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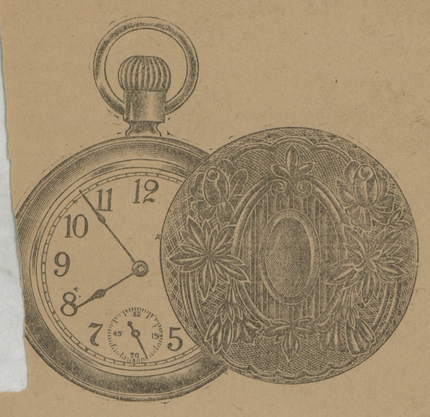

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BARTON'S EXPERIMENT

By FRANK FILSON.

(Copyright, 1914, by W. G. Chapman.)

John Barton had fallen in love with Lucy Dean after the first germs of his deadly purpose had sowed themselves in his mind. Once there, they had taken root and flourished, so that not even the new interest in his life could prevent their development.

The idea possessed him, body and soul. Since boyhood the temptation had come to him at idle moments when he was vaguely dissatisfied with life. But he had always fought it down and conquered with sheer will power.

He knew, however, that the law could never touch him. He knew that he could carry out this design with impunity, holding the harrowing knowledge of it in his own soul until the day of discovery.

Love comes unexpectedly enough, and Barton's soul was torn in twain after Lucy had promised to be his wife. Yet, fight as he might, he could not withstand the prompting of that impulse within. He had given rein to it too long.

He had a month's vacation every summer. That would be ample time in which to set his purpose, though his plan would not come to full fruition for two or three months longer. However, it was only necessary to start, and, automatically, the train that he had fired would smolder until, without intervention upon his part, the ripe fruits of his enterprise became manifest.

Barton had rented a little furnished cottage in a remote region of the Adirondacks, where his only neighbors were a few woodmen.

He made some miserable excuse to Lucy to cover his absence for so long a period, and disappeared from the haunts of his friends. And, the evening after his departure from the Grand Central station found him in the little cottage, alone, staring out moodily across the lake.

The clay-colored chemical which was so essential a feature of his design stood on the little bare table in the room which he had selected for his operations.

He had the formula calculated to a nicety. All that was necessary was time for the chemical combinations to become permanent and to produce their rich crop of results. The experiment had been performed many times since man emerged from barbarism, but less and less often as he became enlightened, and of recent years so seldom that its very infrequency was John Barton's greatest asset of safety.

It was on the fifth morning after his arrival that he received a letter from Lucy.

"My dearest John," she wrote, "I am becoming very uneasy about your going up to that out-of-the-way place in the Adirondacks, where you are all by yourself. Mother wants you to come back at once and spend the rest of the month with us at Atlantic Beach.

"I am greatly concerned about you, dear, and unless you write me that you are coming on the next train, I shall begin to think you do not love me."

The sight of Lucy's delicate handwriting brought back to him with a rush all the memory of their love. How fond they had been of each other! How the knowledge that she loved him had temporarily driven the thought of his purpose out of his mind. And how miserably he had striven to avoid that insistent temptation that came knocking at his heart!

But the experiment was under way, and, more, it was succeeding. There was no doubt of that. Science was infallible, and her laws absolute. And he had used only a tenth part of the clay-colored chemical, with its faint, aromatic smell, so subtle an agent in his great task, and yet apparently so innocuous.

John answered Lucy's letter, excusing himself on the ground that he needed perfect rest, and remained in his cottage.

Then the day of decision dawned. There was a letter from Lucy. John could hardly steady his fingers to tear it open.

"My dear John," it began, "since receiving your last letter I have felt very much hurt at your refusal to spend your holiday with us. I hoped that you would write again, and I have waited every day to hear from you. I was too proud to answer you.

"But now, dear John, I have come to the conclusion that you could not have treated me thus unless something serious were the matter. And so mother and I are coming up to Cranberry Lake to see you. We shall start tomorrow, and the day after you receive this, we shall be at your station. I hope you will meet us there, John, and remove my suspense—and mother's."

And now the die was cast, and the man's struggle between love and the dreadful task to which he had set himself was renewed more acutely than ever. None can know what a mental struggle he endured during the rest of that day. For, if he destroyed the results of his experiment he knew that he could not nerve himself to begin anew.

But the thought of Lucy conquered. As the gray dawn came stealing into his room, after a sleepless night, John emptied the clay-colored fluid out of the window. Then, taking a razor from the bottom of his bag, desperately, wildly, he shaved off his mustache.

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January Clearance Sale

which starts Jan. 2nd and lasts 20 days

To those who are not acquainted with the commercial world, can't understand the great importance in clothing manufacture—clothes makers make winter clothes in summer time and summer clothes in winter time, and before one season is started the former season's stock MUST BE DISPOSED OF that gives them cash capital for their next season's business. But this year they were GLUTTED with vast stocks returned and cancelled from their customers in the South and it gave us a chance to buy their BEST STOCKS AT WAY DOWN PRICES.

To the many

inquiries we've had this season—How early were we going to start our January Sale ?

We are pleased to inform our friends and patrons that this great Sale is NOW ON and those that have waited for this GREAT MONEY-MAKING EVENT will be greatly surprised as our reductions will average NEAR ONE-HALF on all

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