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An Interesting Story.

HEPSEY BARTON.

Miss Hepsey Barton was an old maid! So said all the young men in Lenox, and all the young girls too, and the old saying, "What everybody says must be true," of course verified this assertion. Notwithstanding this dreadful fact, Miss Hepsey was a universal favorite with the young people of both sexes; and, although the most inquisitive damsel in Lenox, Kate Grey, could never find the most remote tradition of her having any "love affairs," still there was no one in the place that seemed to take a warmer interest in the couple and flirtations of the young people about her than Hepsey. She was thirty-four years old, so she frankly owned, and so read the Town Clerk's record, and still her mirror reflected no scowl nor wrinkle on her features, nor silver thread in her brown hair. She was not beautiful. She had a high forehead, but her hair grew low over it; her eyes were grey, nose large, and shaped a little like a potato; her mouth was large, and showed a set of white but irregular teeth; her complexion was a sort of neutral tint, and her hair though abundant and glossy, of a fine brown color, was always dressed with the simplicity of a Quakeress.

No wonder that Hepsey was, as we have said, a favorite among the villagers: the children liked her because she mingled with them in their childish sports, and taught them new modes of amusement; and she never met them without a kind word and a sunny smile. And then among the young men and maidens how could she fail to be beloved, who was so wise and prudent and confidential a counsellor—who, though never volunteering, was ever ready to impart the best advice on the knotty points that puzzled the brains of the young people of Lenox, from the arrangement of a luncheon to the weightier matters pertaining to pleasure and domestic parties.

Her parents being dead, she kept house for her brother, a widower, with a pretty daughter about fifteen, who was acknowledged as the prospective belle of Lenox, and joined heartily with the young people of the village in loving Aunt Hepsey, who, altho' quiet and unobtrusive, would perform more real, active good in a week, than an ordinary woman could in six.

Hepsey, said Jeremiah Barton one evening to his sister, I believe you never had an offer in your life?

True, brother, I never did, was her reply. Well Aunt Hepsey, that is queer enough, said Helen, who was playing with a pet spaniel on the floor, while Aunt Hepsey was knitting her stockings for her. I am sure I do not know a married woman in Lenox, that I like half so well as I do you. There is Mrs. Grey who has lost all her teeth, and wears false hair, and Mrs. Stevens scowls all the time, and her face is all over scowls and wrinkles, and Mrs. Carter who cares for nothing but balls and parties, and Mrs. Jones who leaves everything to the servants, and Mrs. —

Judge not that ye be not judged," chimed in the sweet voice of Aunt Hepsey. She had a sweet voice, exceeding sweet, and to the blind she must have seemed most beautiful.

Well, Aunt Hepsey, I will not say what faults I see in most of the married ladies around us, but this I will say, and I know father thinks so too: there is not a woman in the State that makes home so pleasant as you; and if a real woman wants any higher praise than that, I for one woman have no words to express it.

You are right, Helen, said her father, but I think you and I are not the only ones who have thought so. There Deacon Jones, who wanted to offer himself to her soon after your mother died, but she begged me to refuse for her in advance, because she could not leave that little motherless Helen. Then there was Squire Grey at the Corner, had some talk with me about proposing for her, but she preferred keeping house for her brother. But I am going to speak now of an offer which she may soon receive, which she, however, must refuse for herself. I think it an excellent match, and if she will not take up with it, she shall refuse it herself, and at least have it to say that she has actually refused one offer.

So, brother, it seems you are tired of my company, quietly replied Miss Hepsey, at the same time taking up a stitch that had dropped in her knitting.

Have it so if you will, Hepsey; but any rate think it over, before you refuse our new minister, Mr. Harris. Why, he is a bachelor, not forty yet, and almost as handsome as his brother Willis was. See, Helen, you do not remember Willis Harris—oh no, he died before I was married. Well, he was a splendid looking fellow, open-hearted, generous, and a capital scholar. His father lived in that house where Squire Green, did before

he went to Congress. His father was tho' very rich, and Willis and Harvey were both sent to College. Mr. Harris lost his property and died poor; and Willis left college to go to sea, take care of himself, and help Harvey. Harvey has never been back here until last month. He has preached in Iowa from the time he has finished his studies.

And where is that noble Willis, father? Ah, that is the sad part of my story. He was successful at first, but just before Harvey was to graduate, he was wrecked on his voyage home, and instead of a brother's greeting after receiving his diploma, a stranger mentioned in his hearing, that the "Falcon" and all on board had gone down in a hurricane. Father had invited the two brothers to make a visit that autumn, for I had always been very intimate with them both; and on hearing the news, I hurried to meet Harvey, to offer him at least a temporary home. He was dangerously ill at the time, and upon his recovery he was unwilling to receive our attentions. Very happy was I to inform him that our church unanimously chose him as its pastor, and more happy that he came.

Brother, what has put it into your head that Mr. Harris has any thought of taking a wife? said Hepsey, her voice trembling slightly, and her usually colorless cheek becoming a shade paler.

His own words. He wished to know if you was unmarried, and why, and if I thought you could never consent to change your name and condition, and his face was lighted up with such a handsome animated expression, that I could not bear to repeat to him your determination to remain single. So I told him he must talk with you about it, if he wanted to know. He said he would call to-morrow evening and see you.

Hepsey, said Mr. Barton at the tea-table, "do for once oblige me, by trying whether your hair will not curl as it used to when you was Helen's age. You have not worn curls—let me see, since your seventeenth birthday. That was the day, too, that we heard of Willis Harris' death, and Harvey's extreme sickness."

No, brother, replied Hepsey; no doubt it would be rebellious against curling now, and then for an old maid to expose her face with ringlets would be too absurd.

Too much as if you wanted to catch the minister after all, wouldn't it, aunty? laughed Helen; though I should love to see it curled once.

So aunty you are going to marry the minister after all! exclaimed Helen, running joyously into her aunt's room the next morning, going to take a ride with him to-day at any rate. Now let me dress your hair to-day—I must, aunty, or I shall do some mischief. Aunt Hepsey fallen in love! joy! joy!

But, Helen, I have no idea of marrying Harvey Harris.

Indeed, aunty, but I know better. Didn't he stay until twelve o'clock, and didn't I know that the minister's last words must be something dreadful good, put my head close to the open window sill and hear him say, there will be some surprise when you are known as Mrs. Harris? Ah, that blush! Oh, aunty, how pretty you look, that curl laid so on your cheek, and your eyes are so bright! I wonder, for my part, how you could have kept your hair so straight so long; all I have to do is to wet it and twist it over my finger, and it curls sweetly.

And, oh aunty, if you have not got a ring on your finger—I never wore one before! It is a beauty, but shockingly old-fashioned. So the chatterbox Helen rattled on, as she dressed her aunt's hair, and helped her prepare for a ride with Mr. Harris.

That's a good sensible girl now, said Mr. Barton, as his sister came into the little parlor, equipped for a ride; and I never saw you look so handsome before, neither; and in the plenitude of his joy at the idea of becoming brother-in-law to his friend Harvey Harris, he bestowed upon her a mighty kiss.

Oh, aunty, just let me peep into that locket, said Helen—such a beauty, but old-fashioned. I declare, Mr. Harris ought to have his taste modernized a little. I think he was pretty confident of his attractions, or he would not have brought two presents to give at his first call. I declare here is a little short curl of jet black hair, and a long curl of brown—that is like yours, but Mr. Harris' hair is brown too, but little darker than yours, that can't be his. There is a mystery about it somewhere.

Yes, Helen dear, there is a mystery about it; it shall be solved on our return this evening.

Just then the Rev. Mr. Harris drove along in his carriage, and after helping Hepsey in, he handed Mr. Barton a note, and then they drove rapidly away. The note read as follows:

FRIEND BARTON.—A couple wishing me to marry them this evening, I have taken the liberty to arrange matters, so as to have the wedding at your house, as I feel no claim upon the people where I board. As they intend residing in Lenox, and will prove an acquisition to our whole society, if it is convenient I would be glad for you to invite the people of the village generally, if not, let only your own family be present.

H. HARRIS.

Helen was in a fever of expectation and delight, as well as considerable of a bustle in preparing for an impromptu party. The village generally were invited and some two or three had arrived, when the Rev. Mr. Harris came in alone. To Helen's eager inquiries, he could only answer that Aunt Hepsey would be there soon, and that the couple desired to be received by her father alone at the private entrance to his study. They would be there, he said, at half-past seven, and in fifteen minutes after she might go in with him; and the ceremony would be performed in the study, and she and her father might introduce the new married couple to the company.

The time at length came. She heard considerable bustle in the study, and at the appointed hour, Helen took the minister's arm and went into the study. There stood a dark, noble-looking man, whose short black curls were slightly decked with silver, and—Aunt Hepsey!

In a few words the Rev. Mr. Harris pronounced Hepsey Barton and Willis Harris husband and wife, and then they were introduced as such to the astonished villagers.

Willis and Hepsey loved each other almost from childhood. The locket and ring were given her by him, when he sailed for what all supposed was to him a fatal voyage. Both looked upon marriage as something too hidden in the future for him to make an offer for so called.

He was the only survivor of the vessel's wreck, and was cast ashore on the inhospitable coast of Africa, and was carried into slavery among the savage tribes of Ethiopia. After a various fortune he fell among the Arabs, and reached Constantinople. Two years spent in trade there, made him wealthy. Although he received no answers to numerous letters he sent home, he preferred to believe they had been mislaid, rather than that friends had ceased to love him.

He reached New York in safety, and there learned that his brother had just returned to his boyhood's home. He wrote to Harvey, requesting him to ascertain whether Hepsey still remembered him,—waiting an answer at a house some three hours' ride from Lenox.

The rest is known. If any one asks whether the "old maid" made a happy wife or not, I can only answer, that although ten years have passed, her ringlets curl as well as ever, and she has not a wrinkle.

THE HOOKER AND THE STEAMBOAT.—A woodsman from the interior of Indiana, who had been on board of a steamboat, had occasion to go to St. Louis a short time since.

From the bank of the river he hailed the "Harry of the West" with—

Captain, what's the fare to St. Louis? What part of the boat do you wish to go on—cabin or deck?

Hang your cabin, said the gentlemen from Indiana,—I live in a cabin at home; give me the best you've got!

STRANGE IGNORANCE.—A contributor to the Paris Illustration objecting to the practice of smoking in public,—which is, perhaps, not a nice practice writes as follows:

In New York, in those very United States from whence so much of our tobacco is derived, it is forbidden under penalty of fine, to smoke in the public streets. Shall we allow ourselves to be beaten, on the ground of public propriety and the usages of civilized life,—by the Quakers?

Our friend of the Illustration must excuse us for correcting him. The inhabitants of New York are not Quakers; Buddhism is the religion of the United States, though the Mahomedan and Jewish creeds are tolerated by the Government under certain restrictions. The Emperor of New York is the recognized head of the church, and preaches every Sunday in the Reatacky synagogue. His eldest son, the Duke of New Orleans, has been declared ineligible to the throne, on account of his avowed leaning towards the Brahmin form of worship.

We are really surprised at a French writer in the nineteenth century knowing so little of the religious and political institutions of a contemporary people.—London Diogenes.

The following conversation lately occurred in a country school-house—

"Squire, can you spell?"

"Yeth, thir."

"Well, let me hear you!" "No—has—ses—molasses." "Well, go on." "Please the thir, I cant; I always stick when I come to molasses." "Call the next boy."

MISS SEDGWICK ON HOUSEWIFERY.—We have rarely read more good sense than in the following, by Catherine M. Sedgwick, on "The Qualified Housewife." She begins:

"Many parents expect their daughters to marry, and thus be provided for; the daughters themselves expect it. But it may be well for both parent and child to consider the chances against the provision. Marriage may come, and a life of pecuniary adversity, or a widowhood of penury may follow; or marriage may not come at all. As civilization (so called) goes on, multiplying wants or converting luxuries into necessities, the number of single women fearfully increases, and in greatest proportion where there is most refinement, whereby women are least qualified to take care of themselves. In the single lives of our ancestors, men were not deterred from marriage by the difficulty of meeting the expenses of their families. Their wives were helpmates. If they could not earn bread they could make it. If they did not comprehend the 'rights of women,' they practised their duties. If they did not study political economy and algebra, they knew the calculations by which the penny saved is the penny gained." Instead of waiting to be served by costly and wasteful Milsons, they looked well to the ways of their household, and ate not the bread of idleness. The Puritan wife did not ask her husband to be decked in French gauds, but was truly—

The gentle wife who decks his board, And makes the day to have no night."

"In giving the reasons that restrain men from marrying at the present day, and thereby diminish the chances of this absolute provision for women, we beg not to be misunderstood. We would not restrict women to the humble offices of maternal existence. The instructed and most thoroughly accomplished women we have ever known, have best understood and practised the saving arts of domestic life. If parents, from pride, or prejudice, or honest judgment, refuse to provide their daughters with a profession or trade, by which their independence may be secured; if they persist in throwing them on one chance; if daughters themselves persevere in trusting to this 'neck-or-nothing' fate, then let them be qualified in that act and craft in which their grandmothers, and which is now, more than at any preceding time, the necessary and bounden duty of every American wife, whatever be her condition. Never by women in any civilization was this art so needed for never, we believe, were there such obstructions to prosperity and comfort as exist in our domestic service. And how are the young women of the luxurious classes prepared to meet them? How are the women of the middle classes fitted to overcome them? And how are the poorer class trained to rejoice in their exemption from them?"

"If a parent look forward to provision by marriage for his daughter, he should, at least, qualify her for that condition, and be ashamed to give her to her husband unless she is able to manage her house, to educate her children, to nurse her sick, and to train her servants—the inevitable destiny of American housewives. If she can do all this well, she is a productive partner, and, as Madame Boileau says, does as much for the support of her household as her husband. It may, or may not be the duty of a mother to educate her children in the technical sense. But if her husband is straining every nerve to support his family, it would be both relief and help if she could save him the immense expense of our first rate schools, or the cost of governess. If she be skilled in the art of nursing, she may save off the fearful bill of the physician. If she know the cost and necessary consumption of provision, the keeping of accounts, and, in short, the whole art and mystery of domestic economy, she will not only preserve her husband from an immense amount of harassing care, but secure to him the safety, blessing and honor of living within his means. If she be a qualified housewife, the great burden, perplexity, and misery of housekeeping, from the rising to the setting sun, from our Canadian frontier to far south of Mason & Dixon's line, will be—we will not say overcome, but most certainly greatly diminished."

POUR OUT WEST.—Traveller dismounts at a tavern. Helloa, landlord—can I get lodgings here to-night?

Landlord—No, sir; every room in the house is engaged.

Traveller—Can't you even give me a blanket, and a bunch of slavings for a pillow in your barroom?

Landlord—NA, sir; there's not a square

foot of space unoccupied and anywhere, in the house.

Traveller—Then I'll thank you to shove a pole out of your second-floor window and I'll roost on that.

Parisian Sketch.

A friend living in the Faubourg de Temple, went out at a late hour of winter evening, to take a pistol without lock to the gunsmith's.

Turning at the corner of the canal he was stopped by a man of ferocious aspect who demanded his life or his purse. It is related that Orday escaped, when placed in a similar predicament, by a pun; our friend adopted the readier plan of taking his pistol from his pocket and placing it at the highwayman's breast.

Follow me to the next guard-house, or I'll pull the trigger! he exclaimed.

As it was dark, the robber did not perceive that he was threatened by an imaginary lock. He had recourse to the supplication usual in such cases.

Sir, do not ruin me!

It is to save you, on the contrary, that I lead you to the guard-house.

I am the father of three children.

I have six.

I have a wife who depends upon me for support.

And so have I.

Indeed, I am not in reality a wicked man.

Neither am I. Come, it is late, and rather cold by the water side. March, or I shall fire.

The robber was obliged to follow our friend to the guard-house. They arrived there just as a patrol came in. Our friend related his history. The robber was examined, and discovered to be an escaped convict, of whom the police had been for a long time in search.

Our friend was duly congratulated upon his presence of mind and energy which he had displayed.

But, added the officer in command, I regret to say, I shall be under the necessity of bringing an action against you.

Why so?

Because it appears from your own avowal, that you carry arms upon your person, without the authority to do so.

Our friend then exhibited his pistol, and showed to the officer, that, without the lock, it was no arm at all.

Not so, said the officer, a pistol is always a pistol. I must put your name on the charge sheet.

The robber, turning to our friend, said to him:

Sir, you have deceived me. May what happens to you now teach you that bad faith and lies always receive, sooner or later, their punishment.

The man who "cast upon an account, is supposed to have swallowed several mathematical words.

The Doctor and the Dancing-Master:—One practices the healing art, and the other the toing art.

The man who is stranger to the finer feelings, is recommended to have an introduction.

The Times are getting so hard that people cant pay attention.

The lady who took everybody's eye must have had quite a lot of them.

An auctioneer, at a late sale of antiques, put up a helmet, with the following candid observation: This ladies and gentlemen, is the helmet of Romulus, the Roman founder—but whether he was a brass or iron founder I cannot indite tell.

AN OBLIGATO ON THE FLUTE.—The sum lent on that article by an obliging pawnbroker.

A factious boy asked one of his playmates—"Why a hardware dealer was like a bootmaker?" The latter somewhat puzzled gave it up. "Why said the other, because the one sold the nails, and the other nailed the soles."

"Distance lends enchantment to the view" as an escaped convict said when he stood on the Jersey shore, and looked upon the distant beauties of Sing Sing.

We may live without a brother, but not without a friend. In order to deserve a good friend we must become one.

COUNTER CHARM.—Pretty shop-girls.

A lady was dreadfully affronted the other day because a gentleman accosted her as an old acquaintance.

"How are you count?" said a noted wag to a spruce looking specimen of the genus club yesterday. Sir exclaimed the indignant swell, why do you call me count? Why, I saw you counting oysters in New York last week, and I suspected you were of royal blood returned the wag.