

sued the other. "It seems to me that I might hand things out over a counter."

"Even that requires more experience than you'd ever guess," remarked the old lady. "But I think I can offer you something more to your taste, and it only rests with yourself to accept it."

Lena leaned forward eagerly as Mrs. Smith went on. "I knew your dear father years ago, and it was a great shock to me when I heard of his death. Of course, I did not know that he had left you penniless. I knew you were his only child and I have been trying to find you. But I thought you might be staying with some rich relations. Only a week ago, I found out about his financial loss; but, even then, I did not realize what it meant to you."

"I have no rich relations," put in Lena. "So I discovered later," observed the elder woman. "I knew there were none on your father's side,—ah,—you seem astonished at me for saying this. O my dear, dear child! You'll never understand how strange are the ways of Providence in sending you to me. George Watkins and I were sweethearts once; then there came a quarrel, and estrangement followed. We were both to blame; but we were young and headstrong and could not foresee the future. We parted in anger, and then he married your mother. It was not a very happy union, as things go; but she, poor thing, was not left to him long. When I heard of her death, at the time of your birth, I felt sorry for him; and I longed to adopt you, then and there; but what could I do? I was far away, in India, at the time, and when I came back and met your father, casually, one day, I could feel that the old wound still rankled; so, who was I to offer to take his child? By that time, you were no longer the helpless infant you had been; but a beautiful, graceful girl who had twined her heart round her old father's, and he would not have parted with you, for love or money."

Lena was crying softly now, as she recalled how much her father had been to her, and she to him.

"Don't weep so, child," murmured the old lady, laying her hand tenderly on the young girl's shoulder. "I did not mean to remind you of your recent loss. But I had to talk about the past, in order that you would see that my request is not so very strange, after all. I have often longed for a daughter of my own. Will you be that daughter? Will you come and live with me here—not as a companion or to earn a living,—but as my own adopted child? I shall do my best to be a mother to you. Believe me, I think I can give you a good home—such a home as you have been accustomed to have. Will you stay with me and be the joy of my old age?"

"You are too good to me," cried Lena, impulsively, as she rose and gave Mrs. Smith a kiss. "I shall do all I can to be a daughter to you."

Lena counted that day on which she had found the purse as the luckiest day of her life, and she was more than glad that the sight of so much money had not led her, even in her then starved state, to appropriate what was not hers.

Tact

The stout lady struggled with difficulty into the railway carriage. "Ah!" she gasped. "That door might ha' been made by 'Old Sam.'"

She paused for breath, says the Manchester Guardian, and then proceeded to explain:

"You see Old Sam was one of them chaps 'oo'd got on. Went from a three-and-six cottage to a big 'ouse. But 'is missis wasn't used to a big 'ouse, and spent all 'er time in kitchen wi't servants. Old Sam didn't like this, but 'e never argued wi' women. Now, she was stout, like me. So he takes her away to Blackpool, and while they was away he'd the kitchen door built up narrer, so the servants could get in and out, but not 't missis. That did 'er, that did."

"'E'd what I call tact," said a man opposite.

And all sat lost in admiration of the tactfulness of Old Sam.

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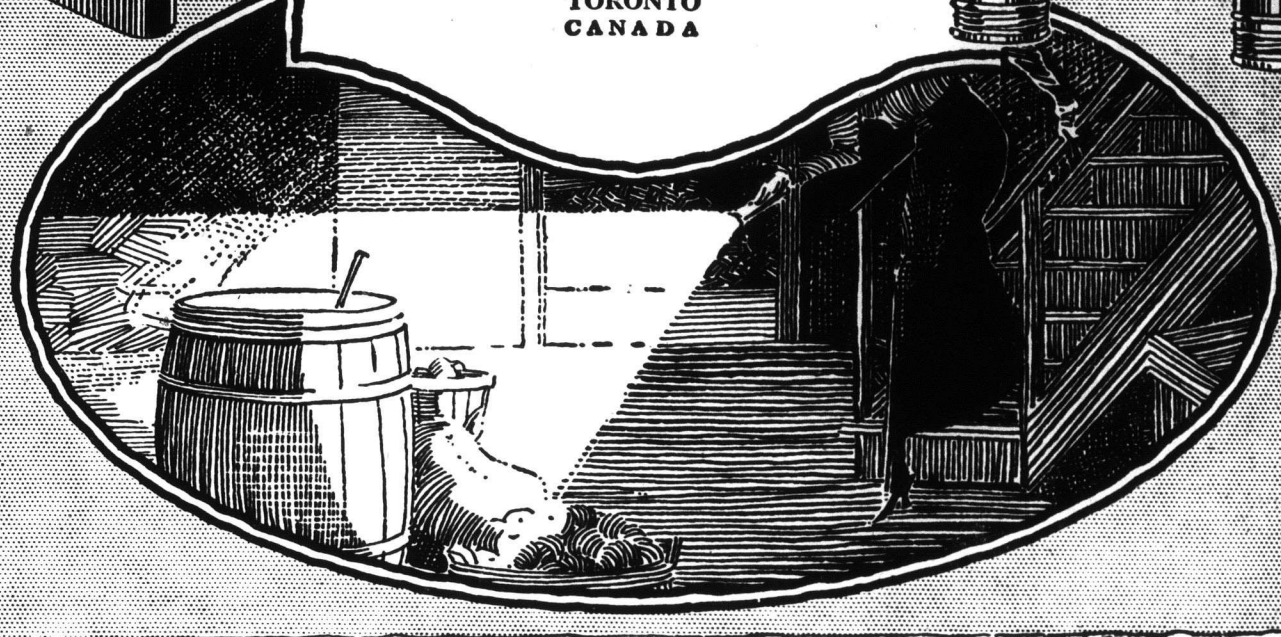
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