

# SEVEN DAY BOOK

## JACOB STAHL

### BOOK I

### HESTER

#### CHAPTER I

#### TEMPERAMENT AND FORTUITIES

##### 1.

THE first link in the chain was obviously forged by temperament. Either Mrs. Stahl or Nancy Freeman, who filled many offices in the Stahl household, none of them satisfactorily, neglected to replace the lid of the flour-tub. Similar and greater acts of neglect had been committed in the past, and no penalty exacted, but on this occasion a fortuitous mouse intruded into the flour-tub and made history. Of this mouse nothing more is known. Doubtless it was a well-meaning creature enough. Indeed, we only know that it was a mouse at all, from circumstantial evidence. It came and went, left a musky trace of its passage, and vanished.

Mrs. Stahl had an Irish temperament, chiefly evidenced in a habit of procrastination and a reposeful trust in miracles. The procrastinating habit may have been responsible for the absence of a lid from the flour-tub, certainly it was responsible for the presence of Nancy Freeman. Mrs. Stahl had thought, and said, that she must "really look out for another girl," and it is possible that she would have braced herself to the effect had it not been for that other factor in her temperament - her sweet faith in the impossible. However inefficient Nancy proved herself, Mrs. Stahl always hoped that she would do better to-morrow or next week. Mrs. Stahl maintained her happiness by such illusions as these. She had an imagination