

## How Marion was Led Into the Light.

(By Julia H. Johnston, in 'American Messenger'.)

'Ought you not to do it, Marion? If you cannot look upon it as a privilege, do you not think it a duty?'

'Perhaps it is, Mrs. Vane, but it is such a hard duty. It seems to me impossible to take it up.'

Mrs. Vane looked longingly into the fair face of Marion Earle, one of her bright, attractive Sunday-school girls, for whom she had a particular tenderness. This was partly because the young girl was motherless, and partly because she had but lately given her heart to the Saviour, and the earnest teacher longed to guide the trembling steps into the way of peace. Just now they were talking of confessing Christ before men. Marion was naturally a timid girl, and she shrank from a public profession of her faith, because she had no courage to go before the church officers to be admitted to membership, nor to come out before everyone on the Sabbath-day.

'Everybody would look at me and I should be sure to think of that, and not of what I was doing,' she said, in real distress. 'Then, if I united with the church, more would be expected of me, and I should disappoint people.'

'What people think or expect makes no difference with duty, nor with what our Lord expects, dear girl,' said Mrs. Vane. 'You are under obligation to live a Christian life, just the same, whether you join the Church or not, because you have pledged yourself to the Lord Jesus; but unless you do as he would have you do, how can you expect the help he has promised to those who run in the way of his commandments? Your duty is the same every day, but you make it harder by not taking one of the strong helps Jesus gives, when he says, "Do this in remembrance of me."'

Here the talk was interrupted, and the two parted. Marion was very unhappy. No one could come so near to her as Mrs. Vane, who understood and loved her, and the shy girl opened her heart to her, all the more because her father, to whom she was devoted, had for a long time been absent from home. Marion knew in her secret heart that she ought to confess her Saviour; but she would not acknowledge it even to herself. Meanwhile conscience, that could not yet win her to the way of joy, at least prevented her from being happy in following her own way. The power of conscience to make us unhappy is a blessed thing; it drives us in the right way, when we will not be drawn.

The following Sunday Marion sat in church service, hoping to hear something that would help her. The sermon was addressed principally to church members, and was full of comfort and courage, but she told herself perversely; It is not for me, and sighed, and wondered what could be the trouble.

The time came for the morning offering. A gentleman in a side-pew left his seat and stepped to the front to take the collection basket. His wee daughter, at church for the first time, had been very good throughout the first part of the service, but growing tired, had slipped into the vacant pew alongside—had gradually stolen quietly to the end of it. Now, as her father passed down the aisle next her, the little one looked after him in wonder, and then trotted

down the broad aisle, following in his steps. It would have been impossible to make the baby understand that she must go back, without frightening and grieving her; so, up and down went the flutter of her white dress, and when the collectors came up to the pulpit with the offerings, and the minister asked a blessing upon the gifts, as they stood with bowed heads, little Edith waited near her papa, looking only at him, with wondering and trusting gaze, unafraid and unaware that everyone was looking at her. Marion was much touched by the tender incident, for baby looked so sweet and winsome that no one there would have forbidden her to take her own way.

Mrs. Vane sat opposite, and in glancing at her, Marion saw the light of a happy thought break over her face, and said to herself, 'I wonder what it makes her think of.'

When she turned to greet her teacher after service, Mrs. Vane took Marion's hand and detained her till none were near enough to hear, then she looked into her face, and said earnestly:

'Edith is a very timid child. Generally she would have been frightened at the sight of so many people looking at her, but she did not think of that. She followed her father where he went; he was before, and that was enough for her. Do you understand? Think about it, dear.' And Mrs. Vane turned away, and was gone in a moment.

But Marion went home to think, and the sentence, 'She followed her father,' repeated itself in her memory like the music of a silver bell. How she loved her earthly father. She knew she would follow him anywhere, unconscious of surroundings, if only she might see him, after his long absence. A new sense of the real Fatherhood of God thrilled her, and with the loving thought came a longing to follow him, which cast out the fear of what people might say or how they might watch her. Then, remembering, though not quite distinctly, the words her teacher had quoted to her, 'Come out from among them, be ye separate—and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you—said the Lord Almighty,' she resolved to cast herself upon his mighty arm, and before she slept she said fervently, forgetful of what had so hindered her before, 'I will follow my Father.'

So Marion came into the light, led by a little child.—'American Messenger.'

## 'Hail and Farewell.'

Good-bye, kind Year! we walk no more together,

But here in quiet happiness we part;  
And from thy wealth of faded fern and heather,

I take some sprays and wear them on my heart.

Good-bye, Old Year! with words of grace,  
Leave us to him who takes thy place;  
And say, Old Year, unto the New,  
Kindly, carefully, carry them through,  
For much, I ween, they have yet to do!

So the tale of the months is told,  
Ever new and ever old,  
Ever sad and ever gay,  
As the years go on their way.  
With a smile and with a tear,  
Cometh, goeth, each New Year.  
—Walf.

## Why He was not Ashamed

'But, Mary, she is such a dowdy. She dresses in such a queer way. People look and smile and make remarks. Why doesn't she dress like Mrs. Westman?'

'If we were as well off as the Westmans I suppose she might,' answered Mary, pausing to take her hands from the dishwater and shake the drops from them before she should take another towel and help Dick with the wiping.

Dick objected to washing dishes, and had done it this evening under protest. It being done under protest, it didn't move very fast, you know. Dick objected to several other things. He was thirteen years old and knew a great deal more than he would when he was thirty. He felt himself quite a smart young man, and liked to appear well among people. He had begun to notice lately that when his mother went to church or away from home, which she seldom did, that her dress was old-fashioned and odd-looking, and contrasted strangely with the fashionable and smart-looking attire of the neighbors; and it wounded Dick's sensitive pride.

Of course he could not say anything to his mother because he really loved her; but there was Mary—he could talk to her, and maybe she would drop a hint to their mother, and something would be done to save his feelings. It was true there was not much money to spend for dress in the household, and, so far, Dick had managed to get rather more than his share of the outlay. But he did not think of that. He only thought of what a humiliating thing it would be to have to go to the picnic tomorrow, with his mother wearing that old-fashioned, tight-sleeved dress, when all the other ladies wore full sleeves, and that dowdy of a bonnet, which had not seen the milliner's shop for ever and ever so many years.

'So you are ashamed of your mother?' Mary put it straight at him, as her brisk fingers made the tea-towel fly over the cups and saucers and plates.

'Why, yes,' Dick admitted before he could check himself; and then, with an indignant flush upon his face, he said: 'That is, I'm not just ashamed. But who wouldn't care about her looking so?'

'I'm sure I don't care very much, as long as she is the dear, kind mother she is,' said Mary, 'and I hate to say anything to her about it.'

'Then I'm going to,' said Dick, stiffly, setting his lips together.

'I wouldn't if I were you,' said Mary.

'Yes I will,' reaffirmed Dick. 'If she does not care for her own sake, she ought to care for ours. Yes, I am a little bit ashamed of her—that is, of her clothes.'

Mary said nothing more; but she was a sensible girl, and was thinking all the time. Presently, when the dishes were finished, she said quietly, resuming the subject: 'Dick, do you suppose your mother was ever ashamed of you?'

'She never had any reason to be,' answered Dick. 'I've never done anything to cause her shame, have I?'

'All these have I kept from my youth up,' quoted Mary, with sly sarcasm. 'But I wasn't meaning that,' she added, as she saw the flush on Dick's face: 'I meant of your appearance.'

'No,' answered Dick, shortly, 'I guess I manage to keep myself looking about as well as any boy in town considering—'

'I said "ever,"' replied Mary, cutting short what Dick was going to 'consider,'—