

MISS BIRK'S STORY.

"Dear child, how did you talk? Let me see, you are a trifle over seventeen, and you say that you are miserable—that your heart is broken—and you shall die." And Miss Hope Birk, having briefly summed up what it had taken Jenny Farley more than an hour to tell, looked kindly over her glasses into the troubled young face before her. It was a pretty, innocent face, too, with blue eyes and bright lips, and a smooth white brow, around which clustered a profusion of short brown curls. Miss Hope Birk loved every feature of it, and it pained her to see it thus clouded. But Jenny was suffering from the first trouble she had ever known, and the tears would flow, the great sobs would come, shaking her slender figure, until the good lady was tempted to speak almost harshly to her young friend.

"There's no reason in giving way to your feelings like this," she went on. "Not but that I know it is hard to bear, but other folks have had just such trials, and will to the end of time. You can't go through this world in satin slippers, for there's rough places all the way along. Now let me tell you, it depends just upon yourself to be happy or miserable. You thought you loved this young Ritchie—"

"I did—I do—I always shall!" interrupted Jenny, with a fresh burst of tears.

"Very well," said Miss Birk, "if you love him, you want him to be happy, I suppose?"

To this plain question there was no reply.

"You ought to be glad that he is going to marry the woman he chooses; you had no right to think of him in any other light than that of a friend, you—"

"Oh, don't talk in that cold way, Miss Hope," sobbed Jenny. "I know I had no right, but how could I help it? You can't tell anything about my feelings. You never suffered so!"

"I never suffered, Jane Farley," repeated Miss Birk, rising from her chair, and walking to the window, where she stood for some moments, as if to recover her wonted composure.

"How little we know of each other in this world, Jenny," she added, when she resumed her seat. "You think because my face is calm, and my daily life is quiet, that I have not known what it is to have those I love torn from me; that I cannot understand a grief like yours. Child, will you listen to a page from my life?"

Jenny wiped her eyes, and raised her face in token of assent.

"I am an old woman now, dear," Miss Birk began. "Nearly sixty-nine years I have been a pilgrim in this wilderness, and for the most part they have been years of peace. But I had a time of great trial when I was a little older than you. The Lord brought me safe through it, or I should have been a poor wreck, for it seemed to me there was nothing left for me to cling to. I was an only child, and up to my sixteenth year I never had a wish ungratified. It was at that period of my life that my father failed in business, and shortly after died. My mother was feeble and had been accustomed to every luxury but she bore up bravely for my sake. She obtained a situation as housekeeper in the family of a very wealthy gentleman who had known and respected my father, with permission to take me with her. Mr. Denning was a noble man, thoughtful, generous, and kind. My mother's office was merely nominal, and he took care that she missed no luxury which it was in his power to procure. As for me, I was treated half as a child, half as a friend. He loved to have me sit in the library while he was busy with his books or his manuscript, and if he walked or drove I was almost invariably his companion. It was the old story over again, Jenny. I learned not to love, but to adore him, and that was why I suffered. There were months when I never thought of Heaven—when it seemed to me that if I might always live in his presence I should be supremely happy. I am sure that he did not suspect my feeling for him to be anything more than the love of a young sister for her elder brother, at least for many months, and I think it was that which made me love him more."

"We had lived at his house a year, when my mother sickened and died. That was my second great loss. In that time of affliction Mr. Denning was ready with words of tender sympathy, and in a thousand unobtrusive ways endeavored to soften my grief. As soon as I recovered from the blow, I stated to him my intention of seeking employment in the neighboring city. I recollect very well his look of amusement as he held up his hands in his own, and said:

"They were not made for work, Hope; they are too little and white."

"But they are strong," I replied; "they are able to earn my daily bread."

"I want you to stay here, my child," he said, without noticing my words. "I cannot afford to lose your pleasant young voice and your sunny face. And besides my own selfish wish, I have another reason for wanting to keep you. Can you guess what it is, little friend?"

"I trembled under his glance; there was something in it which made me feel that I was about to hear that he loved me. I made no reply to his question, and he went on:

"Very shortly, Hope, I expect to bring home my wife. Oh, how his voice lingered on those words, as though they were most precious! She is a queen of beauty and grace; you must love her—you will love her, not only for my sake, but for her own. You are surprised, Hope, for he began to notice, my rigid, white face. 'You thought I could not keep a secret from you, and it was hard, but Georgia would have it so. I have told her about you, and she is ready to love you as I do.'

"In answer to all this I said not one word, but sat perfectly still, staring straight out at the window. It was such a blow that I was crushed under it. He stood beside me for some moments as still as myself, and then with a deep sigh he turned away and left me alone. He had guessed the truth."

"It was a beautiful, bright autumn afternoon. I remember how I sat watching the flaming leaves on the maples in front of the house, and the white clouds drifting across the blue sky. I had not a tear to shed; I never

thought of weeping; my only wish was to leave that place, and never see it or him again. I believe it was after sunset before I stirred from my seat. I went up to my pleasant chamber, and began quietly to gather up my books and papers and put them in a trunk. While I was thus occupied, a servant rapped at the door, and handed me a package. It was a note from Mr. Denning. I can repeat it word for word, Jenny:

"Little Friend:—I shall have left home when this is handed you. Stay here until you find another home. You will not pain me by refusing the enclosed trifle, and if you need a friend at any time, remember you have none who will more gladly serve you than I."

"JOHN DENNING."

"I tossed the letter into my portfolio; the note to which he referred as a trifle, I put in an envelope, sealed it, and directed it to him, and left it upon his study-table. Then I went on with my work. Early on the following morning I left the house. I had one friend in the neighboring city. She was a music teacher, and to her I determined to go. We had once been schoolmates, and I was sure that she would let me stay with her until I could obtain employment. I found her living in very humble lodgings, but she gave me a kindly welcome. Ellice Kinsey, like myself, was an orphan, but she had a serene, unflinching confidence in God's love, while I was entirely without hope, without faith."

"In the course of two or three weeks, I obtained a few pupils in drawing; these, with the sum I was able to earn by writing for one or two weekly newspapers, furnished me a fair support. In November I read the marriage of John Denning and Georgia Willis; it was what I had expected to see, and yet it gave me a great shock. For a few days it seemed to me that I could endure life no longer, I was so tired of its cares and burdens and sorrows."

"One afternoon just at dusk, Ellice and I were returning home from a long walk. She had been talking in her own sweet way of such things as she thought would interest me, apparently without observing my silence and inattention, when I interrupted her, as we stood upon a bridge that spanned the river, by exclaiming, bitterly:

"How I long to throw myself over this railing. No one would miss me—no one would care, and I should be at peace!"

"Ellice stood still, and looked seriously in my face. She took both my hands in hers, and held them with a firm grasp; she was evidently not frightened by my wicked words, but grieved for me."

"'Hope,' she said, 'I will pray God to forgive you, and soften your sinful heart. I believe you are insane tonight.'"

"No, I am not," I answered, wrenching away my hand. "I am not, but I am miserable, wretched. Death would be so sweet—so sweet!"

"You believe in a hereafter," said Ellice, solemnly. "You are not prepared for it."

"I had not thought of that. My eyes drooped beneath her steady gaze; she took my arm in hers, and we walked home in silence. After that I grew calmer. Ellice was truly my friend. She asked no questions in regard to the cause of my grief, but her gentleness soothed and comforted me, and she led me at length to seek the peace which comes alone from heaven. Months and years passed, in which I endeavored to fulfil my duty, and doing this I had the reward of a quiet conscience. Occasionally I heard a rumor from the Denning's. It was said that the wife was thoughtless, gay, and extravagant, fond of dress and display, and happy only when surrounded by a crowd of admirers. My heart ached for him, for I knew he loved the simple pleasures of home."

Here Miss Birk paused. Jenny looked up in her face and saw there were tears in her eyes.

"Is that all, Miss Hope?" she asked, in a soft voice. "Did you never meet him again?"

"It is not all, and I did meet him once again, child—once again; it was years after our parting. I heard that he was very ill of a contagious fever which was prevailing in New York and the vicinity. His wife had left him in terror—he was alone. It was then I went to him, and day and night for nearly a week watched beside him. Oh, how I prayed that his precious life might be spared; but God knew best. He died in my arms while I struggled. I was then a child for that. Just before the last hour his reason returned—he knew me, and almost with his last breath blessed me. Oh, I can never be grateful enough for those few days that I was able to be with him and minister to his wants. Again Miss Birk paused but soon added in a cheerful voice: "Now Jenny you have seen that I have suffered like yourself but my heart is not broken, and I have lived, as I trust, to do some good in this world. Sorrow is hard to endure, yet, if we are patient and submissive, it brings us great blessings. You recollect how beautifully your favorite poet speaks of love which meets no return:

"Talk not of wasted affection, affection never was wasted. If it enrich not the heart of another, its waters returning Back to their springs, like the rain, shall fill them full of refreshment."

That which the fountain sends forth returns again to the fountain."

"That is true, I have proved it from my own experience."

Miss Birk arose from her seat as she spoke, and laid her hand caressingly upon Jenny's brown curls, and then passed quietly from the room leaving her to her own reflections.

Drink to it, Health.

Every night, in every ship in her majesty's navy, the queen's health is drunk by the officers of the vessel, but it is a curious fact that it is always drunk sitting, the officers never rising, as is usual on land. The origin of this custom has never been thoroughly elucidated.

The beautiful colors seen in the soap bubble arise from the fact that the bubble, being very thin, reflects light from both the outer and inner surfaces of the film.

THE DYING SOLDIER

Only One Soldier Remained of a New Brigade—Baltimore.

Just below the stone fort at Camper, sitting in the middle of the phaeop field, I came upon a pitiful sight—a soldier sitting on the ground, holding in his lap the head of a poor fellow who was literally shot to pieces. One bullet had gone through his head another through his lungs and chest, tearing a horrible hole, from which the blood poured at every breath. He was almost dead, and every breath sounded like the noise made by pouring liquid from a bottle, and his comrades kept the flies from his face, that was clothed with blood and dirt, and waited. Occasionally, when the poor fellow would groan a bit louder than usual, the friend would change the dying man's position, but he held him as stiff as he could.

"Don't suppose there's a surgeon about?" he inquired, as I stopped. I told him there was not now, but would be later.

"Well," he remarked, quietly, "don't suppose they could help him. He's 'bout gone, I reckon."

The breathing became weaker and the gurgling fainter and fainter as the grayish pallor began to show through the sweat and dirt and blood, and finally, without a tremor, breathing ceased. The soldier held his burden a moment until he saw the end had come, and then laid his handkerchief over the ghastly face and gently let the head down to the ground and slowly got up.

"Know him?" I asked. "My brother," he calmly said. And then he filled his lungs with one long, deep sigh and gazed off to the hills for a moment with a far-away, thoughtful look, and I could see that he was looking into some home and wondering what mother would think.—Leslie's Weekly.

Secret Societies.

In Rome there was not such a tendency to secret societies because of the immense awe in which the Roman held the state itself, which was worshipped as a protecting deity. But the Emperors feared the secret society, and forbade all combinations except those which would be known in our time as benefit and burial societies, and it is probable that one cause of the hatred inspired by the Christian Church in Rome seemed to clothe it around. It has been suggested that, after a time the church secured recognition as a burial society, and so the catacombs were constructed with the permission of the Roman Government, because they were connected with this idea of a burial club. In modern as in ancient times secret societies have greatly impressed the popular mind, although the motives for the formation of these bodies have been different. Not religion so much as politics and supposed personal advantages have been the impelling causes of most modern secret bodies.

China is understood to be honey-combed with secret societies, whose object is mainly the overthrow of the present dynasty and an expected regeneration of the empire. But the most modern of great states is scarcely more exempt than is the most ancient from the secret society. America counts its secret societies by the score, and their membership by the hundred thousand.

In Europe the Carbonari were a real power, and were supposed to be a much greater in the struggle for Italian unity until the open movement associated with Mazzini and Garibaldi practically ended the reign of secrecy. But at the present time all over Southern Italy and Sicily the secret society with its "theory of the dagger" is a very real and important fact. There seems little in common between the Mafia and the harmless temperance societies of England, but these latter have in some cases their oaths, ritual, and pass-words, their gatherings being absolutely secret, and having, therefore an attraction for many who are thus gathered in rather by the romantic attraction of mystery than by reason of the avowed object of the society.

The popularity of students' clubs in Germany is partly due to good fellowship, but partly to the mysterious attraction of "initiation" rites.

Alfred Noble and Dynamite.

His great inventor, the son of a Swedish inventor, was a man of great daring and extreme sensitiveness, due, it is believed, to physical ill-health. While his dynamite was distrusted he did the most reckless things with it, digging a quantity of the dangerous substance, for instance, out of a cask with a knife; yet "he was particularly susceptible to headaches caused by bringing nitroglycerin into contact with the skin; they affected him so violently that he was often obliged to lie down on the ground in the mine or quarry in which he was experimenting."

He was a man of vast reading and some poetic feeling, being, moreover so fastidious that he never could find a wife whom he thought up to his intellectual level.

He was deeply disappointed by not being made a Fellow of the Royal Society, and had we gathered, in his nature an element of whimsicality which his great wealth, not all made from dynamite, for he was at Baku a great petroleum dealer, enabled him to gratify.

"Being very nervous, and tiring of the pictures around him, he had made an arrangement with one of the largest picture dealers in Paris by which he could select any picture he liked and have them hung on his walls. As soon as he was tired of one set he sent them back to the dealer and selected others in their stead." He was the inventor of cordite, and died in 1896 at the age of 63, leaving his large fortune for the diffusion of scientific instruction.

IF THAT BUZZLE

If you would enjoy much, another much enjoyment.

If a man does nothing he does worse than nothing.

If there is any luck in a horse show it must be hard luck.

God tempests the wind to the shore.

Lamb.—Sterne.

Light is the task where many share the toil.—Homer.

If a man is satisfied with himself he finds others awfully disappointing.

Everyone has a fair turn to be as great as he pleases.—Jeremy Collier.

If thou desire to be held wise, be so wise as to hold thy tongue.—Quarles.

If there is honor among thieves there should be some among politicians.

He that wants money, means and content is without three good friends.—Shakespeare.

If counterfeiters turn out bad money it is because they are able to make it good.

If criminals are to be believed not one of them ever had an honest conviction.

That man may safely venture on his way, who is so guided that he cannot stay.—Walter Scott.

The shortest life is long enough if it lead to a better, and the longest life is too short if it do not.—Colton.

Leisure for men of business, and business for men of leisure, would cure many complaints.—Mrs. Thrale.

The cheapest of all things is kindness, its exercise requiring the least possible trouble and self-sacrifice.—Smiles.

There is an unfortunate disposition in man to attend much more to the faults of his companions than to offend him.—Greville.

If a woman only knew her husband as well before marriage as she does after the chances are that she would marry some other fellow.

A man's ledger does not tell what he is or what he is worth. Count what is in man, not what is on him, if you would know what he is worth—whether rich or poor.—H. W. Beecher.

ODD ITEMS.

The deer really weeps, its eyes being provided with lachrymal glands.

Russia has a business college at Kieff that was founded in 1588.

Fully 2,500 persons commit suicide in Russia every year.

No fewer than 1,173 persons have been buried in Westminster Abbey.

The empire of Japan comprises today about four thousand rocky islands.

The sea coast line of the globe is computed to be about 36,000 miles.

The mines of Bavaria (coal and metal) yielded only \$2,700,000 last year.

In a hot night Paris consumes 55,000 quarts more water than when it is colder.

The fir tree is the commonest of all trees, being found in every part of the world.

No person in Norway may spend more than six cents at one visit to a drinking place.

New theatres to be erected in Paris will hereafter have to be approachable from all sides.

The present system of musical notation was invented in the eleventh century.

Russia is said to own 3,000,000 horses—nearly one-half of the whole number in existence.

Stockings were first used in the fifth century. Before that cloth bandages were used on the feet.

It is said that the ordinary carp, if not interfered with, would live about 500 years.

A cubic foot of newly fallen snow weighs five and one-half pounds, and has 12 times the bulk of an equal weight of water.

THOUGHTS.

Who has not known misfortune, never knew himself or his virtue.—Mallet.

Mankind in the gross is a gaping monster that loves to be deceived and has seldom been disappointed.—MacKenzie.

Leave not off praying to God; for either praying will make thee leave off sinning, or continuing in sin will make thee resist from praying.—Fuller.

More bashfulness without merit is awkward, and merit without modesty insolent. But modest merit has a double claim to acceptance.—Hughes.

When all is done, human life is, at the greatest and best, but like a forward child that must be played with and humored a little to keep it quiet, till it falls asleep, and then the care is over.—Sir William Temple.

SAID OF THE CZAR.

Only one can be czar, but many can love him.

If the czar is a rhymster, worse luck for the poets.

When the czar is cold, all Russia has the influenza.

The czar is very mighty, but is not the Almighty.

If people want to hang the czar the rope will break.

The czar is of course a cousin of God, but not His brother.

The ukases of the czar are worth nothing if God does not say "Amen."

A tear drop in the eye of the czar costs the country many handkerchiefs.



FIND THE HIDDEN IDEAL

PICTORIAL PUZZLE



FIND HIDDEN MAN AND OUT

PICTORIAL PUZZLE



WHAT FLOWER IS REPRESENTED?

PICTORIAL PUZZLE



WHAT FLOWER IS REPRESENTED?