bed with extended hands, and felt it. Yes, it was at least four feet from the floor, and very oddly, it had long, slim posts, such as bedsteads used to have, instead of the low, carved footboard, and the high, postless headboard, which belonged to the bedstead upon which he had slept in recent years. Ephraim resolved to strike a light. He groped his way to the table, and tried to find the match-box. It was not there; he could not discover it upon the bureau either. But he found something else, which he did not recognize at first, but which a more careful examination with his fingers told him was a flint and steel. He was vexed that any one should play such a trick upon him. How could he ever succeed in lighting the gas with a flint and steel!

But he resolved to try, and he moved over toward the gas-bracket by the bureau. It was not there! He passed his cold hand over a square yard of the wall, where the bracket used to be, but it had vanished. It actually seemed, too, as if there was no paper on the wall, for the whitewash scaled off beneath his fingers.

Perplexed and angry, Ephraim was about to replace the flint and steel upon the bureau, and to dress in the dark, when his hand encountered a candlestick. It contained a candle. He determined to try to light it. He struck the flint upon the steel at least a dozen times, in the way he remembered doing so often when he was a boy, but the sparks refused to catch the tinder. He struck again and again, until he became really warm with effort and indignation, and at last he succeeded.

It was only a poor, slim tallow candle, and Ephraim thought the light was not much better than the darkness, it was so dim and flickering and dismal. He was conscious then that the room was chill, although his body felt so warm; and, for fear he should catch cold, he thought he would open the register, and let in some warm air. The register had disappeared! There right before him, was a vast old-fashioned fireplace filled with wood. By what means the transformation had been effected he could not imagine. But he was not greatly displeased.