KEEPING TROUBLES OUT OF SIGHT

(© by D. J. Walsh.)

THERE was something wrong about Mrs. Penn, the woman who lived next door to Mrs. Shaw and opposite to Mrs. Dilworth. Mrs. Shaw and Mrs. Dilworth had been brought to speak about it that afternoon as they sat together. They were fast friends, and they had been telling each other a great many private things for years. It was inevitable that the matter of Edith Penn should come up between them some time, although they were loyal to her as a neighbor and charitable to her as an acquaintance and a woman.

"She doesn't ring true," Mary Shaw said.

"I've often thought that," Mrs. Dilworth sighed. "There's something about her I don't understand, although I have tried to—something that repels me. I've never mentioned it before because I supposed that I was the only person in the neighborhood who felt that way about her."

"You aren't," Mary Shaw said. "I feel the same way myself. She's a good neighbor; I couldn't wish for a better. She's always agreeable and pleasant—too pleasant. Apparently she never has any reason to be otherwise. I guess that's why—" She paused. "It doesn't seem natural," she went on thoughtfully, "for a person never to have annoyance or trouble of any kind. The rest of us who have had our deep valleys—well, I suppose we can't understand a person who seems to live constantly on the sunny hills of existence. And Mrs. Penn certainly appears always to be on the tip-top of the very sunniest hill. Perhaps that's why we don't understand her. It's a good ways up there from one of our deep valleys."

Mrs. Shaw gulped a little and wiped away a tear. Her deep valley was the loss of her husband who had been her true companion for more than thirty years. Mrs. Dilworth said nothing, only rocked a little faster. Fifteen years before she had lost her only child, a little son, and the pain of bereavement was still very acute at times.

There was a tap at the door, a brisk "May I come in?" and Edith Penn entered with a small dish in her hand. She was a woman as old as either of the two who started at her appearance, but she had a youthful air, for her gown was gayly blue and her face danced with smiles.

"I've brought you over a bit of divinity fudge," she said to Mrs. Shaw. "I'm so glad Mrs. Dilworth is here. She can enjoy it, too."

Mrs. Shaw accepted the candy with just a shade of embarrassment. She felt a sense of guilt in that she had talked about her neighbor and was now accepting a gift from her.

"The candy is lovely," she said "Do sit down."

Mrs. Penn shook her head, still smiling. It came to Mary Shaw that she had smiled so much that her face had taken on a rather set look, a strained look, one might say.

"No! I must hurry back. I've a thousand things to see to," she returned gayly.

"You are always so rushed," Mrs Dilworth offered. "And only just you and Mr. Penn and the little boy to do for." The little boy was Mrs. Penn's grandson, who had come to her when his young mother died.

"I see you have been to visit your sister," Mary Shaw said.

"Yes. I stayed only one night. That was all Mr. Penn could spare me. You should have seen the house he and Frank kept! I had a stack of dishes that high to wash." She laughed and vanished.

The two women looked at each other gravely. But they said not a word more. Thoughtfully they tasted the candy. It was delicious.

"It ought to sour in our mouths after the way we've talked about her," Mary regretted.

"I was just going to say that," Mrs Dilworth agreed.

After Mrs. Dilworth went home Mary Shaw washed the empty bonbon dish from which she had emptied the candy, for in their conscience-smittenness they had not been able to eat it, and throwing a shawl over her head, went to return the dish to Mrs. Penn. She found Frankie making a snow man in the front yard.

"Go right in, Mis' Shaw," he lisped. "Gran'a making me a pair of pants."

Mrs. Shaw tapped lightly, as a warning, and entered. She heard a sound of sobbing and stopped, motionless with amazement. Sobs! They came from the sitting room. There was something else, too—Mrs. Penn was saying, "Oh, dear!" over and over again.

"She's sick—in pain," Mary Shaw thought, and hurried forward.

Mrs. Penn lay on the couch with her face in her arms, a pathetic, grief-stricken figure. As Mrs. Shaw bent over and laid a hand on her shoulder she started and looked up.

"What is it?" demanded Mrs. Shaw, sinking down beside her and putting an arm about her. "Are you sick? Tell me so I can do something for you."

But Mrs. Penn merely sobbed incoherently. Presently she said thickly:

"Lock the door so Frankie can't get in here. I—I wouldn't have him see me like this for the world. He has never seen me cry."

Mrs. Shaw locked the doors and then returned to her seat beside the weeping woman.

"My dear!" she said, with that understanding that comes only once in a thousand times, perhaps, even to the best of men, "it's all been a bluff, hasn't it?"

Edith Penn gripped the kind hand, looked into the sympathetic eyes, and gave herself to confession.

"I should say it has all been a bluff," she replied. "And I'm sick of bluffing. I'm tired of pretending. I—I hate myself for going round with that silly grin on my face and trying to make people believe it came there by itself. But it doesn't. I put it on every morning just the way I do my clothes. Let me tell you! I took you that candy this afternoon as an excuse, hoping I'd find you alone. I thought maybe I could tell you, but Mrs. Dilworth was there. Oh, my face aches with keeping things out of sight! I've always made the best of everything. My whole life is one fabrication, and what good has it done to me or anybody else? I don't believe it's true that the world is better for your keeping your trouble out of sight. I believe that the give-and-take sympathy creates a bond between people—a needed bond!"

"I have always believed that," Mary Shaw said.

"I've always had to cry my eyes out in secret while I smiled in the face of the whole world," Edith Penn went on. "Even my husband has never suspected that I had cause to shed a single tear. In that way I haven't been true to him, perhaps, but it was the way I was brought up. My mother was the kind of woman who would give our dinner away to somebody who didn't need it, while we did, just for the sake of keeping up appearances. "My sister—" Her lips quivered. "My sister has always been like mother, until yesterday. Yesterday she told me—that she has only six months at best to live. I smiled. I said, 'Six months is a long time.' Then I came home and kept right on smiling. But I've reached the point where I can't smile any more. I love her, and I am going to lose her. And I'm going to cry about it if I want to."

She did cry again, stormily, while Mrs. Shaw soothed and comforted her.

It was not Edith Penn's first deep valley by any means, but it was the first time she had walked there with another woman who knew the length and breadth of deep valleys. In Mary Shaw she had found the friend she needed.

And Mary Shaw, too, had found something which she would in time make known to all women—a brave heart that had masqueraded under a smile in order to hide its suffering.

Process of Changes of the Infant Mind

The ultimate standard of value among human beings is personality; hence its development is of supreme importance. The germ of mental life in the human infant exhibits one of the most striking instances of evolution to be found in nature.

Greater changes take place in the mind of an infant in a few years than in ages of plant or animal evolution. This germ of mental life is so constituted that it tends to develop according to inner laws, as does a grain of wheat, yet it is greatly modified in its development by its environment, physical and psychical.

The infant is in somewhat of the condition of a man who should find himself in a shop where machines of all sorts were in motion. He would at first have no control over them. By noticing what happened after each motion and by pulling various cranks and levers he would learn to know what to expect at any moment and could ultimately control the various machines.

In a similar way does the babe gradually gain control of his bodily movements. In the meantime the conscious states that are experienced are organized into a conscious self.—From "The Individual in the Making," by E. A. Kirkpatrick.

Weasel's Fashion Title

Ermine—weasel. It would probably be a shock to royalty to know they are one and the same.

The elegant white ermine that constitutes the collar or robes of king and prince is the fur of the weasel in its white winter phase. The same marauder of the hen coops, who is the poultry raiser's most persistent enemy, becomes valuable to the trapper in the winter for the pelt it yields.

Prime weasel pelts, styled as ermine in the trapper's price list, bring a couple of dollars. In the dead of winter the weasel is entirely white, save for the tip of its tail, which is black.

In summer the weasel is brown and its fur is worthless.

Look Out for the Snails

In some parts of Wales the natives indulge in the thrills of a snail race. With a dash of paint upon their shells to identify them the snails are started across a space about a yard square, being attracted to the end by a pile of wet ivy leaves. The snails often develop an unfortunate habit of going to sleep during the race and they must be jockeyed by the use of small sticks by their owners. The owners of the snail which crosses the line first takes the purse.

Very Much So, Yes

Mae—You're a mounted police? How romantic!

Police—Yeah, you said it, lady. Why, even now I have it in my legs.

Changing Sin Styles

We people in Junction City wish the idea of sin wouldn't change so often. It gets us so that we don't know where we're at. It'd be lots more comfortable to know what sin was, so that there wouldn't be any doubt about it, and then we could get out and fight it. Sometimes, just as we get busy fighting sin and the ol' devil, we find that it isn't sin any more at all, but is what everybody is doing.

What we need is stabilized sin. It's plumb disgusting to get out and fight a thing for years and then find that it existed only in our imaginations. We in Junction City don't want sin changed on us. We're fighters. We don't care what sin we're fighting, just so we're fighting it.—Homer Croy in Plain Talk Magazine.

Eternally Broke

The most common habit we have which makes for distress is the habit of living beyond our means—not only of monetary income but of vital and emotional energy. As a consequence we drag our feet through life, figuratively and literally speaking.

Such men and women have no time or energy to live because they exhaust both time and energy in keeping alive. They go through life eternally broke. They can't get more out of life because they don't put more into life. They can't be happy because they are crowded, pushed, pulled, swamped by countless impulses which have no biologic value, satisfy no social needs, and contribute nothing to individual life, health or happiness.—George A. Dorsey, in Cosmopolitan.

Roberta Knew

Roberta, aged four, had been told by her grandmother she would wear her tongue out, if she did not stop talking so much. Coming in one day from playing, the child excitedly told her grandmother that she had just seen a woman who had worn her tongue out.

Grandmother asked her how she could tell and she said: "The woman was talking on her fingers."

Grandmother figured out that the little girl had seen some deaf and dumb persons.—Indianapolis News.

Real Estate Transfers.

Fred F. Smith, et ux, to Thomas J. Lee, tract in Rush Twp.; $1500.

George E. Rider, et ux, to Luther F. Rider, tract in Ferguson and Halfmoon Twps.; $1.

Agnes Hoover to John F. Hood, et ux, tract in Rush Twp.; $50.

Fred Gowland, et ux, to George Dinsmore, tract in Rush Twp.; $400.

Henry Lingle, et ux, to Spring Garden Rifle Club, tract in Penn Twp.; $800.

Catharine M. Dinges, et al, to Philip H. Johnston Jr., tract in Boggs Twp. and Milesburg; $1750.

J. E. Pelton, et ux, to Guy Bitner, et ux, tract in State College; $7000.

West Penn Realty Co., to Bellefonte Trust Co., tract in Spring Twp.; $400.

Bellefonte Trust Company to West Penn Power Co., tract in Spring Twp.; $400.

William W. Ward to T. G. Crownover, tract in Ferguson Twp.; $150.

Mrs. Sarah Hess to T. G. Crownover, tract in Ferguson Twp.; $312.

George H. Lupton, et al, to J. E. White, et ux, tract in Rush Twp.; $900.