

Janet's Model.

(By Mary Downe, in 'Forward.')

It was growing late in the afternoon, as well as in the year, and the light in the studio had begun to give warning that work must soon cease for the day. Janet still lingered at her easel, though for half an hour she had done very little work on the sketch before her, having fortunately caught the effect she wanted at the beginning of the pose. Finally, tipping her chair and head, she glanced from the study to the model and back again with a satisfied smile. Hard training was beginning to tell, and without conceit she was sure that the vigorously drawn little head possessed several qualities which her master would approve. She felt much encouraged in her recent determination to try for a prize offered to students of city art schools for the best portrait study in oil, and even felt sure that there might be a possibility of her success.

'That is all for the present, Stephen,' she said to her model, when the final survey was over, and immediately began to scrape her palette and gather her brushes together ready for washing. The fifteen-year-old boy addressed rose from his seat, drew a few steps nearer to Janet and stood twirling his shabby hat between his hands in an embarrassed manner. Presently he said, in a low tone, 'Won't you need me any more, Miss Greene?'

'Why, you may just finish up, as usual—fix the fire and lock the windows, you know, and then come to me and I'll pay you,' answered Janet, absently, rousing herself from dreams of the wonderful prize picture which she would paint. But Stephen still lingered.

'I mean, won't you need me any more after to-day, to paint from. If you could keep



THE NEW CANVAS WAS BROUGHT OUT AND THE FINAL WORK BEGAN IN EARNEST.



STEPHEN SITTING FOR THE GREAT PICTURE.

me a little longer, Miss Greene—jest till me foot gets strong an' I can go to work in the rollin' mill again. Me mother isn't a bit well, an'—he hung his head and played with his hat again, the kindly half-light veiling his flushed cheeks.

Janet knew of the accident which had crippled the boy temporarily and withdrawn the invalid mother's support, and her family had managed in various ways to lighten Stephen's burden without hurting his self-

respect. She answered with sincere kindness and sympathy: 'I'm sorry, but I must begin another portrait, next week. Perhaps I can find a chance for you to pose for some of my friends. I'll see what I can do, Stephen.'

The boy murmured his thanks and began to perform the light task assigned him. Janet suddenly frowned at an absurd idea which had popped into her head.

'Nonsense! That's carrying conscience a little too far!' she told herself, angrily. 'Stephen does very well for practice work, but it would be ridiculous to try to make an exhibition portrait from him. And how could I give up my beautiful color scheme, and Amy's pretty hair that I've always longed to paint? This isn't a philanthropy competition, it's art; and I know I couldn't help standing some chance for the prize with such a model as Amy.'

She glanced lovingly at the folds of golden-brown drapery on the wall near by, which were to make a harmonious background for her cousin's red-gold hair; and she swept her pet brush ecstatically over an imaginary canvas, as she thought of the long line of the graceful, creamy throat. But suddenly, between her eyes and the softly glowing background, came Stephen's dark, wistful face, as he stood waiting for his dismissal. The contrast between imagination and reality was a dramatic one, and impressible Janet felt a thrill which it was hard to analyze. Her quickened senses, however, led her to see a new significance in the features before her. What a strong, patient soul looked out from the rugged, serious young face! If a painter could make the world feel the beauty of that soul,

would not that be a triumph, too? With a troubled mind she paid the boy for his work, and told him to call at the beginning of the next week for possible news of employment.

Then, left alone in the gathering dusk, Janet fought out the battle with self; and the artist who has sacrificed a cherished dream of color and form to try to find content in the commonplace, will know that it was not a very easy one. But it was a smiling girl, with a peaceful mind, who finally walked home under the first stars, murmuring to herself:

'And only the Master shall praise us,  
And only the Master shall blame.'

The sittings for the great picture began on Monday, and Janet could not regret her choice when she witnessed Stephen's pleasure at the prospect of even so slender an income. She surprised herself by the interest with which she began the work and the progress she made. Her practice sketches from the same model at odd times had not only helped to give the desired technical facility, but she had unconsciously been acquiring a grasp of the boy's character, which was a stimulus to her in the new, exalted mood under the influence of which she worked. She made no attempt to paint a fancy head, but tried for truth, strength and simplicity, though unconsciously she emphasized the pathos and ideality which she felt in her model. Every day after her class hours were over she worked steadily, and, after two or three preliminary studies, the cherished new canvas of the prescribed size was brought out, and the final work began in earnest.