POOR DOCUMENT

ST. JOHN STAR, SATURDAY, JULY 7, 1906.

A TRANSACTION IN GAS

By Casper S. Yost.

"I never could understan' why people! he never reach the top? Was ever a fill pay a quarter fur a patent cast iron stairway so long? His chest felt as window fastener when a five cent gimthough it carried a load of a hundred let beats 'em a mile," said Red Ike sortly to himself, as he slipped the end strong man's trick at the vaudeville of his jimmy between the upper and iower sash and with a quick movement which seemed to belong to some one

speechless and then—

"Gas!" he whispered. "Gas! Infernal house full of it. Who ever heard of such rum luck. Here I've been spyin' this house fur a week to git the lay, and just as I've got things fixed nice an' pleasant, with nobody at home but the woman and the baby, the gas factory cuts me out. It's sure death to go in there, But—but—but—"

but he could yet crawl.

He found the door by instinct. It was ajar. He entered and noticed that the air seemed to be less heavy. The scape was evidently below. The woman and child lay on the bed, unconscious. He reached up and shook them feebly but they made no sound. To the window he crawled, slowly, painfully, a thousand deaths in every inch of the way. He raised one hand to the sash

there. All alone. Dead!

experience he had never been so disconcerted.

"Mebby they're not," he muttered, as the possibility entered his mind.

"Mebby they're still alive. But—but if they ain't they will be mighty soon, an't there's nobody but me to help 'em. If I raise a rumpus the cops' il get me; besides, they'd make a mess of it. If I sneak there'll be a funeral here, sure. It's not our funeral though, Ikey," he went on, assuming the dual role habitual with him when he became quite tonfidential with himself; an' it ain't none of our business. If it was a man in there—but it's a woman—an' a baby. It's up to us, Ikey, we've jus' got

to make a try."

Mebby they're not," he muttered, as just outside the window. Life for him —may be life for the forms on the bed. He had come this far and he must "see it through." This time he got hold with both hands and raised the sash a few inches. A-a-a-h! Was anything ever half so sweet as that drought of air? He leaned agains the sulked it in, feeling strength return with every inspiration. Raising the sash to the top he thrust he head and shoulders out and reveled for a moment in the luxury, regardless of the danger of discovery. Then he recovered his mind.

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iower sash and with a quick movement broke the filmsy lock.

"I bet I've smashed a thousan' of them window locks in my time," he continued, "all of 'em different, an' I never found one yet as much use as a bent hair pin; but when I butt into a gimlet I know I'm up agin a hard proposition. Now, here's a house full of money an' the people ain't got sense enough—

"Great Snakes!"

That wasn't what Red Ike said, but for purposes of publication something less expressive has to be substituted.

He had just raised the sash when his soliloquy was interrupted and at the same time he staggered back as if struck by a club. For a moment he was speechless and then—

"Great Snakes!"

The was at the landing. How pleasant it would be to stop right here and let everything go. Why not give up the struggle? There was nothing in it for him. He had come to rob them. Why should he make greater effort to save their lives than he would to get their silver? They would find him there in the morning. Perhaps they'd blame him. Ah! "Come back here, you old mutton head. Quit chasin' aroun' on your own hook. Settle down on my neck and get busy. I need you." He didn't give this command with his lips. He was past that. He could not rise, but he could yet crawl.

He found the door by instinct. It

go in there. But—but—but—"

Another thought had struck him.

"The woman—an' the baby—are in arms seemed limp as strings. What's He stood staring at the house through the blackness of the night. In all his drew himself to his knees and—dropexperience he had never been so disconcerted.

The use? Brace up, Ikey, It's back bone you need." Gripping the ledge he drew himself to his knees and—dropexperience he had never been so disconcerted.



he knew indicated deep slumber?

"You're all right, my lady," he said, with a grin of satisfaction. "Mebby Red Ike ain't no doctor, but he's got 'em skinned on this job. Hello! The kid's coming 'roun,' too. Time for you to mosey, Ikey. You don't want to be here when they wake up. We jain't been introduced, you know, and it might be embarrassin'. We'll just close up that gas factory below, if we can find it; then we'll sneak home."

don't feel the effects of it more than you seem to do."

"But, doctor," exclaimed Jones. "I didn't open 'the windows! I didn't open 'the bed! And the house was practically free from gas when I entered. I can't understand it at all."

"That's certainly strange. Is there no one else in the house? Where is the girl?"

"I looked into her room. She isn't there. She always spends Wednesday

Margaret should take such risks.
Something must be wrong.

lungs or heart. She was apparently dead. He uncovered the face of the child and rejoiced to find some signs of life. The covering had protected her. He raised and lowered the woman's arms as he remembered to have seen a doctor work with a man who had been drawged from the surf. After a

doctor work with a man who had been dragged from the surf. After a moment a gentle sigh came from her closed lips. He stopped and listened. An aspiration so soft that only an ear acustomed to noticing the faintest sound could have been heard, but it was enough. Had he not stood in the darkness many a night and strained his ear to hear the peculiar note which he knew indicated deep slumber?

"You're all right, my lady," he said,

inp that gas factory below, if we can find it; then we'll sneak home."

He gave a parting look at the woman and child, assured himself again that they were still breathing and then glided softly from the room. Ten minutes later he crept out through the same window by which he had entered, and, keeping well within the shadow, made his way down'the alley to the street and beyond.

It was half an hour or more after the intruder's departure. A tall man,

the intruder's departure. A tall man, carrying a suit case in one hand, came rapidly down the street and ascended the front steps of the house with "Look here. Dr. Roberts," cried Jones. "Look here, Dr. Roberts," cried Jones, "the sideboard is open and the silver

Margaret should take such risks.
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Hurriedly inserting his night key he three open the door. The odor of gas was still present, but it was no longer overpowering.

"Good God!" he exclaimed, "they may be dead."

Up the stairs he sprang and into the bedroom, crying, "Margaret! Margaret! Margaret!"

"That looks bad. Possibly your wife put it in some other place. But no! There has been a burglar here. This window has been forced. The latch is broken and there are the marks of a tool here. Could the burglar have turned on the gas to murder the occupants of the house?"

"But why open the wallows? And how came the bed took is unitered."

"True, Jones, that theory is untended in the returning warmth in their cheeks, the faint but unmistakable beating of their hearts and their fluttering breath upon, his face. They

THE WAY TO THE ATTIC

By Walt Makee.

"Haw eternally fooded off across the fields."

"To hisk is detected not him ma."

"You speak to him ma."

"You know Beats you have speet me to

Doughty looked off across the fields.

"But this one does suit me, mother."

Th?" From Doughty, suddenly in
"But this one does suit me, mother."

The stopy have leading up to it; the lane idiscover after a while that we are a quarter mile from our destination."

"Well what in thunderation did you stop here for? I never knew before that

terested. "What one, Rosma? Have Before the answer came, Doughty there was a religious side to real esyou and your mother been up here besaid, "We should have brought a tate."
fore?"
"A week ago, if you please." Mrs. "I'm talking to Rosina."
"but

"They the sendamed Doughty, turn of the customed disapher, recitating in the customed disapher, recitating really."

The property of the service of the customed disapher, recitating really, rectitating the recitation of the recitation of

Douthy lifted her lorgnette to look at By way of showing his utter indiffer- lane there to the house. It's just over passin'."

"There isn't," his wife assured him,

"but we have to go along that rocky Douthy lifted her lorgnette to look at a farmer seated upon a wagon-load of potato-baskets. "Rosina has found the very place she wants, and all there is to do now is to find the price of it and settle the matter at once."

A touring car passed them in a flurry

By way of showing his utter indifering the house. It's just over lane there to the house. It's just over lane there to house. It's just the knoil.

Rosina tried to squelch him with a lowered countenance. He stood a moment in some hesitation, then, making a very wry face, he turned upon his life there to house. It's just the knoil.

Rosina tried to squelch him with a lowered countenance the stood a moment in some hesitation, then, making a very wry face, he turned upon his lover of countenance the stood a moment in some hesitation, then, making a very wry face, he turned upon his uter indifering the hence.

Now, as my mother, thirty-five homestead—"

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Way down the stony down the stood a moment in some hesitation, then, making a very wry face, he turned upon his some hesitation, then, making a very wry face, he turned upon his some hesitation, then, making a very wry face, he turned upon his some hesitation, then, making a very w

"Is your father at home?"
"Yeh."

Rosina tried to squelch him with a Mrs. Doughty.

"Mother, do let me manage this."

"He's shavin'."

"I'll wait, if he won't be too long."

"Better not. He don't like no trespassin'."

"Rosina tried to squelch him with a like no trespassin'."

"To tell the truth, it ain't worth that much, ma'am..."

"We'll offer three thousand..."

"Dorfing, ma'am. D-o-r-f-i-n-g."

"I guess I know how to spell, sir!"

"Mother, do behave. Perhaps, Mr Dorfing will con...."

"Mother, do behave. Perhaps, Mr Dorfing will con..."

"We'll offer three thousand..."

"And perhaps he won't. I wouldn't

"Mrs. Doughty came slowly are the house to Rosina's side. She said: preclates the comp—"
"Perhaps the gentleman would take "Dorfing, ma'am, D-o-r-f-i-n-g." Perhaps the gentleman would take

"Mrs. Doughty came slowly around "I trust Mr. —er—Mr. Doorstep ap-

Dorfing, do you own this farm?" No, sir, I do not."

"That's all. Thank you. Good-day. Come ladies.'8 "And perhaps he won't. I wouldn't give him ten cents—"
"Be calm, mother. I know the sit-