

same time trying to hear her mother and sisters retire to their rooms. She was uncertain whether they had all closed their doors, and the suspense kept her nervously irritated for a long time.

At half-past nine she rose silently, went round to her father, and bent over to assure herself that he was still asleep. The light, regular sound of his breathing satisfied her that she might safely desert her post for a few minutes. Cautiously manipulating the door-handle, she let herself out and closed the door again behind her, after which she stole along the passage in her moccasins as far as Nicholas's room. Upon her scratching gently on the panel, he opened the door from within. Had the light been better, she might have noticed that his face was flushed and his hair ruffled from lying down.

"I mustn't stay above a minute," she said rather breathlessly. "It's my turn to be with father. He's asleep now, but he may wake. . . . Where is the box?"

He pointed silently to the table by the window, upon the surface of which the great aluminium box rested horizontally. Evelyn moved towards it quickly, and tested its weight by lifting one side an inch or two. She was astonished at the lightness.

"Is it ready for use?"

"Yes."

"Then how do you start it?"

He explained the mechanism to her.

"I see you have set it for eleven," said the girl.

"Yes; if I get to sleep by then."

"Then it will run for one hour from eleven till twelve?"

"Yes."

"And to reproduce afterwards?"

"The spool comes round to the starting point, where it is stopped by a pin. You raise the pin—so!—and continue winding with this handle a few times. That

gets you past the pin, when all you have to do is wind the whole machine for another revolution."

"You don't require to treat the sensitised surface of the film chemically before reproducing?"

"No; the original exposure itself fixes it."

"Are you having the box in this room, or in your bedroom?"

Nicholas would have wondered more at the question had he not felt so unwell.

"I shall place it on a table by my bed."

Evelyn threw bird-like little glances about the room while considering quickly if there were more questions to be put before leaving him. Her eyes rested accidentally on a poison-blue phial on the mantelshelf. She looked from it to him.

"What is that bottle?"

"It's some stuff Lore gave me for sleeplessness, but I've never taken any."

"Do you suffer from that regularly?"

"Every night lately."

"Then it may interfere with your experiment?"

"It's more than likely. To-night especially. My head's in a sort of fever."

"In that case, hadn't you better take some of it? What is it?"

"She couldn't give me the name. I don't know that I care about risking it." He went over to the bottle and took it in his hand. . . . "On the other hand, what the dickens does it matter? I don't suppose it will kill me, and I certainly shan't get any result otherwise. One takes it in water, I believe. I'll get some water from the other room."

He passed through the communicating door, leaving it ajar behind him. No sooner was his back turned than Evelyn snatched up and uncorked the phial with lightning speed, and poured a quantity of the crystals into the palm of her hand. She recorked and replaced