

CREeping UP THE STAIRS.

In the softly falling twilight
Of a weary, weary day,
With a quiet step I entered
Where the children were at play;

IN A FLASH.

When I first remember my Aunt
Barbara, she was over forty years of
age; but she could never have been
accounted a handsome woman.

You ask me to go back in memory
(begins my aunt) to what seems to me
now like a period of remote antiquity,

And now, here was this man, and
another with him, effecting a surreptitious
entry of the premises at 1 o'clock
in the morning!

These thoughts flashed through my
mind almost as quickly as that flash
which revealed so much.

"It's old Shillito, come to pay his
rent," he remarked a moment later.
"Two hours after banking-time, as
usual. What a nuisance he is!"

"But the money will be quite safe in
your desk, won't it, John?" asked
Bessie.

"Safe enough without a doubt, seeing
that no one but ourselves knows of its
presence there. Only, as a matter of

business, should prefer to have it in the
coffers of the bank." Presently he
added: "The old fellow was half seas
over, as he generally is; and I have no
doubt, with so many houses of call by
the way, that he will be soaked through
and through before he reaches home.

A few minutes later John kissed us
and bade us good-night. Bessie and I
went to the window to see him start
but by this time it was nearly dark.

The evening passed after our usual
quiet fashion. We worked a little and
read a little and played some half-dozen
duets, and chatted between-dozes,
till the clock pointed to half-past 10,

It was close on to 1 o'clock—as I
found out afterward—when I awoke
suddenly from a sound sleep. The
instant I opened my eyes the room was
illuminated by a vivid flash of light-

"Very beautiful; only I wish it were
anywhere rather than here," gawgured
Bessie who at such times was just as
nervous as I was the reverse.

The lightning is not quite as vivid as
it had been a little while previously,
still came in as frequent flashes, and by
its light my sister and I made a hurried
toilet.

When this was done, it seemed as if
everything possible had been done; and
yet it was next to nothing. With both
hands pressed to my eyes, I stood think-

At this juncture came another flash,
and a terrible peal of thunder startled
the air and shook the house. At the
very instant, impelled thereto by some-

Near the scepter and purple robes
was the cradle of the King of Rome,
weighing one quarter of a ton. The ma-
terial was said to be silver-gilt.

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narrow window which looked into the
garden. To this window I now made my
mind to enact.

"O Barbara, dear, what is the mat-
ter?" she cried. "Why do you frighten
me so?"

"Why, you goose it is not us they
have come after, but Mr. Shillito's
ninety pounds," I answered.

"I hoped so, too, but there was no
judging how much Dethel had contrived
to ascertain respecting us and our
affairs. I went to the corridor window

All this time, metaphorically speak-
ing, I was wringing my hands, know-
ing full well how precious were the fast-
fleeting moments, but only feeling my
helplessness the more I strove to dis-

"What noise was that?" asked one
of them quickly.

"I tell you there was. Where's the
glim."

"I advanced a couple of paces, and the
men fell back in speechless surprise
and terror. I have often tried since to
picture to myself the appearance I must

At the head hovered the figure of an angel
holding aloft a metal wreath, from
which depended the rich silk draperies
that could be made to completely en-

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now ready for the role I had made my
mind to enact.

"It is not you I want to frighten, but
the men down stairs," I replied. Then
in a few hurried words, I told her my
plan.

"I have omitted to state that the
window of John's office was secured by
two stout bars, which was probably one
reason why the thieves had chosen to

"Where's the door we want?" I
heard one whisper to the other.

"On the right—the first door we come
to."

"What noise was that?" asked one
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The Mystery of Flowers.

The name of the Peony is derived
from Poon, a celebrated Greek physi-
cian, who taught the Greeks that this
pretty flower was of divine origin, eman-

The floral kingdom furnishes plants
which flower unobtrusively on certain days,
and superstition has seized on this fact
of great persons who happened to be
born on the day they plant flowers.

The French the white variety of this
plant is, in curious contrast, associated
with the peaceful character of a nun,
and is called *la religieuse des champs*.

Under their fostering care the plant
grew as large as a fir-tree, and such was
the respect that it exerted that when
Christianity spread into Europe

The phenomena of optical illusions
have been made use of to a considerable
extent upon the stage within the last
few years. One of the most curious
exhibitions of this sort is known as

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A Modern Highwayman.

The railroad are the great highways
of the present day. The highwayman,
who has long left the slower thorough-
fares, now appears as the porter of pal-

"Chicago sleeper, sir?"
These words are varied according to
the train. It may be Rochester sleeper
or Buffalo sleeper, or St. Louis sleeper.

"I've managed so as to get your berth
made up second, sir. Lower berth, if I
think you said, sir. I always like to
oblige an old patron of the road, sir."

The quickness with which a car full
of berths is made up by a porter who
understands his business is something
marvelous. In the dim watches of the
night as you sleeplessly toss on the hard

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