

## THE HOME CIRCLE

### A Strike for Freedom.

Written for Farm and Home by  
Morris Wade.

"THE BEST of you kin do as you are a mind to do about it. I'm a-goin'."

Old Hetty Worth spoke with unalterable decision. She nodded her gray head, and her dull blue eyes gleamed with a sudden fire as she shook one shriveled finger toward her two old companions and said again, "I tell ye I'm a-goin'."

They were old women. Hetty was younger than either of her companions and she was sixty-nine. Old Susan Linn was seventy-eight and Hannah Shore was seventy-six. All of them were inmates of the poorhouse, an ugly, square, red brick structure, the roof of which could be seen over the hill to the left of where the old woman sat in a shady spot eating a rather meager supply of coarse bread thinly spread with very poor butter. It was all the luncheon Nancy Noone, the wife of the keeper of the poorhouse, had provided for them.

"You can eat some of the berries you pick, with it, and I guess it will be all that you need," Nancy had said. They had been sent to the wide stretch of meadow land about half a mile from the poorhouse to spend the greater part of the day gathering wild strawberries for Nancy to preserve, but not for them.

"Ketch her givin' us a taste of her preserves!" said old Susan. "She thinks she's ben' too good to us when she gives us a little dried apple sass in the winter time."

"If it wain't wicked to do it, I could hope that she would have to go to the poorhouse herself when she's old as we be," said Hannah Shore. "But I ain't mean enough to wish my wust enemy such misfortune as that."

"Well, I hope that Nancy and Peter Noone will get their come-uppance for their meanness to us an' to others as helpless as we are, that's what I hope, an' I don't think it's wicked to hope it, either!" said Hetty with flashing eyes. Then she added:

"But goin' back to the Fourth of July over to the Four Corners, I tell you I'm goin'! I ain't been three mile from this poorhouse since I come here five year ago. I ain't even been to the village, only two mile away, in two years. I might as well be in the East is, I feel, as if I was in it. The poorhouse ain't no better than a prison. I'm tired of it an' I'm goin' to make a break for a little freedom. We ain't bossed by no longars or bad characters of any sort that we should be treated so. My husband paid many a dollar in taxes when he was livin' an' I ain't no poorer if I am in the poorhouse. I've got some rights, an' I'm goin' to let them Noones know it by walkin' off to the Four Corners' celebration without ever sayin' a livin' word to them about it. Yes, I am!"

"La, Hetty! I jest be!"

"Ain't ye skeered to?" "No, I ain't!" "It'll make Nancy an' Peter awful mad." "I hope so! There's one thing they can't do. They can't lay hands on me and they can't say any wuss things to me than they've already said, an' that, too, when I was tryin' to please 'em. I've a perfect right to go to that celebration if I've a mind to, an' so have you. Independence day was intended just as much for poorhouse folks as for the richest people in the land. It's a holiday that every freeborn American has a right to enjoy. I'm goin' to breathe the air of liberty an' independence as I never could breathe it in sight of that poorhouse. I'm goin' to the celebration."

"How you goin' to get there?" "Oh shank's horses if I can't get there any other way. It's only four mile to the Four Corners, an' I a-lus was a good walker. I could walk there faster than I can crawl round here pickin' those reddin' little wild berries in the hain' sun all day. You know that Peter an' Nancy are goin' to the celebration. Well, soon as they're out of sight I'm goin' to light out my own self."

"They'll see you there." "Let 'em! I expect 'em to see me. They'll not keep there. You know how nice an' sweet they a-lus are before strangers. It wouldn't surprise me none if they treated me to lem'nade an' sody water

to show off 'fore folks an' have 'em go away sayin' how good an' kind they was to the old people at the poorhouse. I'll have a real good time. I know lots of folks over Four Corners way who won't be a mite 'shamed o' me, even if I do live in the poorhouse. I callate on havin' some real good visits with old friends. I lot on that more than on the celebration itself, although I shall enjoy the speakin' an' singin'."

What on earth you goin' to wear, Hetty? "Well, I got to rig up the best I kin. I'll have to wear my old black an' white lawn, but it's done up real nice. You know Nancy had me do it up to wear next week, the day the overcoats come out for their quarterly visit. Then my white apron is done up, an' I've got a real good white handkerchief to wear 'round my neck, an' my big gold brooch to pin it with. My bunnit is all out o' style, but I'm goin' to take the ribbon off an' do it up on the sly an' put it back on. I'll look clean an' decent, anyhow."

Hetty's purpose did not waver as the day of the celebration drew near. Hannah and Susan prophesied that Hetty would "weaken" before the Fourth came, but she did not. Indeed, she seemed to grow bolder each day. Peter and his wife set out for Four Corners soon after breakfast. They gave each inmate of the poorhouse a certain allotted task "to keep them out of mischief," as Nancy said. It was in each case a task that would keep them busy all day. Hetty sniffed the air so scornfully, when told that she was to weed out a certain large onion bed, that Nancy looked at her suspiciously and said to her husband when they were driving out of the barnyard, "That old Hetty Worth had been mighty any of late. She's snuffed and tossed her head a dozen times when I have told her to do things. She's got to be taken down a peg or two before long."

I have noticed that she has been kind o' sassy the last few days. She don't want to come any of her airs over me," said Peter.

Hetty was slipping her old black and white lawn over her head before Peter and his wife were out of sight. Hannah and Susan looked utterly the moral courage to join Hetty. Old Susan lacked the physical strength to walk half of the distance to Four Corners, and Hannah said meekly that she "didn't want to get into trouble." The other inmates of the poorhouse shook their heads emphatically and prophesied all sorts of evil when little old Hetty walked briskly out of the poorhouse yard with the old lawn held almost to her waist above her faded black petticoat. She had not feared to use Peter's blacking on her old shoes, and her courage had risen to such mountain heights that she had taken an old green parasol of Nancy's from a hook in the hall, and she held it above her as she trudged away in the hot sunshine.

"Good-by," she said half-mockingly as she trudged away. "It's fine to travel freedom's road once more. Hooryay for liberty!" She waved the old parasol aloft and walked away with her head held very high and a spirit of freedom running riot in her breast.

She had gone less than a mile when she heard the sound of wheels behind her, and in a moment old Lawyer Heath came driving along alone in his buggy. He drew rein when he reached old Hetty and said, "Why, good mornin', Hetty. Which way you going?" "I've started for the Four Corners, squire." "Were you going to walk all the way there?" "I was if I didn't git a chance to ride."

"Well, I guess you can have a chance to ride. Get right in here. My wife has one of her sick headaches to-day and she had to stay at home."

Lawyer Heath was one of the wealthiest, the kindest, the most sympathetic men in the county. He had known old Hetty in her more prosperous days. He had known and respected her hard-working husband upon whom the hand of misfortune had fallen so heavily that old Hetty had been left penniless when he died.

"It's a long distance for you to undertake to walk, Hetty," he said. "Yes, sir, but I had to walk or I lay to hurne, an' it's been so long since I been any place that it seemed as if I'd fly if I didn't go some place soon."

"Couldn't Peter Noone have sent you over to the Four Corners?" Hetty burst into a scornful laugh at this.

"Ketch him doin' it!" she exclaimed. "I lot on him raisin' 'calu when he sees me there, if he kin git a chance at me when there's no one by to hear him. He'll be hopplin' mad."

The lawyer, who was one of the over-

seers of the poor, had been suspicious of Peter and his wife for some time. He had doubted their sincerity when they affected such kindness to the inmates of the poorhouse in the presence of the overseers. It was not long until old Hetty's nimble tongue was pouring forth truthful tales that aroused the old man's sympathy as well as his just indignation. Just before they reached the grove he drew forth a five-dollar bill and, handing it to Hetty, said, "Now, Hetty, I want you to take this and make it help you to have a good time. You need not have any hesitation about taking it. Your husband did me many a good turn in his day, and I am simply repaying you for some of his kindness."

"God bless ye, sir!" exclaimed Hetty as her old worn fingers closed over the bill. "It's the livin' truth, sir, that I ain't had a cent o' my own before in five years. Thank ye a thousand times!"

"That's all right, Hetty. You have a good time and hold up your head as high as you please when you meet the Noones. And remember that you are to ride home with me after the celebration. Buy all the lemonade and sody water and ice cream you want, and get you a good dinner in the dining hall at the grove."

"Well, you jest ought to of seen Peter Noone an' Nancy when they saw me drive into the grove with the squire," said Hetty afterward. "Their eyes almost popped out o' their heads! They come up to the buggy when we stopped near 'em an' Pete says sweetest'n' mer-lasses. Well, sir, so you have brought one of our dear old ladies along with you. She might have come right along with my wife an' me if she had only said so. That riled me so that I says right out, 'That ain't so, Pete Noone, an' you know it ain't!' Well, Nancy looked as if she would eat me up, but she says as soft like, 'Why, Hetty, we would have been glad to have had you come with us. You can ride home with us.' 'Thank ye,' says I, 'but I've got better company.' 'Yes,' said the squire, 'Hetty will ride home with me.' Well, I could see that Pete and Nance was ready to have a fit. I got out o' the buggy an' sailed off. Pete come up to me once when no one was nigh an' he says, 'I want to know what this means, Hetty Worth.' 'You'll know all right soon enough,' says I. 'You'd better keep your tongue still,' says he. 'I will,' says I, 'for it's worse itself telled things now,' says I, an' Pete he looked like a thunder cloud."

On the homeward drive the lawyer said to Hetty, "Now, Hetty, I have been thinking about you a good deal to-day, and I have something to tell you. You know that there is a beautiful home for old ladies over in Hawleytown ten miles from here. I gave five hundred dollars toward the home, and I have the right to put some old lady into the home for life. I think that I will send in the name of Hetty Worth if she will go. You will have a sweet, clean, comfortable room for life. You will be free to come and go as you please, and you will be treated with Christian love and kindness. Will you go?"

A flood of tears was Hetty's only reply at first. Then she said, "It'll be like a foretaste o' heaven! I've laid awake nights wishin' I could go to one o' them homes. I used to live in Hawleytown, an' I've lots of old friends there. Go? Will I go? Why, sir, I'd crawl on my hands an' knees to git there!"

"All right. You shall go. And I guess, Hetty, that you'd better go right on home with me and let my good wife make you comfortable at my house until I can arrange matters at Hawleytown. It might be rather unpleasant for you at the poorhouse after what has happened to-day. I will stop with you and get your things."

"An' so I got my freedom for good an' all," Hetty was fond of saying long after she was established in her new home. "Yes, an' the Noones got their freedom from ben' keepers of the poorhouse, which freedom they didn't want. Henry Evans and his wife took the place then, and although they are mighty good and kind to the poor old bodies there, I'd a sight rather be here, where I am as happy as the day is long. It is beautiful here, beautiful. I tell ye, I git right down on my old knees every night o' my life an' thank the good Lord for the day I made my bold strike for freedom!"

When he is in company where others are calling for whisky and wine Senator Beveridge asks "a glass of milk and seems just - satisfied."

## Thoughtful Moments.

### TRUE POLITENESS.

A person may conform to all the rules of etiquette and yet he may not possess that innate generosity and kindness of heart which leads him to think of others before himself and which constitutes true politeness. Indeed, he who conforms always to the conditions of the golden rule, he who does to others as he would have them do to him, is a true gentleman, no matter in what condition of life he may be.

A bright and cheery home is a great stimulus to the training of children in politeness. "Youth eye" but once in a lifetime and it then demands surroundings suited to the exuberance of spirits with which it is endowed. Surround the home with refining influences. Enter into the children's thoughts, plays and studies. Teach them to consider one another. If sister has a headache and cannot be disturbed, let him (especially if they be rougher and more boisterous boys) play quietly, thus leading them to be ever thoughtful of others. If each has a separate talent, be careful to encourage each alike, the more so if there is one who seems to have no especial genius and is very sensitive about it. Above all be polite yourself, for "example is stronger than precept," and to teach one thing and do another is to destroy the effect of that teaching.

Whether or not a child should be taught to say "sir" and "madam" in reply to questions has been subject to much debating, and as yet I think there has been no fixed rule determined for the use of these words. For my part, I think "yes" and "no" spoken in a kind and respectful tone are just as deferential as when the words "sir" and "madam" are added. Everything, or at least a great deal, depends upon the manner of the speaker. Some persons have said "that manners speak louder than words," and to be refined and well-bred in manner, combined with a kind and gentle heart, is to at once gain an entrance to the society of the really noble. — [Dorothy Maxwell.]

**Love the Power.**—Brain counts for a good deal more to-day than heart does. Appeals to the heart are not thought to be quite in good taste. The current demand is for ideas. Mere intellectual ability upon a Christian subject is not Christianity, any more than working a flying trapeze in a church is what the Bible calls "Godly exercise." Morality, to be safe, requires to be impassioned. No morality is safe until it is enthusiastic. You cannot read one of St. Paul's epistles without feeling that it was struck off at white heat. Theology is experience frozen over. Everything starts in heat. It is the passion of love that is driving all the gospel machinery the whole world over. It is the impassioned men that have made history, religious and secular both. — [Rev. Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst.]

**Bigson:** How well you're looking this morning, Jigson? **Jigson:** Yes, I never looked better in my life. I'm looking for a man who owes me ten dollars.

**Magistrate:** It's disgraceful that you should beat your wife so unmercifully. **Prisoner:** Well, your worship, she aggravated me by keepin' on sayin' she'd 'ave me up before that bald-headed old 'unbug, meaning yer worship. **Magistrate:** You are discharged.

**Woody Wraggs:** When a lady gives me a meal I a-lus say, "May your shadow never grow less." **Fruved Foster:** When a lady gives me a meal I a-lus say: "May your photographs a-lus need as little touchin' up as dev do at present," and git a quarter in addition.

"You keep me waitin' so long!" complained the customer. "Madame," said the worried grocer, who was economizing in his business by employing only one clerk, "ain't you the woman that was in here yesterday kickin' about short weights?"

**Savage Bachelor:** I don't see why a man should get married when a good parrot can be bought for twenty-five dollars. **Sweet Young Thing:** As usual, woman is at a disadvantage. A grizzly bear can't be bought for less than 20 times that.