



THE Banner of Faith.

JANUARY 1886.

Hope : The Story of a Loving Heart.

CHAPTER I.

FAITH, Hope, and Charity. So Jonas Halliwell named his three children.

Do not now picture to yourselves three small maidens rising in little steps one above another, as Jonas did when tiny Faith was carried to her christening. Such a sight was never seen in the Halliwells' house, for Faith and Hope were well-grown girls of fifteen and sixteen when their party was made complete, as they proudly declared, and the father, love in his eyes and triumph in his voice, brought Baby Charity, barely an hour old, to be kissed and blessed by her sisters.

Nurse followed; the Halliwells, in their quiet way, were well-to-do folk, and the mother did not want for good care and tending whenever the need arose; but she was shaking her head, as old nurses will do. Alas! with good reason this time, for the frail baby only lived a few months. Welcomed with tender love on earth, it only stayed long enough here below to return sad little smiles for sweet words and caresses, and then gently passed to the greater Love above. Baby Charity's little earth-garment was hidden in a quiet grave in a lonely Welsh churchyard, a long way from the city dwelling where she was born. How this came about, and the results that fol-

lowed, I must tell you; for if Baby Charity had not been born, pined, and died, my story might never have been written.

Now, let me begin at the beginning.

Jonas Halliwell had served his Queen and country all his best days as a sailor in Her Majesty's Navy. Wounded in the Crimea, he was as proud of that great scar, across his cheek, as later on he was of his wife and children, and that is saying a good deal. When, quite as an elderly man, he came into a little money, married a nice girl, and left the service to settle down quietly in his own country, he was at once offered the post of caretaker of a large London house in the neighbourhood of S. Paul's Cathedral. One of those great old houses shut in a court just removed from the busy streets—a court, this one, with one great tree in its centre bursting into green leaf every spring. The dwellers opposite had caused the branches on their side the way to be lopped off, so securing more light to their rooms, but the Halliwell girls gloried in their share of the tree, and would not have had a leaf touched on any account. There were no offices in their house to be darkened. What the empty rooms were meant for Faith and Hope often wondered. The largest room, indeed, was called the Board Room, and once a quarter mother and her girls were very busy dusting and cleaning for 'the gentlemen,' who punctually arrived at a certain hour,