

Ferg "the Star" Again.

FERG'S house stood all alone in the suburbs. One cold day in winter he was sitting by a blazing fire, his head bowed down, and his eyes fixed on the flickering flames. The wind was whirling in fitful eddies, and curling the snow into weird figures in front of the house, but Ferg inside, the only occupant that afternoon, seemed unconscious of what was going on outside. But, hark! sleigh bells in the distance; the sparks that issue from the flames and pass up the chimney no longer attract his attention; the bells become more distinct, and in a moment more the snow on the doorsteps creaks beneath the feet of the stranger. A knock at the door. "Come in," said Ferg. The stranger enters on the invitation, hurriedly throws off his fur coat, and then a great belt which rings of gold and silver.

Ferg gets everything he requires, gives him a chair near the blazing fire, and makes a few comments on the indecency of the weather, stirs up the fire and sits down. A hurried excuse of going for some more coal gives him a moment's opportunity to search the stranger's sleigh, but to his great delight he finds nothing with which he can defend himself. He returns quickly with the coal and continues his conversation with the visitor. The latter speaks of being once a stage manager in one of the large theatres in New York City, a position which he filled for upwards of ten years. He stated that travelling for the company was the worst and most dangerous part of his work. Ferg assures him that he should not fear anything as long as he remained with him, but he would not guarantee any security outside his own house. The stranger listened attentively and seemed to be quite satisfied with these remarks.

Then he asked if it were possible for him to stay that night, stating that he had some urgent business to transact in the city, which would occupy about two hours. He paid Ferg for his lodging and supper before leaving and promised to be back at 9.30. He put on his belt, locked it, and buttoned his coat tight around his neck, leaving for the city at once.

Ferg must soon act or not at all. He decided to leave his house a short time before the stranger was expected, and hurried