

places before the great and the mighty of the earth.

CHAPTER II.

1. Now about this time the chief ruler gathered together the Council to commune about the lighting of the citizens' houses, for they were all lit with gas from one large central place, where it was made and distributed throughout the city.

2. And each citizen paid for what he consumed, and though of late it had been lessened in price, yet many marvelled that the cheaper it became the more they had to pay for it.

3. So the chief ruler propounded to the Council this great problem, and promised a great reward to the wise men thereof if they could read the riddle aright.

4. Now one of the wise men stood before the chief ruler and said, "My lord, I marvel greatly that the men of the City of Granite cannot understand so simple a matter, for it is long since thy servant found out the great secret.

5. "And I will hasten to tell my brethren here that all may benefit thereby, if the citizens will but simply change their burners, then shall their difficulties disappear as the morning dew."

6. Now was the chief ruler wroth, and commanded him to sit down, and not make foolish

jokes on such a serious subject.

7. But one of the rulers spoke, and said, "I pray you, brethren, let him unfold to us what sort of burners can so solve this great and marvellous mystery."

8. And the wise and witty ruler answered and said, "I meant, my lord, gas-burners void of holes."

9. Then did a sorrowful silence fall on the assembled rulers, broken only by the sobs of the Lighting Committee.

10. Then did another of the wise men stand before the chief, and spake unto him, saying, "I pray you, my lord, that you will lend an ear to your servant, for I think that I alone possess the key to this mystery."

11. And the chief ruler said unto him "Speak up, my brother; and if you can read the riddle aright, great indeed shall be thy reward."

12. And the wise man answered and said, "If the citizens will but turn off the gas at their meters, then shall their burdens be lightened, and the visits of the gasmen, instead of being a terror to them, shall be welcome, and they may even be invited to partake of something for their stomach's sake."

13. And when the chief ruler heard it, he bent himself to the earth, and rent his robes, saying, sorrowfully, "Nay, verily, thy remedy is worthless, for I