

**WOMAN'S STRATEGY.
OR, THE FIRST TIME I
SAW HER. A NOVEL**

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Woman's Strategy. Or, the First Time I Saw Her. A Novel by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

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"She went to the table and took up a card, looked at it for an instant, and then threw it down, and sitting down by the table, folded her arms upon it, and laid her head wearily on them, and stayed quietly."—See page 107.

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OR

THE FIRST TIME I SAW HER.

A Novel.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY T. MORTEN.



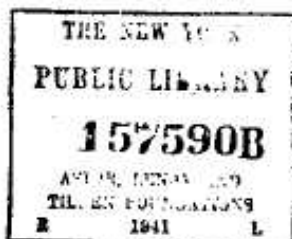
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WOMAN'S STRATEGY.



THE ADVERTISEMENT.

I HAD what I may call *no end* of answers to my advertisement, though I had put it in such a form as I hoped would attract the select few.

The advertisement was for partial board and lodging in a respectable family. It occupied a conspicuous place in the *Times'* supplement, and had been composed regardless of expense. Smith and I made it out together, after a capital dinner at the "London;" and as Smith is a literary man, and writes for *Punch*, you may be sure it *was* rather out of the common run.

Nevertheless, on that memorable morning I found no less than twenty letters on my

breakfast-table; the next post brought in twenty more, and so on every two hours during the rest of the day. I was offered the best accommodation, the most comfortable of homes, the most excellent cooking, at all terms, in every part of the town, and in all kinds of grammar, writing, and spelling.

One lady, who lived at Hammersmith (I had mentioned the locality required as within ten minutes' drive of Regent Street), informed me that hers might truly be termed a comfortable home, as she was blessed with six daughters, all musical.

Another, who dated her note from Tottenham Court Road, described her house as delightfully situated, the chamber I was to occupy looking out on the road, where the 'busses passed every minute, making it look pleasant and cheerful. In a postscript she also informed me that there were eggs for breakfast every morning. Another, writing in a stiff angular hand, promised everything I required, with the addition of family prayers. One informed me, as a kind of attractive bait, I suppose, that she was a young widow, who, finding "the solitude of home irksome, received two or three persons of station and refinement."

Smith and I read over the whole lot very attentively, and, as Smith said, it was as good as a sermon, for it showed you what an immense amount of lies and humbug, ah! and trouble, too, there is in the world. It took us a couple of hours to finish the reading of them, what with the jokes and witticisms of my friend, and the more sensible remarks of myself. I am a grave man, not much given to laughter or fun, but what I pride myself on is my exquisite sense of the elegant and beautiful. I hate vulgarity; I dread a vulgar man or woman as I dread the devil. I could not live near such a creature if my life depended on it, and, to confess the truth (Smith calls this a weakness), it was on that account I was going to leave my present mode of life as a bachelor in lodgings to become a boarder in a "refined and well-educated family;" so the advertisement ran.

My lodgings were all I could wish, clean, well furnished, in a respectable square, and Mrs. Meggs was an excellent cook; but then she was so decidedly vulgar.

She would come into my room in the morning to know if I intended dining at home, and what I would like for dinner, with her im-