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Selected Story.

Sarah's Trouble.

BY HESTER A. BENDIS.

What is the matter, Sarah? Sarah's mother, a little pale-faced woman, with soft, tranquil eyes, stood at the ironing-table, pulling the ruffle of a snowy skirt this way and that with fingers that were slightly nervous, and looking anxiously into the cloudy face of her daughter.

"I don't know, mother, I'm sure I'm just tired of everything."

The girl's voice had in it more of impatience than weariness. She pushed a bowl of clear starch from her so vigorously that it fell upside down on the clean, new carpet, which she and her mother had labored all the preceding winter to obtain, and then she burst into tears.

Her mother laid down the skirt, picked up the bowl and cleared away the debris. Then she wiped her hands, drew an old splint-bottom chair up to the table, and, sitting down beside her daughter, put an arm about her waist and a kiss on her hair, just where it parted above her low, flushed forehead.

"What is the matter, dear? she repeated. 'I'm so worried about you of late, that I'm actually nervous. You used to be such a happy girl, singing from morning till night, and making the old house sweet and cheerful. Sweet and cheery!' interrupted the girl, fumble-down thing and out and I wish it was turned up or down, or sideways, or any way, so I could never see its terrible deformities any more!"

A young girl's laugh came fluttering down from an ivied porch, a hundred yards away, and seemed to set all the rose-leaves about Mrs. Hentz's window into a slow waltz, as it rippled through and struck straight to the heart of the poor unfortunate, who, though so young, was "tired of everything." It hurt there like a dull sword, as it went roaring from one chamber to another, in search of an "affinity" it had never before failed of finding; and the face that Sarah Hentz lifted to her mother was positively dreadful in its deformity.

"She can laugh," she said, bitterly—"laugh and be merry. Why not?"

"There's no reason why she should not—no reason, that I can discover, why any girl, blest with youth and health, and friends and home, should not be happy, if not merry."

Mrs. Hentz was rather more in earnest than when of her weakly-loving and unwisely-yielding nature are apt to be; and her daughter felt a slight stir of conscience, as she thought how "youth and health, and friends and home," were hers, and yet how uncomfortable she was making her life and her mother's.

"I suppose I am wicked," she admitted, "awfully wicked—but I can't help it. Lena has everything to adorn her beauty, and to make the most of life with; and—and—she has Charlie, too!"

The secret was out, and Mrs. Hentz was glad her daughter had hidden her face, and so could not see the smile that would flit across her lips and steal into her eyes.

"Oh! is that it?" she asked. "How did that come about?"

Sarah only sobbed for answer.

Mrs. Hentz waited till the sobs subsided, and little, half-drawn sighs testified to the passivity of her daughter's emotion, smoothing her hair all the while as only mothers know how, and tightening the clasp of her arm about the slender waist.

"Maybe you don't want to tell me, dear," she said, at last; "but I would not mind, anyway. You and Charlie are the same good friends?"

"Good friends? Why, mamma, that wasn't it—that wasn't all, at least. He was all the world to me—was, and is, and always will be! And now he's gone to her!—all but him—everything good before—all but him—everything good before—and grand. I had nothing but you—that's a good deal, mamma, I know, but you ain't Charlie!—nothing but you, and the old tumble-down house that I know she makes fun of."

"Lena—Lena Russell make fun of your home? Oh, no, Sarah; she is too good a girl to do that. And I thought you were the very best of friends."

"So we were, till Charlie left me, just because—"

"Because what?"

"Why, you see, we were playing croquet—Theo. Eyre and she, and Charlie and I—and she croqueted my ball out of turn. And you know my temper, mamma. I spoke crossly, and Charlie reproved me for it when the game was over. That made me angrier than ever; and—and—I didn't think he'd do it—but I told him if he was so dreadfully anxious about Miss Russell, he'd better go and comfort her, and he might stay, when he got there, too, I was sure he was quite welcome to do so, and I should consider myself fortunate in being rid of him."

"Why, Sallie! Did you say that to Charlie Sprague?"

"Yes; and a good deal more, I presume—for when I'm angry I don't know what I do say."

"And what did he answer?"

"He took me at my word—and I didn't think he would. I didn't think Heaven itself would tear him from me! He's said so a score of times, and I believed him. He never loved me.—He wanted to go—I know he did!—Oh, dear! oh, dear!"

"Again the little face went out of sight, and again a storm of sobs shook the little figure that had been Charlie Sprague's special care, and love, and pride, ever since he and Sallie Hentz were 'boy and girl together,' trudging to and from the district school."

"And did he go away without a word, Sallie?"

"Almost; he said something about my sending for him when I should feel any need of him; but I'd die before I'd do that—I would!—for he wanted to go. He's up there now, this very minute—that's why Lena is so merry. Oh, dear! oh, dear!"

"And you love him very much? It would make you miserable if you thought he loved Lena?"

"I know he loves her, and I am miserable!"

"Well, the roses for you, Sallie!"

Mrs. Hentz was every whit the mother, else she would have taken advantage of the opportunity to read a very useful homily to a very obstinate, self-willed individual, without pausing to consider how the homily was reading itself; and probably done an immense deal of harm, when only good was intended, as people often do who are not given to much thinking.

"Perhaps he does not care for Lena, after all," she added. "At any rate, he's happy as you can, dear. Mother's got only her one lamb left, you know, and her flock once numbered seven."

"Oh, mamma! mamma! forgive me, do!" Sarah pleaded. "I don't mean to get angry and grieve you—indeed I don't; for you're the best mamma in the world, and I don't deserve to have you for my own!"

Mrs. Hentz was about to reply when steps came, light and tripping, over the porch floor, and a voice called, merrily:

"Ho, Sallie! where are you?"

Lena Russell and Sarah Hentz had been like two sisters together all their lives, until the trouble about Charlie made Sarah seem cold and changed toward her old friend, who was one of the dearest and best of girls, and who, though of 'great expectations,' seemed always unconscious of any difference in their respective positions and prospects.

"Sallie is a darling, if she does go off sometimes 'like shot on a hot shovel,'" was Lena's frequent affirmation; and she knew that Sarah would be an angel, but for that very mortal temper which put in an appearance at most unseasonable times.

"What! in tears?" she added, as she entered the humble kitchen before Sarah had time to beat a retreat. "I suppose mamma scolded a ruffie, or tore it in the fluting, or—or—whatever it is the matter, little sober-face?"

"My head aches," explained Sarah. "Too bad! But I've a panacea. I came to tell you some news, and I expect you to be as surprised as I was when I knew it was 'true, and no mistake.'"

Sarah remained silent, and Lena went on, saying:

"I don't mind your mamma, dear, so I'll tell you at once, I'm to be—her face flushed, and her voice fell, without warning, from C to G—married next Thursday, at nine A. M."

"Married! You, Lena?"

Mrs. Hentz was slightly incredulous, judging from her tone. Sarah sat staring in speechless horror.

"Yes; I've been engaged to Charlie for two years, but I hadn't any thought of marrying him, or of letting him marry me, for many years to come, until yesterday. He has to go to En-

ropo in a week, and— Goodness gracious! Sallie, what is the matter?"

"But Sarah did not answer. She lay a little helpless, unconscious, buried in her mother's arms, and was carried thus to the chintz-covered lounge by the window. When she opened her eyes again, Lena was bending over her, bathing her forehead and looking pale and anxious.

Sarah looked at her a moment as if she could not quite comprehend what was the matter; then she said:

"Go away from me, Lena Russell!" she said. "I never want to see your face again! Do you understand?"

"Do you understand what you are saying?"

"Lena had risen, and stood with head thrown back like an insulted princess, and while she waited for the answer, that was full two minutes in coming, every particle of color faded from her face.

"Yes; I understand. Leave me." Sarah covered her eyes with her hand, as if to shut out a sight that was painful, and without another word, Lena passed out of the room and the house, where, for years, she and Sarah Hentz had been as sisters together.

For hours, poor, distracted Mrs. Hentz sat beside her daughter, or crept quietly here and there for ice-water or cologne. The clear-starching was forgotten, and when the twilight folded up the 'tumble-down' house, Sarah spoke for the first time.

"I'll go to my room, please, mamma," she whispered. "To-morrow I'll be quite well again."

She tried to rise, but her head swam, and she would have fallen but for her mother.

"Why, what's the matter here?" said the good-natured voice of Barbara Jones, the village sempstress. "Sarah sick?"

"She has an attack of headache, and I was just trying to get her to bed.—But she's dizzy, somehow."

Mrs. Hentz was 'dizzy,' too, Barbara thought, for she was white as a ghost, and all a-tremble.

"Let her lie here on the lounge," the sempstress advised. "Some say there's magnetism in my fingers. Maybe it will do her good."

As she spoke she put her hand on Sarah's short, wet curls, and stooping, kissed her forehead. She was a dear, dainty little thing, this patient-eyed woman, who sewed for everybody, and who knew a good many secrets that she didn't publish.

(This latter I hold to be one of the cardinal virtues, and if it were principal in the make-up of a woman, the world would be a sweeter place to live in—a sweeter and a better!)

Sarah lay quite still, with closed eyes, and Barbara smoothed her hair and stroked her forehead with the tips of her soft fingers for half an hour, talking low and softly all the while to Mrs. Hentz.

"I guess she's asleep," the sempstress whispered, as she rose to put on her hat to go. "Poor little girl!—How pale she is! Oh! I almost forgot my errand," turning abruptly to Mrs. Hentz. "I came to ask if you could wait a week or two for your dress. Mrs. Russell wants me every evening still, I am told; and when her daughter was married, they left the 'tumble-down house' together.—"Certainly," interrupted Mrs. Hentz. "Lena Russell is almost like an own daughter to me, and Charlie Sprague—"

"Charlie Manning, you mean," corrected the sempstress.

"No, I mean Charlie Sprague, the groom-elect, has been—"

"Well, well! There is a mistake somewhere," Barbara broke in. "Mrs. Russell told me it was Charlie Manning; or, at least, I so understood her."

Something swept past them in the twilight, and before they could fully comprehend whether it was ghost or girl, Sarah was half way up the hill, whose summit was bright with the lights of Lena's home.

Up, up she went, or rather flew, for her little feet seemed scarce to touch the ground—up over the beaten path and through the side gate, just beyond which stood Lena, picking leaves from a snow-ball tree, and seeming in a very serious mood, for one with a bridal day so near.

"Lena! Oh, Lena!"

Sarah's voice was full of a wailing eagerness, and her eyes shone wistfully in the twilight.

She seized hold of Lena's dress and looked into her face, as if she thought she would see the faces of those who may possibly bring 'a reprieve.'

"Why, Sallie! How you frightened me! Has anything happened? Or are you a ghost? I declare you look like one!"

"Lena, tell me truly. Is it my Charlie—"

Lena's eyes opened wide, and a puzzled look possessed her face for one

very long minute; or, at least, it seemed long to the poor waiting girl beside her. Then she said:

"Bless me! Your Charlie? Not if I know who your Charlie is!"

"Oh, Lena! have mercy—have mercy! Don't you see I'm dying here before your very face, and you won't tell me whose wife you are to be?"

Lena put both arms around her, and drew her down on the cool grass at the foot of the snow-ball tree.

"I don't think I just understand you," she said. "Whose wife but Charlie Manning's could I be?"

"Oh, Lena! Oh, God! thank Thee!"

Lena began to comprehend the situation.

"You weren't mad enough to think I wanted your lover, I hope, when you knew I loved my own, too?"

"I'm a little idiot, and I don't care who says so," admitted Sarah, with her arms tight about Lena's neck. "I didn't know you were engaged to Charlie Manning. You never told me, and he's been gone for months; and I drove my lover away from me—and—and—oh, I'm so happy!"

"Happy!" gasped Lena. "Well, don't choke me if you are, for I want to live to enjoy my own wedding, and yours, too. But you are a goose!"

"I know it! I'm anything anybody chooses to call me."

Lena laughed outright.

"And now I have the secret of my reception and dismissal to-day, I suppose," she said. "I've been too miserable for anything ever since. We've been such good friends, you know, and I couldn't imagine what I'd done to offend you."

Then Sarah told her companion all about her trouble with Charlie Sprague, and how sorry she was, and how she had suffered, and how she should always love him, if he never did come back, etc., etc., and the result of that confidence was that, an hour later, that young gentleman opened a tiny note, handed him by one of Mr. Russell's servants, which read:

"I have need of you, Charlie. Come. SARAH."

That was a very long evening at nobody's head ached, or heart ached, for that matter.

"I know you were not lost to me, my darling," Charlie Sprague said, holding his 'darling' closer in his arms than he had ever held her before. "I have loved you too long and too truly to lose you ever, here or hereafter."

"And I'll never say a hateful thing to you again while I live!" vowed the 'darling.' "If you could only know how sorry I am!"

"But I don't want you sorry. I want you glad, and I'll do my best to make you glad and keep you so."

And both vows were as sacredly kept as they were solemnly made.

Sarah was Lena's first bridemaid, and Charlie Sprague the groom's best man, the following Thursday, 'at nine o'clock in the morning'; and little Mrs. Hentz knew she was the happiest mother of the happiest girl in all the happy land!

Clear-starching increased on her hands as the summer advanced (is increasing still, I am told; and when her daughter was married, they left the 'tumble-down house' together.—"But Mrs. Sprague speaks often of it, and always as the dear old place, where her particular devil was put under her feet in the time of her terrible trouble."

Very well, then; it has come to this at last. I thought you would acknowledge it."

"Acknowledge what?"

"That we are not fitted for each other; that there never was—no, never can be that ideal affinity between us that must follow the marriage relation in these days to insure happiness."

"Then we had better live apart."

"Agreed! I am glad you proposed it."

"What will you do?"

"I shall find the means of support by benefiting my fellow-women. There are some brilliant leaders of my sex to whom I am assured I can ever apply. She will counsel me. At any rate, I shall be happier."

Mr. Buckstone went to his business with a heavy heart.

"Is the woman crazy? Have they turned her poor head with their twaddle about the mission of the modern woman of the period? Ah, my Lucy is far different from when I married her! I believe the best way to cure her is to let her have her own course for awhile, however. She will see her folly. Meanwhile, I can look after and provide for her—for she will need aid sorely, ere long. Perhaps I can convince her of my devotion, and disengage her mind of the fallacies which have taken such a deep hold of it."

But the discontented wife went to the office of one of those estimable and respectable gentlemen who advertise to insure and procure domestic estrangements after a legal manner and with due reference to despatch. She told her story, and the legal bird of prey at once prepared to entangle her in his meshes. He sympathized with her, drew her out, and promised to act the part of friend and protector while he put the engine of the law in quick motion for the liberation of his fair and interesting client from the irksome bonds of holy wedlock.

When Mr. Buckstone returned to his home that night, he found 'it deserted—empty, swept and garnished of everything pertaining to his wife's presence.

On the table in his library lay a note. He perused it under an overwhelming sensation of dizzy astonishment:

MR. BUCKSTONE:—I have taken the liberty of your right and privilege. I leave immediately for Newport, to commune with my eminent lay friend on business relating to my future course. My lawyer accompanies me as my protector.

For the last time in life, I sign myself

LUCE BUCKSTONE.

"Oh, my poor, foolish wife! Is it possible? She throws away her husband at the very moment she most needs his disinterested love and care! It must not—shall not be! My duty is apparent. At the risk of business—everything—I must follow her, and rescue her from her insane course!"

It was the work of a few moments to take the down-train.

At the hotel, when he arrived, he saw the names of his wife and the eminent divorce lawyer registered.

How was he to proceed?—how in breach her? He walked down the bench to consider.

A short distance ahead he could discern two figures promenade the sands. He quickened his pace. One of the figures—the woman's—he knew for that of Lucy, his wife; the other must be the lawyer.

He followed closer. The shades advanced, and he could get close enough to hear their conversation, even without his presence being noticed—for they walked the soft, pebblesand, close by the ever-washing waves, that broke at their very feet.

"And how did Madam receive you?"

"Very graciously, indeed. She said there was work for such as myself to do in the land—great work!"

"Then you will at once engage in your high career as a benefactress of your sex?"

"She gave me no present encouragement. She spoke, however, of my trying a lecturing tour next winter. But what am I to do the meanwhile?"

"If you will allow me I will proffer my assistance."

Here the deep tones of the lawyer were lowered to a more confidential key, and became inaudible to Mr. Buckstone.

The next instant Lucy had dealt her companion a quick blow in the face, and retreated, as if recoiling from a loathsome object, so rapidly and recklessly that her skirts already touched the sea waves lapping the sands at her feet.

She heeded this not, however, but still retreated almost into the sea.

The next instant it seemed to her that the ground opened and was swallowing her.

Down, down she seemed to sink—

She clutched wildly at the air, and strove to free her feet from the mysterious and devouring entanglement that was drawing them in—drawing her in bodily!

"Oh, save me! The quicksands!—Ah, it is no dream! See, I am sinking out of sight! Quick! help! Oh, my husband!"

The next moment Mr. Buckstone leaped boldly into the dangerous combination of boiling elements, and after a struggle of a few moments' duration—though a terribly severe one—bore the half senseless form of his misguided wife to the shore of safety.

He looked around for the lawyer; but he was nowhere to be seen.

"My husband! my poor, abused, outraged darling! Can you forgive me? Can you overlook the wickedness of your foolish wife?" she cried, when she revived.

She hid her face, burning with the blush of shame, upon his bosom, as he, still holding her in his arms, ejaculated:

"Out of the Quicksands!"

"Of estrangement and folly," she added. "I have done with ideal affinities. Let me go home and be a true wife to you. It is all I ask."

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married John Wray, and loved him with all her heart.

How Young Men Should Drink.

If young men will drink liquors, we insist they should do it gracefully. A great many accomplished bar tenders and polite standers have their risibles excited to a degree dangerous to proper saloon decorum by the awkward manner in which upstart grog 'uns take their grog, to say nothing of the danger from strangulation incident to starting a horn of brass down the throat.

The following is the proper way to do the business. It may seem a little awkward at first, but practice will make it easy, and the habit of doing the thing gracefully and easily will save you from a world of ridicule and from many of the evils which crazy temperance people are always charging as sure to follow drinking. Stand up straight like a man, your left side to the bar, take the glass neatly and firmly between the thumb and forefinger of the right hand, letting the little finger drop down near the bottom of the glass, in a plane exactly corresponding with the top of the bar, until it is precisely before you. Just then throw the head back a little, push the chin forward, so as to leave the throat in a full open, easy position. Compress the lips tightly, draw a full breath through the nostrils, and with a graceful curve raise the glass until the rim is within about three inches of your chin. Now is the supreme moment. Just here turn your eyes upward, think of your mother, and open your hand instead of your mouth! If any one laughs it will be an insult which you should resent by not going there again.—*Clayton County (Ga.) Journal.*

A Temperance City.

Not a glass of liquor can be purchased within two miles of the depot at MeComb city. This regulation is strengthened by a special law of the Mississippi Legislature, and also by a provision in every deed of property given, that no liquor store, coffee-house or other house where liquor is sold, shall occupy any lot within the corporation. They have made every arrangement which wisdom and prudence can devise to completely close the gate of that city.

The man who undertakes to edit a newspaper and get uneasy and excited when he hears that some people abuse him. No paper can succeed unless some one talks about it—either for or against it.

The above item, copied from an exchange, are our sentiments exactly. If a man takes umbrage at anything that appears in our paper, and orders it stopped forthwith—maybe with some gratuitous remarks to the effect that it is no account, has nothing in it worth reading, &c., we shan't get excited or scared about it. It is like a man who stamps his toe and then stops and kicks and stamps against the earth—he is the only one hurt by it.—*Munroe Enquirer.*

Girls That Wom.—Children enjoy playtime all the more if they have work to do on occasionally. If you would have your little ones interested in home and its surroundings, and also have them grow up to love work, and to depend upon that for their happiness, give them a personal interest in something. One child may have a piece of ground and be allowed to cultivate it, appropriating the proceeds as he pleases. Another may have a few fowls and be taught to keep an account of their eggs and the cost of their keeping. Even in towns, something of this kind may be planned for each little one, which will combine profit with pleasure, and give them habits of industry.

Tell the Truth.—There is no moral difference between 'white' and 'black' lies. We think a great lie a great sin, and a great shame to a man; but, after all, little lies are much more dangerous, because each one of them is diamond-pointed. And these little, petty untruths, which are so small that we do not notice them, and so numerous that we cannot estimate them, are the ones that take off the very enamel of the moral sense—cut away its entire surface.

The Baltimore News draws the following practical moral from the late horrible Showalter tragedy: When a man is found to be drinking too much, even though he does not get drunk, and is getting quarrelsome, or morose, and sulky, he ought to be arrested by the police and kept in jail—not until next day merely, but until he has gotten the whiskey out of him.

A number of English settlers have made their homes near Suffolk Va., of whom, so far as we have learned, are well pleased. A number more are expected shortly to arrive by the Allan line of steamers, touching fort nightly at Norfolk.

Sim A. Harriington

THE FLOWERS COLLECTED