

The Secret Out.

A Wife's Curiosity Gratified.

Mrs. Brown and her gossip, Mrs. White, were conversing about their husbands and the secrets of Freemasonry. Mr. Brown was a Freemason; and the fact of not being able to share the secrets of the Order with him, made Mrs. Brown very unhappy. She was pouring forth her grief to Mrs. White, and saying for the thousandth time:

"I wonder what they do in the Lodge Room?"

"I have no doubt but it's dreadful," replied Mrs. White, "but if my husband was a Mason, I'd very soon find out what he did."

"But how? They daren't tell."

"Ah! but I'd make him tell."

"How? Oh, how?" asked Mrs. Brown anxiously.

"Hush! I'll tell you, but don't breathe a word for the world, because it's a dead secret."

"No, no; I won't."

"Well, do you know that tickling a man's ear when he's asleep will make him talk?"

"No! Will it though?"

"Yes. Now you wait till Brown comes home from Lodge next time, and have a broom straw in bed with you. When he gets asleep you tickle his ear with it gently, and he'll begin to talk about what has been going on at the Lodge, and in this way you can get the whole of the business out of him."

"Gracious me! You don't say so, Mrs. White?"

"To be sure I do. I always get my husband's secrets out of him this way. You just try it, but don't let on to any body."

"I'll do it."

"And you'll tell me all about it, won't you?"

"Certainly. But you must never say anything about it."

"Oh, of course not. I'm very close

mouthed," replied Mrs. White, earnestly.

So it was agreed upon, and they separated. But unfortunately for the success of the scheme, Mr. White had just got home in time to overhear the conspiracy, and lost no time in acquainting Mr. Brown, who laughed heartily over it.

A few nights afterwards, Mr. Brown attended the regular meeting of his Lodge, and, as may be supposed, his wife was all anxiety regarding it. On retiring, she armed herself with a spray from her broom, and wakefully and impatiently awaited her lord and master's return. At last, she thought, her time had come, husbands had no business to have secrets of any sort apart from their wives, and she would soon break down the veil of mystery which had troubled her so long. Her heart thumped wildly as she heard him softly open the front door and come in; of course she pretended to be asleep, and did not see the comical smile on her husband's face, as he turned up the light, and began disrobing for bed. But he said nothing, and in a few moments, was comfortably tucked in, and giving out premonitory indications of approaching sleep.

Then Mrs. Brown opened her eyes cautiously, and convinced herself that he had gone to that land from which sleepy husbands never return until some time next day. Cautiously she reached under the pillow, and took her trusty broom straw from its hiding place. Then she raised herself on her elbow carefully, and began to tickle her husband's ear, and he was all the time doing his best to keep from exploding with laughter.

Finally, he began to talk a little, and her ears were keenly alive to every syllable.

"Yes, he must die," muttered he. He betrayed our secrets—to his wife. I've got to kill him; the lot fell on me."

Mrs. Brown screamed and leaped from the bed, while her husband, unable to control himself any longer,