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An Ineffective Revenge

By ALAN HINSDALE

A vehicle stopped at the country residence of Mrs. Van Arsdale, and a man, taking a phonograph from it, carried it to the front door. Miss Birdie Van Arsdale was sitting on the porch at the time and asked him what she could do for him. Presenting the phonograph, he said:

"I am introducing the burglar alarm phonograph. It is especially designed for unprotected families and renders other defenses unnecessary. It is connected electrically with such openings in the house as would be considered available by a burglar, would ready for use, and on his breaking the connection the clockwork is set going. The machine then addresses the burglar, who, finding his presence in the house to be known, bends a precipitate retreat."

The pretense to such enormities as a drummer knows how to pour out upon what he has for sale caused the young lady to call out:

"Mother! Come here!"
Mother came. The salesman repeated what he had already said and continued like a trotting horse on an endless track.
"If the burglar is one of the desperate kind any member of the family who has been awakened by the phonograph's first words may move a slide marked 'Shoot' and the report of a pistol will be heard. This slide," pointing to another, "is to call the police."
Mother and daughter exchanged glances. They were deprived of man's protection and never went to bed without poking canes and umbrellas under their beds. Mr. Van Arsdale was obliged to spend his summers in the city and was rapidly with them. When he came up he lay like a watching on a wire enclosed portion of the porch, and his wife and daughter slumbered. Mrs. Van Arsdale asked the price of one of the phonographs and a check of \$100 was drawn, and after the new owner had been duly instructed the drummer departed.

It was Saturday evening Mr. Van Arsdale had written that he would not be able to spend the week end with his family, and after the house was closed for the night Mrs. Van Arsdale and her daughter placed the phonograph at the front door. The salesman had put in all the connections, and there was nothing to be done except make the attachments. These things having been attended to, the ladies went to bed, and sleep and oblivion reigned over all.

Mr. Van Arsdale changed his mind and went home.
It was just twenty minutes to 12 when Mr. Van Arsdale arrived at home and stepped lightly on to his porch that he might not awaken his wife and daughter. His out of door bedding not being provided, he thought he would go upstairs stealthily and get it. In so doing he stepped into the hall and felt his foot catch in some obstruction, such as a fine wire or light string. What was his astonishment to hear a sonorous voice burst forth:
"Ah! You thought to get in here without our knowing it, did you? Ad-vance at your peril! I've got the drop on you! An inch further and you're a dead man!"
It must be admitted that such a reception or entering his own house had a marked effect on Mr. Van Arsdale. The only motion he made was throw up of his hands. He could not see the speaker, but he supposed the speaker could see him, since he had declared that he had the drop.
At the first challenge of the intruder Mrs. Van Arsdale and Birdie both slid out of bed and made for the position of the phonograph, reaching it just as the talking machine pronounced the words "a dead man."
"Is he going out?" whispered Mrs. Van Arsdale, shivering.
"No," replied the daughter. "I think I can hear him down there near the door."
"Push the slide calling the police," Birdie felt for the slide, but, not being able to see in the dark, struck the wrong one. There was a shot, followed by the words: "Well then, take that!"
Something was heard to drop in the hall below.
"What have you done?" cried the mother frantically. "I told you to move the slide calling the police. You've killed him!"
"Why, mother, it wasn't a real shot. It couldn't hurt any one."
The imagination is powerful—at least Mr. Van Arsdale found it so, for on hearing the shot he felt a shock; his knees gave way and let him down. When he heard his wife accusing his daughter of having killed him, not feeling at all dead he called out in his own true voice:
"What if thunder is all this about?"
"Why, it's papa," cried Birdie.
"Oh, Henry, are you killed? I mean are you frightened to death?"
"I reckon that's about it frightened to death. Who's there to do the shooting?"
There was an explanation. Mr. Van Arsdale turned on the lights and saw the phonograph. He spoke no word, but, striding out to the tool closet, he grasped an ax and returning, made kindling wood of the machine that had scared him almost to death.
"Why, papa," whined Birdie, "you've spoiled our burglar alarm. You haven't hurt anybody except mamma, who gave a hundred dollars for it!"

AMERICAN CHEMISTS.

Some of Their Big Achievements in the Industrial World.

In chemistry, as in other practical matters, Americans have had the wisdom to direct their energies to the special needs and opportunities of their country. For instance, they have built up the greatest sulphuric acid industry in the world. And they have given so much attention to sulphuric acid simply because it is a prime requisite for our superphosphate fertilizers, our petroleum refining, our explosives for blasting and the numerous other substances of which the United States is the leading producer.

Similarly American chemists originated and developed the largest aluminum industry in the world, which supplies us with that lightest of all metals in ever increasing quantities. They built up from its very inception the largest calcium carbide industry, which furnishes us that new-borned for producing acetylene light and which, mixed with oxygen, permits us to weld and cut metals by means of a burning jet of oxyacetylene—an entirely new way of cutting steel cutting it like butter. Instead of slowly cutting or sawing it by mechanical devices they built up the largest electrolytic soda industry, in which the powerful electrolytic current decomposes common kitchen salt and sets free that greenish gas chlorine as well as caustic soda. The public hardly knew this chlorine before its horrible use in compressed, liquefied condition for trench warfare in the asphyxiating gas bombs. Its splendid uses for peace, as a purifier of our drinking water supplies, as an antiseptic and as a bleaching agent were hardly ever spoken of. As to caustic soda, it is the base of soapmaking, of mercerized cotton goods, of soda pulp for our paper supplies, and it has endless other uses in chemical industries. Our chemists were instrumental in providing us with the largest sulphite cellulose industry, whereby wood is changed into the raw material from which paper is made, and with our machinery for the petroleum refining industry, a succession of chemical treatments, and chemical processes. Another American chemist industry is the manufacture of synthetic abrasives, strikingly improved over the grinding materials found in nature.

We owe to an American chemist the production of artificial graphite, one of the very essentials of the electrochemical enterprises in which the United States is a pioneer as well as a maker, for graphite "electrodes" and graphite "lenders" are the very entrance doors through which the electric current flows into electric furnaces or electrolyzers whenever the use of metals is impossible. I. H. Baelkand in Harper's Magazine.

THE UMBRELLA AN ILLUSION?

Well, How About the Military and Straw Hats It Saves?
The psychology of the umbrella is worth studying. It does not really, of course, protect the individual from the rain. It does little more than shelter his head. The rain strikes his legs and his body just the same. But it saves the rain from striking one's face, which is discernible. It gives a certain illusion of shelter and thus shelters the psychology more than it does the body. We now have waterproofed clothing, which is a much more effective protection than the umbrella, but people go on buying and using umbrellas just the same. Their bodies do not really need them, but their minds have become accustomed to them. Meanwhile letter carriers and postmen go without them and do not seem to get any wetter than other people do.

It is probable that a colored umbrella protects a woman's psychology in a rainstorm better than a black umbrella would. Having chosen the color in accordance with fashion and her own taste in tints, she has, as it were, a canopy of consciousness over her, affording her a fine protection. On the other hand, a black umbrella is a better protection for a man's psychology than a colored one would be. A red umbrella over the average man, now, would seem to him to gather all the raindrops from the Hoosier range to Mount Desert and precipitate them upon his egregious head.—Boston Transcript.

romanian.
"Romanian" really means "Romanian," the country having been founded by descendants of the ancient Romans.

Vain Quests.
A little girl who was trying to tell a friend how absentminded her grandpa was said: "He walks around, thinking about nothing, and when he remembers it he then forgets that what he thought of was something entirely different from what he wanted to remember."—Christian Register.

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Future Melting Pot of the World.
Argentina bids fair to be the future melting pot of the world. Of her 6,000,000 people more than half are foreign born. During her history she has received over a million Italian immigrants, a half million Spaniards, a sixth of a million French and a quarter million in other nationalities. Buenos Aires is the most cosmopolitan city in the world, not even excepting New York.—Dan Ward in World Outlook.

Fancy Gardening.
It is a fancy of Chinese gardeners to plant statuettes of tiny men firmly in pots. Just like real plants, and then to train live evergreens to grow up over these statuettes. The vines thus form a kind of robe for the statuette men, their white faces and limbs protruding from out the greenness. Argonaut.

Oh!
"The little son of the hostess is mighty ugly, isn't he?"
"Do you think so?"
"He certainly doesn't take after his mother. Must look like his father!"
"His mother says he does. I'm his father!"—Houston Post.

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