Mechanics Run Mad.

WHEN the strange thing which I shall try
to describe occurred, I was sitting alone
in my room before the embers of a generous
fire, watching the smoke curl lazily from my
half-smoked cigarette, and wondering when
Jack would get in from his little trip down
town. I concluded he had stopped after the
theatre for something to eat; and as in that
case I knew that he would not hurry himself,
I lit another cigarette to console myself for
the extra waiting. I had nearly smoked it
out, and was in a state of uncertainty whether
to go to bed and trust to finding Jack at home
in the morning, when I heard the doorlatch
click, and turned round, saying to myself,
"There he is at last." The door opened, but
it was not Jack who opened it. A man of
whom I can give no description, except that
he was unusually tall and wore a full beard,
entered the room. Without removing his hat,
which was slouched low over his eyes, he
drew a chair close to mine and seated himself.

"Are we alone?" he asked in a low voice,
looking uneasily around the room.

Something in his tone, and in the appear-
ance of his eyes, which were bloodshot and
always wandering, made me think that my
visitor was drunk, but his actions, though
unceremonious, were quite sober.

"We are very much alone," I thought to
myself, eyeing him with curiosity, and waiting
for what was to come next. "What can I do
for you Mr.—"

"Mr. Miles, Abner Miles," he said, supply-
ing the introduction. "You are an educated
man, Mr. Roach; a student of science, a mas-
ter of the principles that govern the move-
ments of machinery. Do not be surprised
that I know your name, or the studies that
you have pursued. I have inquired; I have
watched you at your daily work; I have seen
the light burning in your room at midnight.
I have something to exhibit to you. You will
be able to understand me; your perception is
developed; your observation is trained; your
reasoning powers are used to exercise. I,
too, am a worker in the field of science. For
many years I have been devoting my energies
to the application of a new principle of motive
power, and my labor has at last succeeded.
Ah! but we must be secure from interrup-
tion."

He rose from his seat and secured the door
by turning the key in the lock, and said ner-
vously, "Are you prepared to witness my
discovery?"

"Whenever you are ready to proceed," I
replied, without looking up.

"Scorn and doubt," he exclaimed; "it is the
way of the world. Mistrust for the man of
genius and welcome for every charlatan and
humbug. My invention is to revolutionize
industry, and you refuse to believe in it
because it has not been taught you in a book.
You are as unworthy as the rest, but you shall
see; you shall acknowledge that you experts
have something yet to learn. Look in what
compass is embraced the keystone of a new
era!" he cried, drawing a small box from his
coat, and holding it extended at arms-length.

By this time I had no doubt remaining that
my visitor's mind was deranged. He was
pacing from one side of the room to the other,
with the precious box in his hand. Suddenly
he stopped, and striding up to my table, with
a sweep of his arm threw a pile of books and
papers to the floor, and cleared a space before
him where he carefully set the box. He lifted
the cover and displayed the contents. It was
a steel model resembling a flat car, with a
large wheel on each side which turned clear
of the ground. Taking the car in one hand
and the lamp in the other, he sat down on the
floor without ceremony, and after arranging
his machine to suit him, set it down and gave
one of the large wheels a sudden turn. There
was a whirring sound and several sharp clicks,
and the car went across the room with con-
siderable velocity. Going to the farther end
of the room he started it again. It ran over