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HANET

By J. W. DE FOREST.

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"What a singular odor!" soliloquized Holcum, snnffing the air with a slight tremor of disgust about her

She said odor instead of smell, because she was a teacher of several years' stand ing in one of the common schools of New York, and had learned in the exercise of her profession to express herself with an elegance of the Johnsonian species. She was accustomed to remark to her scholars: "Before you speak, always consider not only your thoughts, but also the language in which you propose to give them utter-

She was at this moment ascending the third staircase of the cheap, plain, and even seedy lodging house in which she had her parlor-bedroom-kitchen, or, in other words, her one room in which she studied, slept and did such small cooking as was needed for her tea and breakfast. In this simple fashion she had lived for years, not merely because her earnings were small, and not at all because she was stingy, but mainly because she was a noble, unselfish woman, who had it at beart to educate a youthful orphan

"It is burning charcoal," she added after an instant. "Can it be that some poor mortal is seeking his death?"

School teaching alone had not given her the wisdom to reach this suspicion. She was a reader of novels; she had an imagination and a native longing after the unusual; she was capable of conceiving a suicide and of conceiving herself as saving him. Where a practical, common sense man would merely have smelt fire, this fanciful, impulsive woman scented a tragedy of the heart. We shall see which of these two characters best suited the exigency that was now agonizing in this bare and musty old lodging house. The wildest imagination is sometimes the truest common sense.

"It may be that young foreigner," thought Janet Holcum. She ran up another flight of stairs, hurried along a musty, dusty passage and stopped before a door marked by dirty fingers. Timorous and modest, she looked at it with hesitation as well as anxiety; but the charcoal fumes were stronger here, and began to make her sick and faint; she felt that she could not hesitate long. After rapping and receiving no answer, she put her mouth to the keyhole and called, also without effect.

"Oh dear! what shall I do?" she groaned, confident now that a tragedy was passing within, and looking about her vainly for help. She had already learned that this fifth story was unoccupied except by the pale, slovenly, haggard young foreigner, whose step she had frequently heard, pacing to and fro for hours, over her head. As she remembered that he was a man, and that she had never been introduced to him, she thought of running down stairs and summoning some other man to save him. But the poisonous air demanded instant action; she tried the lock unavailingly, and then flung herself desperately against the door; the miserable bolt catch gave way, and she was within. Unable to breathe in the mephitic atmosphere of the room, she rushed across it, opened a window and thrust her head out. Looking back from this position, she saw something which made her shudder.

There was a painter's easel; on the easel was a picture with its face turned from her; behind the easel, on the floor of one corner of the room, was a wretched bed, and on this, the chest and head concealed by the picture, lay the motionless form of a man. The moment Janet had drawn one long breath of the out of door air she hastened to this terrible corner. No time to look at the man; no leisure to query whether he were alive or dead; she lifted him by the shoulders, dragged him to the window and seated him by it in a chair. Her only distinct consciousness as to his condition was that the temple which dropped against her cheek was not

entirely cold. But the appearance of the suicide, as she held him up in the chair, was alarming. His face ash colored, his lips blue contracted, his head drooping helplessly on one shoulder, he seemed to be already in another world. She scarcely noticed that he did not look to be more than 25 years of age; that his long, curling yellow hair, although neglected, was beautiful; that his wasted and ghastly features were classic in outline. Two or three times she cried loudly for assist-"Help! Murder!" But outside there was only a wilderness of roofs; inside, the musty old lodging house seemed another desert. She was left alone with her awful question of death or life.



She was left alone with her awful question of death or life.

Presently her enigma responded. The response was only a sigh, but it came from the side of the tomb; it was the triumph of nature over supernature, the bail of a soul returning from the shades. The man was already breathing. and it was not long before he opened h eyes. Into these eyes Janet sent her sweetest and most pitiful smile, seeking thereby to encourage the sick and sorrowful spirit within. Not a word was uttered, for the one was as yet too ill to speak, and the other felt that here was a misery too profound to be questioned. After awhile, seeing that her patient could hold up his head, Janet hastened to the pan of charcoal, which was still burning, and deluging it with water from a pitcher, extinguished its poisonous When she returned to the window the invalid looked in her face with so much

intelligence that she ventured to address "You will be better soon," she said. "The air of the room is becoming purified. It was that charcoal which made you ill.

"Yes, it was to sharcoal," replied the man, with a marked German ac

"I hope that you will be more carefu. about it in future," she continued, be lieving that she was talking to a would be suicide, but not quite certain of it.

"I subbose so," was the weak voiced. She looked anxiously into the fine face was now beginning to reassume somewhat of its natural color and beauty,

are suffering under any trouble," she said, "I trust and desire that you will tell me of it. Perhaps

"I haf but one drubble," he replied.

Wicked as the sentiment seemed to her, the man who uttered it did not seem wicked, but only pitiable. In the quivering droop of his lip, and in the fixed but unseeing stare of his blue eyes, there was a profound anguish and a calm desperation which made her think of the unsounded, motionless waters of the Dead sea covering ruined cities. She had never before seen such sorrow; at least she had never before seen sorrow expressed with such frankness; and the spectacle impressed her the more terribly | GALLIA. . . . We'day, Oct. 24th, 7:30 a.m. because of its novelty.

The youth now rose, steadied himself with difficulty, rubbed his forehead and his eyes, struck his hand repeatedly on the back of his neck, obviously confused. The state of the s nine delicacy ordered her to leave him; but she did not dare, lest he should rekindle his charcoal. Turning away in order to gain time for reflection, she found hera scene on the North river which she had ports. visited and which she instantly recognized. Although unfinished, she was so little a judge of painting that she did not perceive that, as she thought it beauti fully done. Of a sudden it occurred to her womanly wit and sensibility that here was something whereby she might gain a hold upon this victim of despair. and draw him back to a willingness to

"Did you do this?" she asked. "Are you a painter?" His face brightened the merest trifle as

he caught her look of interest. "Yes, I am a bainter," he answered. "Let me turn it to the light for you," he added, with a courtesy of manner strangely at variance with his coarse and even dirty clothing. "You see it is not vinished yet," he went on, looking kindly at her, as if he detected her ignorance of art and pitied her for it.

"I know the place," she said, forcing a smile of encouragement. "I have had the pleasure of visiting it. How well you have represented it!"

"So you haf peen there?" he replied. with just the faintest possible smile of gratification. "It is a pewtiful spot." "Why don't you sell it?"

"What! sell it so? It is not vinished." "Then why don't you finish it?" she added, trembling with anxiety to make him promise to do so. "I haf not time," he said, his gloom re-

turning.

"Oh, but you have time," she urged eagerly. "You shall have time." He eyed her meditatively, earnestly and selemnly, as if querying whether be should tell her his miserable story. While he hesitated this excellent Janet Holcum was praying in her heart that heaven would guide him toward goodness and

safety. "See here," he said at last, "I will del. you someting. You haf saved my life. will dell you why I wanted to die. I had no money. I could not get food. I could not bay for my room. I had had drubbles pevore-over in Chermany. Und now l had not a cent in my bocket. So at last I. tires out, und I gives it up. I lights my sharcoal, und I lies down to sleep it out That is my shtory.

In spite of his strong German accent he was sublime and terrible and pitiable. The tears rushed into Janet's eyes, and stepping suddenly forward she caught both his hands, as if she would prevent him by force from again attempting his

"I t'ank you," was the simple response of a man whose sensibility and quickness enabled him to understand sympathy which had not been uttered.

"You must not do this again," she urged as soon as she could speak. "I will see that you have friends. You shall have time to finish your picture. I will help you sell it. Have you eaten today?"

"I haf no abbedide." She understood that he had not eaten. and the tears shone in her eyes again. "Come down to my room," she said.

"You must! You can take some tea, at any rate. Come down and sit with me, at least, while I eat." "I am opliged," he answered as he fol-

lowed her. "But you must excuse my abbearance," he added, glancing at hi ragged clothing, stained with grease and daubed with paint "I am not fit for the gombany of a lady."

"I am only a poor school mistress," she smiled. "And in you I can respect the artist."

He bowed with a courteous grace which gave him the air of a gentleman, in spite of his wretched raiment.

Arrived in her little parlor bedroom with this strange companion, Janet Holcum's heart fluttered. It was the first time that a man had been with her there alone. If visitors should arrive, what, would they think? Of course it would be impossible to explain that here was a gentleman whom she had caught trying to commit suicide, and whom she had undertaken to cure of his self destroying propensities by means of tea and sympathy. Moreover, what would this man himself think of her? She was squeamish about situations (and here we come to a fact which I have not hitherto dared to mention)-well, she was squeamish because sha was an old maid (To be continued.)

Advice lo Mothers

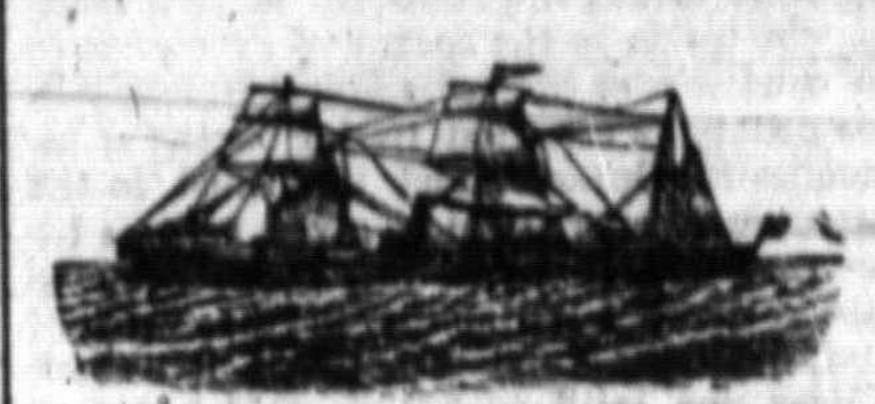
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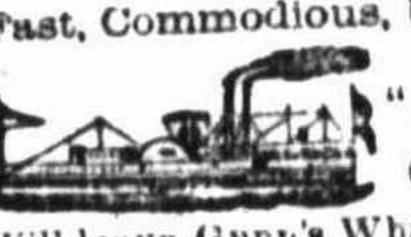
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