

THE SUICIDAL CAT.

There was a man named Ferguson, he always sat on Market street; he was a sparrow hawk, and that hawk would not be beat.

He'd catch more rats and mice and stick 'em forty cats could eat.

That cat would come into the room, and sit on the window-sill, and And he'd be half sit and tick himself, And purr so soft, quiet?

That cat would sit at him— But still he'd purr severe.

And then he'd climb the moonlit fence, And leaf around and howl,

And a cat would sit and call,

Alas, outside the joint;

And then the y' all would stow their tails,

And jump around and howl.

And all the cats in the street,

With the howl of the horrid din,

Would rise right up and search their babies

And all the cats would keep a hollerin' like sin.

And as for Mr. Ferguson,

"Twas more than he could bear,

And he'd sit up and purr,

And the midnight stir;

But this voodoos Thomas cat,

Not one cat did he care;

For still he'd purr and kept his fur,

And his old spine a'ould' up,

As far as the world goes,

And the world of happiness

Did on his lungs depend.

But while a'currin' of his spine,

And waitin' to attack,

There comes an awful crack;

And this 'ere 'spectie Thomas cat

Got bopped in the head.

When Ferguson come down next day,

There was his old wife,

And not a life was left of him;

Although he had had nine;

"All that's left is Ferguson,

"All currin' of his spine."

Now, who does tender hearts

There's no place like home,

Don't go so high like this cat,

To gettin' up your back.

A LOST KEY.

Edgar Arnton had made a highly important discovery, and one that troubled him. He was a surgeon, and was given to examining hearts. For a full hour, in the gathering summer twilight of the Park avenue, he had applied his faculties to the testing, in another sense, of his own. The decision to which, very unwittingly, he came, was that his dire suspicions of the past three months were well-founded in his love.

The thrill which had gone through him as he clasped Miss Gerrow's hand on leaving her uncle's gates that very evening pointed in that direction. The expansion of soul and the exhilaration of mind which he continually experienced in her presence, the longing that often seized him in his moments of professional desire and weariness to fester, not only for an instant, on Kate's bonny face, all drove home the welcome conviction.

In the course of his final turn along the broad path between the whispering poplars, Edgar formed a resolution. Entering Brixby, he encountered the very friend he had desired to consult. Mr. Trent was a solicitor, now years the young man's man, and his only confidant in all the country-side.

"If you are disengaged for ten minutes or so, Mr. Trent," said Edgar, "I should like to have a talk with you about Mr. Gerrow's niece."

"I am perfectly at your service, Mr. Ami. You are smitten by the great appreciation of Miss Gerrow's charms, I have seen it coming a long time."

Edgar smiled a little sardonically, in the dimness.

"I do not understand," said Mr. Trent.

"Why, I mean that had the disease, gone further I might have proved unable to overcome it—as I mean to do now."

"You astonish me more and more, Miss Gerrow is beautiful, of good birth and well educated. She is an heiress into the bargain; and if she cares for you, and her uncle consents, what possible obstacle can intervene?"

"You have said," returned Edgar moodily; "she is an heiress."

The lawyer bit his lip to keep from a loud laugh, and said, "I do not."

"The very thing that, whether she were pret' or plain, would make Miss Gerrow an attraction to most suitors."

"I am aware of it. But I am not like the majority; I am poor, my prospects are barren enough; all the world would say I was fortune-hunting—marrying for money if it came to a marriage. She might lead me to think so too, and that I could not be blamed."

The concentrated pathos of the last sentence, and the involuntary sigh which concluded it, touched the solicitor. His meditated words of bantering remonstrance were not uttered.

"What shall you do then?" he asked.

"Shun the danger, fight the temptation, was harder. I cannot run away in the circumstances I might be minded to do my living lies in Brixby. But you can help me considerably in the struggle."

"I—how?"

"When you see me running any risk of a *tete-a-tete* with Miss Gerrow, and you can possibly interfere, do so."

"And make you hate me for it; I will not do that."

"I shall not hate you. I shall be very grateful. I must meet her frequently at the house of mutual friends. You will often be able to make your debtor a good guardian of his interests."

"It is as though," said Edgar, "Edgar Arnton mis-trusted himself, and the apparent firmness of his resolution. As far as I could see, it was a week later he was thrown into Kate Gerrow's company even more constantly and more infinately than before. Mr. Gerrow was taken suddenly and seriously ill. Edgar had to attend him and to labor hard to ward off an attack of probably fatal apoplexy.

They were a lonely couple, the weak, the old, the old, owned by Brixby Lodge and the fair young girl who repented his heart. Kate was an only child and an orphan. Neither she nor her uncle had any kinsfolk in the neighborhood. Cousins, Kate believed she had somewhere in the North; but there had been estrangement in the family, and that estrangement had never seen.

"It is as though," said Mr. Arnton; "My uncle will recover, will he not?" Kate asked when, after a careful examination of his patient, Edgar stood for a minute or two in the wide, old-fashioned hall.

Very charging looked the questioner, and there was no real answer. Arnton was once more magnetized.

"I said, 'Yes,' Miss Gerrow," he replied; "of course I have not the right to guess from you that there is risk of grave risk, that is inseparable from such cases; but I do not see the least reason for despair. Pray do not worry yourself unnecessarily."

"My uncle is the only relative I have in the world," said Mr. Arnton; "and I said, 'Yes.' You will no doubt know his real condition from me at any time, I beg, Mr. Arnton," she subjoined.

"No, Miss Gerrow, I will be quite frank; although it is a medical privilege to be discreet, you know. But you will

need a trained nurse. The work will be delicate for ordinary servants, and too wearying by far for you. May I send one from the Hospital of Infants?"

"I think that will be best. He'd catch more rats and mice and stick 'em forty cats could eat."

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