

# The Black Cat



July 1896

ON THE LAST TRAIL.  
N.W. PHILLIPS & RUPERT HUGHES.

A MESSAGE FROM WHERE?  
L. FRANCIS BISHOP.

THE MAN WITH THE BOX.  
GEORGE W. TRIPP.

WHAT THE MOON SAW.  
ISABELLE MEREDITH.

IN MISS POLLY'S PEW.  
ELLEN FRIZELL WYCOFF.



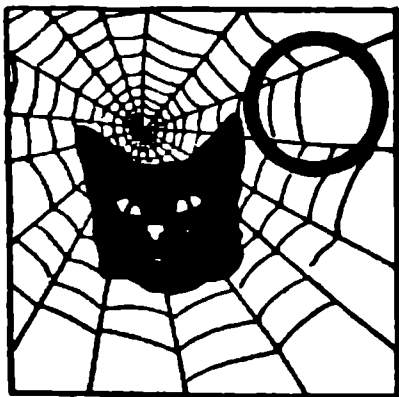
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## The Man with the Box.

BY GEORGE W. TRIPP.



IN a certain quiet corner, one Cahill keeps a cozy snuggerly to which I am partial — especially when returning from an up-country outing. One sultry evening in July, I arrived at his place at the hour of 10 P. M., somewhat used up, for I had passed a busy day on my wheel over a country road since dawn, making kodak notes of certain views I needed for future reference. Entering my favorite restaurant, I gave a generous order and devoted myself to the matter of refreshment. Supper over, I ordered another bottle of the beer I had been drinking with my lunch, and lighting a cigar, sat at luxurious ease, too tired even to glance over the evening paper that lay on my table.

As I sat drowsily smoking, my attention was attracted by the noise of a moving chair in my rear. I turned somewhat suddenly, to find sitting at the table behind me a peculiar-looking person. He was possessed of a long, narrow face that was half buried in a heavy, iron gray beard of extraordinary length. His eyebrows, of the same color as his beard, were bushy and bristling, and meeting in the center of the line of his nose, gave to his face an air of concentrated purpose, borne out by a pair of keen, glittering eyes that peered sharply from beneath them.

“Kodakist?” queried he, with the brusque, familiar air of one who eschewed conventionalities, as he caught my eye.

“I am an artist, sir!” I replied stiffly. His undue familiarity annoyed me.

“Ah, indeed? A distinction without much difference, in my mind; — they’re essentially quite the same —”

“Not at all the same!” I rejoined, ruffling.

“Pardon me, — no doubt you think so; but, after all, it’s a mere matter of one’s point of view. Did it ever strike you, when

thinking of these matters, how few are the primal principles on which are based the innumerable inventions of modern times? ” •

“ Can't say I've thought much about it! ” I tartly replied, sipping my beer and wondering how to rid myself of this preposterous bore.

“ For instance, as an artist, you are very likely aware of the recent successful experiments in photographing color? ”

I nodded in cold affirmation.

“ Then you are probably aware it is generally admitted that the differentiation of one color from another to the eye is occasioned simply by the fact that each color imparts a different number of vibrations to the second of the ray of light it reflects to the optic nerve? ”

I admitted a knowledge of this theory.

“ Very well; you are possibly also aware that the difference between one tone and another, in musical sounds, lies merely in the different number of air vibrations to the second produced by each respective sound? ”

I intimated that I was also aware of this fact.

“ Very well; here we have two quite diverse channels through which the principle of the sensibility of the nervous system to vibratory impressions operates.”

“ Well, what of it? ” I asked impatiently, as he paused and sat regarding me with his bright, glittering eyes.

“ Simply this: why should not the sense of taste be referred to this same principle? ”

He arose as he spoke, and drew from under his table a small box. Bringing it over, he placed it carefully on my table, after which, without apology, he removed my kodak from where it lay near my elbow, to the floor beneath, and seated himself, unasked, opposite me. The box was of cubical shape, made of some fine, richly grained wood, and polished till it shone like the cherry-topped table at which we were sitting. Pivoted on the top of it was an arrow-headed index hand, made of brass and about four inches in length. The side of the box facing me was studded with a row of brass push-buttons.

“ Kodakist? ” queried I, ironically, returning his first question.

“ No, my dear sir, I am not; neither am I a confidence man;

nor am I, as your manner might seem to imply, even what you Americans term a 'crank.' But," said he, suddenly leaning forward and tapping himself briskly on the forehead, "I do confess to a degree of enthusiasm over a certain discovery of mine — an enthusiasm you will presently share if you will give me a few moments of your leisure."

My distaste for the fellow was not lessening; but his speech was civil in its way, and his brusque, eccentric ways amused me. I write occasionally for the press. Here was a character, and I resolved to study him a bit. I rapped for the waiter.

"Excuse me, sir," said my peculiar companion, as the knight of the apron appeared; "it is my privilege first, I believe, under the circumstances. Waiter!" he added, tossing a silver dollar down on the table, "two glasses of water, please."

That functionary stared.

"Sir?" quoth he, with mouth open.

"Two glasses of water, please, and there's something for your trouble."

The sight of the money seemed to restore the waiter's equilibrium, for, picking it up, he felt of it, put it in his pocket, and retired with chin elevated. In a moment he reappeared with two glasses of water, deposited them on the table, winked at me, and again retired with chin still elevated.

"Rather mild potation you've ordered," I observed, with a quizzical glance at my eccentric companion.

"The water?" said he somewhat absently, as he blew the dust from the throat of a small key; "oh, that's all right; you shall drink your favorite beverage presently."

Carefully fitting the key into some aperture in the side of the box facing him, he turned it a little, as if to try the wards; then, pushing the box aside, he suddenly leaned forward, fixed on me his peculiar eye, and abruptly asked: —

"Are you not possessed of a somewhat vivid imagination?"

I acknowledged to being endowed with a fair share of that faculty.

"Do you not write for the press occasionally?"

I admitted that I was something of a scribe.

"So I thought, so I thought," said he, tapping the box thought

fully; "an artist — a man of letters — a person of imagination. Just the person I seek. But talking is dry work, particularly to a listener. Let us first drink," continued he, pushing one of the glasses of water towards me.

"Oh, really, you must excuse me," I demurred, with a furtive eye on the box, which I began to distrust, "water after beer — I couldn't, you know — and —"

"Oh, bother the water," he impatiently interrupted, suddenly turning the box around and pushing it over to me.

In the side of the box that had been facing him was set a large glass-covered dial, around the margin of which was printed, in small characters, a number of words, radiating in the alignment of their letters from the center. In this central point of the dial was pivoted an index hand, the finger of which at present rested on a blank space which broke the circle of printed words. I bent closer to examine these characters. To my surprise, I found they constituted a remarkably complete list of the most popular of the beverages known to the bibulous world. The more noted brands of ale, beer, brandy, whisky, rum, and gin appeared, together with many of the most celebrated vintages of wines. There was also listed a number of the fancy drinks so dear to the American heart. The milder beverages found place, too, — both hot and cold, — even water being included. Beneath the dial was inserted, in a small hole, the key the man had just been manipulating.

I looked up inquiringly. "Name your beverage," said he.

"If you mean that I am to name a favorite beverage from that list, why, I should say Bass' ale," I replied, somewhat puzzled.

"Very well," said he; "kindly turn that key till you see that the indicator above points to the words 'Bass' ale.'"

I complied.

"Take up your glass!"

I obeyed.

Swiftly drawing the box to him, he turned the brass arrow on its top till it pointed at me, and then pressed one of the push-buttons.

"Look at your glass!"

I turned my gaze from the box to the glass that I held in my hand. To my amazement, instead of water, there shimmered in

it with an oily bead an amber-hued beverage, most uncommonly like, in appearance, the ale I had just been drinking.

“Taste of it,” said my strange acquaintance.

I tasted it — though somewhat gingerly.

“Bass’ ale !” I exclaimed, astounded.

“Yes,” he observed, with an air of satisfaction, “and, as you’ll find, a particularly fine brew.”

Curious to investigate this novel trick, I took a few moderate sips of the stuff. The fellow was right. I am somewhat of a connoisseur of fine ales, and I found this one excellent.

“A capital trick ! I perceive you to be a master of the art,” I observed smilingly.

“A paltry dabbler in legerdemain ?” he exclaimed with irritation. “I had attributed to you a finer perception than this. I am aware that in person and manner I may seem eccentric, but, believe me, these appearances are not the fruit of an ill-balanced head or an evil heart. They are the ugly crusts, so to speak, begotten of bitter experiences and deferred hopes.”

He sat silently regarding me for a moment, and then continued : —

“Sir, I have a brief story to tell, and a proposition to make to you. Whether or not you accept the latter, you are confessedly a knight of the pen, and may find some use to make of the former ; will you listen ?”

The fellow really was getting interesting. I nodded my willingness to hear him.

“I am,” he continued, “by profession a model maker. I was brought up to the business, and, having a natural aptitude for the work, came to be counted among the best in my line. Having an original turn of mind, together with a natural facility of execution, I made a specialty of developing the crude ideas of inventors who lacked the technical knowledge and practical experience necessary successfully to complete their various conceptions. Thrown, thus, in contact with minds groping along original lines with more or less cleverness, my own ingenuity was stimulated, and I was led, at last, into a line of original investigation and experiment that resulted in a most wonderful discovery.

“Even to outline clearly to you the nature and methods of

these researches and experiments would take too much time. Suffice it to say that the flower of my discovery stands before you in that box. In that polished cube of wood is incrustated a marvelous device, equal in importance to the telephone, typewriter, phonograph, or any other of the mighty group of great modern inventions.

“You look incredulous; but I assure you my words are well advised, as I shall presently demonstrate to your entire satisfaction.

“This wonderful little apparatus that stands before you, I call a Universal Beverage Differentiator. By a proper manipulation of its mechanism, in conjunction with a certain exertion of psychological power on the part of the operator, any beverage held or recently touched by a person within a radius of sixty feet of the box, and at whom this projector on top may at the time be pointed, will, to that person’s sight and taste, be converted to any beverage indicated at the moment by the pointer of this dial that you see set in the side. Moreover, the impression will hold good until neutralized by the action of certain parts of the apparatus, that, when brought into play by the operator, serve to dispel the hallucination.”

As the stranger paused, as if waiting for me to remark upon his strange disclosure, I took a long breath, tossed away my cigar, sat upright, and, like a sensible cosmopolitan, laughingly observed, “Rats!”

The stranger frowned.

“You choose to be facetious,” he dryly remarked; “I might, however, rejoin that, in this case, it seems to me that ‘Snakes’ answers all purposes equally as well,” added he, pointing to a name on the dial.

I bent closer and examined it. Amidst the list of beverages was printed, in smaller characters than the others — as if to render it inconspicuous — the word “Snakes.”

For an instant, I looked at it in stolid wonder. Then suddenly I surmised its ostensible function. Sitting back in my chair, I regarded my strange companion for a moment in silence; then, putting back my head, I exploded in a fit of laughter.

“Well,” said I, as I recovered my breath, “my friend, all I’ve

got to say is, that if you conjure up snakes as cleverly as you seem to change beverages, you hold the key to considerable sport in your hands."

"To a better purpose than that of mere sport, I should hope," he somewhat gravely replied. "But if you are as incredulous as your words would imply, it seems to me it would be but justice, at least, to give me a chance to demonstrate beyond dispute that what I have related of this box is literally true."

I intimated that I was willing, "providing," I added, with a laugh, "you don't turn on the snakes."

"You may rest assured as to that, sir. Although," he added, with some gravity, "should I do so, you would find it no laughing matter.

"And now, pray mention some wine of which you are particularly fond," said he.

I named a certain sherry I had observed on the dial, and of which I am very fond. Hardly had he swept the indicator to the place, when the pale amber of the ale before me deepened to the ruddy brown of the wine I had called for.

Taking up the glass, I smelled of the stuff, then tasted it. Unquestionably, so far as my physical senses evidenced, it was the brand of sherry I had named.

I set down my glass and regarded my companion with a puzzled look.

"My friend," I dryly observed, "these transformations, on the face of them, appear quite marvelous; but any clever master of legerdemain will do things apparently as wonderful. I shall be glad to be convinced of the truth of your extraordinary statements; but for anything you've shown me as yet, these curious phenomena may be but an adroit piece of chemical jugglery."

The stranger listened with an impatient frown. Then his countenance cleared.

"Sir," said he, "under the circumstances, your doubts are natural. Though it is not my intention that you shall go from here to-night unconvinced, any test involving immediate publicity of my discovery would be fatal to certain cherished purposes of mine. For the present, it is imperative that the strictest secrecy be observed in this matter; and though you may wonder some-



what at my sudden confidence in a perfect stranger, I am not so unsophisticated as may appear, and know, in a way that would surprise you, that my trust is not misplaced.

“Now, I would propose as a test both simple and crucial, that you operate the box yourself on the next person who may drink at one of these tables. With ordinary discretion, no suspicion need be aroused as to the source of the hallucinations, and on the success of the experiment I am willing to stake my chances of convincing you.”

I bit my lips and smiled.

“Your words are more flattering than convincing,” I replied, “but I’ve no objections to such an experiment.”

“Very well,” said the stranger; “and now listen,” he continued, with one finger held up by way of emphasis. “I must briefly explain the method of operating the box. In the first place, it is essential that the operator should be possessed of sufficient imagination to recall at will the taste, odor, and appearance of the beverage he may desire to project into the imagination of the drinker. It is not necessary that this mental picture be powerful on the part of the operator. The faintest suggestion in his mind of the desired effects will suffice, as certain plates in the apparatus — brought respectively into play by the dial indicator — are so constructed as powerfully to develop this mental effort of the operator; while what, for the sake of convenience, I will call the projecting current, conveys these effects through this brass arrow on top into the nervous economy of any person at whom it may be pointed, and who may be drinking any liquid within a radius of sixty feet of the box, — providing, of course, the indicator in the side dial be set at the name of the imagined beverage. Now this row of push-buttons which you observe set in the side of the box regulates the strength of the hallucinations. The first one on the left gives a very powerful impression; the one next it a milder one, and so on down to the sixth and last, which gives a very faint effect.

“By the way, it is not necessary that the projector be held on the subject, once it lines up with him. It suffices simply to sweep it past him. The impression he will thus receive will remain until dispelled by the action of the neutralizing mechanism, which

is operated by these two large buttons set in the end of the box. When the operator desires to neutralize the effects of the apparatus on a subject, he simply lines him up again with the projector and presses the white button. Or, if several persons are under influence, he may break the spell with all of them simultaneously by pressing the red button, which does not necessitate the use of the projector in conjunction with it. Thus, you see, the operation of the box is extremely simple; and I should be very glad if you would put it to any test these instructions may have suggested."

I had followed him through these details with a grave countenance. Inwardly I was convulsed with a curious mixture of wonder and mirth. If only a clever fakir, what possible lay could the fellow be on? Perhaps a matter of a desired loan on the alleged apparatus. Still, for a confidence game, the plant seemed unnecessarily elaborate. Juggling so clever as this would be a goose which would lay more golden eggs in legitimate paths than in crooked ones.

"My friend," I observed, scanning him sharply, "as I've said, your proposition of a test seems made in good faith. If sincere, you, of course, will not object to my trying these experiments without your presence, I suppose?"

To my surprise, he rose at once.

"None at all, sir; in fact, I was about to propose such an arrangement myself," he frankly replied. "I will absent myself for an hour from these premises," added he, glancing at his watch. "That will give you time to experiment to your satisfaction. But before going, I would say that while I want you thoroughly to satisfy yourself in this matter, you will see, I am sure, the necessity of keeping within judicious bounds. A hint to a person of your discretion should be enough."

"Oh, and one thing more: try any plate named in the list, but as you value your life, don't tamper with the 'snake' plate; — remember! have nothing to do with it!"

During the latter part of this conversation, a lull in the evening trade of the place had left us alone. At this juncture, however, a gentleman entered, bowed smilingly to me and, passing on to another table, ordered some sandwiches and a glass of milk. I

knew him as a promising young physician who was strongly opposed to the use of stimulating beverages.

My companion leaned over to me with twinkling eyes.

“There’s a subject for you,” he whispered; “try him! Here comes his lunch,” he added, rising, “and as you seem to have understood correctly my instructions, I now will leave you to experiment to your satisfaction by yourself;” then, nodding me “good-evening,” he withdrew.

I was nonplussed.

I had so far doubted the fellow’s sincerity in desiring a genuine investigation of his alleged discovery; but there of course could be no possible collusion in this case.

How would he get out of it? His audacity amused me. I would humor his game till I saw its point, at least. Under cover of the evening paper, I set the indicator of the box at “milk punch.” Then, waiting till my medical acquaintance reached for his glass of milk, I pushed the No. 1 button, called up the proper mental picture, and slowly lined him up with the brass projector.

It was not without an anticipatory thrill that I did this, and then I smiled at my absurd perturbation. The stranger would very likely return presently, and, alleging an improper manipulation on my part in excuse of the failure of the experiment, defer his straw test until the arrival of some confederate who would enable him to effect a “fake” demonstration for my benefit.

As these thoughts were passing through my mind, the doctor suddenly pulled out his watch.

“I declare,” he called to me, “I had nearly forgotten an engagement I have for this very hour!”

Rising hurriedly, he caught up his glass and took a hasty gulp. Hardly had the beverage passed his lips ere he slammed the glass down on the table, caught himself by the throat, and snorted, coughed, and choked as if he had swallowed vitriol.

I sprang to my feet and stepped over to him.

“What’s the matter, doctor?” I asked in dismay, catching him by the arm.

“Matter?” he wheezed between his snorts and expectorations; “I ordered a glass of milk, and they’ve sent me in milk punch!”



Just taste of that, sir!" said he furiously, picking up the glass and handing it to me.

I smelled it, tasted it. It was milk — and nothing but milk! Not the faintest trace of any other taste or odor.

For a moment I stood confused. Then I pulled my wits together.

"Doctor," said I, dumping the contents of the glass into a cuspidore, "I am at fault myself. I just now ordered a milk punch for the person you saw sitting at my table as you entered. He has stepped out for a moment, and the waiter has made a natural error. I must beg a thousand pardons."

The doctor — by nature a pleasant fellow — had by this time somewhat recovered. His countenance cleared, he laughed good-humoredly, and expressed regret at having shown temper over a trifle. Nodding me a pleasant good-evening, he hastily departed to his engagement.

I resumed my seat, and sat regarding the mysterious box before me with an odd mixture of feelings. My manipulation of this apparently potent apparatus had been conducted, so far, in a spirit of skeptical levity, but my last experiment had put another face on the matter. I began to feel a little nervous about making further experiments on my own responsibility.

Throwing the evening paper over the box, I sat doubtfully considering the matter, when a couple of tough-looking characters swaggered in. Taking seats at a table, they ordered some beer and sandwiches, over which they proceeded to discuss the contents of a scrap of paper which one of them had produced.

Others now began to drop in, and, shaking off my nervous doubts, I gave my attention to a judicious manipulation of the box under cover of my paper.

Up to this time, I still had been obstinately possessed of a suspicion that the effects apparently produced by this alleged apparatus — even in the doctor's case — had been but a clever piece of legerdemain. The marvelous hallucinations that invariably seemed to follow every trial I made with this mystic battery were too much for my skepticism. I found my doubts resolving into a critical enthusiasm, and I entered upon further experiments with a wondering and growing delight in the occult powers of

this cube of potent mechanism. In short, without exception, they confirmed all that had been claimed for this apparatus by its inventor, and created a degree of confusion in the mind of Cahill's phlegmatic head waiter that, I think, had never been visited on that organ before.

Before long I saw that I was going too far with this sort of thing. Relighting my cigar, I leaned back in my chair and awaited the stranger's return with impatience. Convinced, from what I had seen, of the veracity of his statements, I was now burning with curiosity to know the nature of the proposition he had to make me.

I had, so far, refrained from tampering with the "snake plate." As I sat waiting, I found my thoughts persistently reverting to this forbidden fruit. The unpleasant sensation which I at first experienced upon thought of it gradually grew duller with each recurrence of the matter, and, in place of aversion, there presently arose an itching curiosity to try this plate. However, the stranger's warning was yet in my ears, and I had seen enough by this time to convince me that he was sincere and knew whereof he spoke.

And yet — was not there the mild button? I had tried the brandy plate on myself with this button set, and found it reduced the hallucination to a mere shadow of effects. I would try the forbidden plate with it! on myself, of course — possible consequences forbade other experiment.

Disencumbering the box of the paper I had so far kept over it, I pushed the mild button, set the indicator at the forbidden point, and with one finger held prudently over the neutral button, slowly turned the projector till it bore full on me. Reaching out my left hand to my glass, which I had previously refilled from a fresh bottle of Bass' ale, I somewhat hesitatingly touched it. At the same time I mentally conjured up a mild type of a garter snake.

As my fingers touched the glass, I was suddenly seized with a qualm of nervous apprehension; but bracing myself for a possible shock, I firmly grasped it and pulled it to me.

For a moment I observed nothing. With an odd feeling of relief I was about to re-examine the dial, thinking I had made some

error, when I was startled to find my gaze irresistibly drawn back to my glass by an overpowering fascination. The color of its contents was changing. From a pleasant amber it was rapidly passing to an ugly, venomous green; and as I looked, two bubbles of the liquid's bead detached themselves from opposite sides of the glass and circled slowly to its center, where, instead of uniting, as bubbles in proximity usually do, they remained a little apart without further tendency to rotate.

Suddenly it came to me, with a sickening sensation, that they were not bubbles, but a pair of small, glittering eyes that now seemed regarding me from the depths of the beverage. For they sank as I looked; and then — horrors! — they enlarged to two great, frightful orbs that seemed to fasten my gaze with bands of fire. Slowly they began to circle about the bottom of the glass; then faster and faster they spun, until my brain reeled and my head felt like a humming top. At last, so rapidly they whirled, they seemed one bright wheel of baleful, glittering light, which, presently paling to a dull, sickly hued ring, swung slower and slower, finally fading away in the green-hued contents of the glass.

A simple matter to describe — but I had had quite enough. My ears were ringing; an iron band seemed drawn tightly about my head; a reddish mist impinged on my eyesight, and I felt the cold perspiration running from every pore.

I was about to press the neutral button, when I started back with a suppressed cry. In place of the arrow-headed pointer on the top of the box, there twisted and squirmed a hideous green and gray adder! The shock to my nervous system was something frightful; but even in the distraction of the moment, I realized it was not so much this one apparition of an adder that unnerved me, as it was the horrible dread of what might appear next.

With a powerful effort of my will, I reached a trembling hand to the cut-off button, and pressed it just in time to shut off a row of small wriggling vipers which the row of buttons on the side seemed simultaneously projecting.

“And that's the effect of that plate with but the mild button set!” I mentally ejaculated, wiping the cold perspiration from



my face with my handkerchief, and glancing furtively about the room. As I did so, I caught the eyes of one of the seedy pair of toughs fixed on me with a queer, insolent look. My nerves were yet tingling from my recent experience. I felt irritable and ugly, and I returned his stare with interest.

“Look at de cully dude over dere, piping us off wid his kodak,” said he to his chum.

“Say, Cholly,” said that personage, turning about in his chair and holding up to me the sole of one of his big feet, “jess put de machine ter work on dat, and den git der picter framed ter mine me by, — see?”

I knew a word to the waiter would suffice to rid me of the pair. But it suddenly occurred to me that here was an opportunity to utilize the powers of the apparatus to some purpose. I would give these fellows a lesson they'd never forget to their dying day. The indicator of the dial was still set at “snakes.” I had but to press the No. 1 button and call up the proper mental picture, to turn the full power of that terrible plate through the projector, which, as the box now stood, pointed at the wall on my left.

I had just attended to these preliminaries, when Cahill entered and walked down to them, evidently to order them out. But I was resolved not to let them off so easily. Hastily turning the projector, I lined them up just before he reached them.

The effect was instantaneous. With a yell, they both sprang to their feet. The next instant, one fell writhing to the floor, while the other came rushing towards the swing door, his face distorted and the foam flying from his mouth. As he neared me, he suddenly threw up his hands and fell across my table, striking the box, as he fell, with such force as to send it flying under the swing door out into the bar beyond.

The next moment pandemonium reigned!

As the box went rolling along, a chorus of agonized shrieks sounded through the room.

In falling it had swept the occupants of the place with its terrible current!

Indeed, it was only by a miracle of chance that I had not been caught in its radius as the box rolled.

In an instant the room was one struggling mass of delirious humanity. Some rolled on the floor in frightful convulsions, — others, in their frenzy, grappled together and tore at each others' throats like wild beasts!

I sat for a moment paralyzed with horror. Then I realized that in my attempt at a joke I had brought upon at least a dozen respectable citizens delirium tremens in their most horrible form! This brought me to my senses. The box must be recovered at all hazards and its fearful effects neutralized! I sprang to my feet and leaped through the swing door.

The box was nowhere in sight!

A waiter, white with fright, was clinging to the door-post of the street entrance, shouting for the police.

“The box! where's the box?” I cried.

“He's — he's got it, sir!” said he in a frightened stutter.

“Got it! `who's got it?”

“Why, just as it rolled against the bar, in came the crank that brought it here. Grabbing it, he pressed one of the buttons, and then, ‘Great heavens!’ he yelled, ‘the fool has broken the neutralizer. I can shut off the current but not the effects!’ and with that he clapped it under his coat and rushed out.”

My predicament was a desperate one!

The stranger undoubtedly would seek, by flight, to evade all responsibility for the frightful consequences of my folly.

He must be found at all costs!

Appalled at the frightful position in which I had placed myself, I rushed into the street in wild pursuit. But my efforts were vain. And since then, though I have exhausted every expedient in my despairing search, not the slightest trace has been found of the mysterious inventor — “the man with the box.”

