

A PARASOL, A BONNET, OR A BUCKET?

BY GRACE STEWART REID.

Carrie Seeright was so run down by spring weather and spring examinations that, as she herself expressed it, she had to be sent from home to be wound up.

"How happy I should be," said her mother, kissing her good-bye, "if you were going to start a temperance movement in Pleasant Plain!"

"Well, really, mother," answered Carrie, "that is quite a little something to expect of one poor girl in a big place like Pleasant Plain that hasn't even a Band of Hope! But folks won't have any trouble in seeing which side I'm on, for I have a badge on every single dress, on both my outside jackets and on my waterproof—all sewed on tight with thirty-six cotton."

Soon after Carrie's arrival in Pleasant Plain the friends with whom she stayed gave a rosebud luncheon in her honor. Her cheeks were rosy with excitement and pleasure as she sat under the great Japanese umbrella from whose points rose lanterns trimmed with tinkling bells shed a soft light on a table laden with flowers and dainties.

She looked and tasted with delight till the appearance of some charming little pastry parasols filled with ice-cream roses and marked with the guest's initials. Before Carrie's reached her she knew from various sniffs and smiles they were prepared with wine. She thought of a host of things in a minute.

Could she eat the cream without tasting the wine in the pastry? Could she not break the whole thing up and toy with it as if she had been eating it? Would not that be acting a falsehood? It would be too bad to hurt her entertainer's feelings. It would be terrible to have all the other girls think her rude or laugh at her. It would be worse to lose the chance of a temperance hint to thoughtless Pleasant Plain. She sent away the beguiling parasol.

"Why, Carrie!" exclaimed her hostess, surprised and disappointed, for this conceit was intended to be the crown of the bill of fare.

Carrie lightly touched the bow of white ribbon on her dress, as every eye was turned toward her. Her cheeks burned and a faint mist of homesick tears blurred her sight as she covered the empty place before her with cake and fruit, and spoke with a nervous laugh to her neighbor.

That afternoon the troublesome parasol was sent next door to Mrs. Hark whose child's name began with the same letter as Carrie's.

"We have a temperance young lady staying with us," said the servant who brought it, "and you'd feel provoked at her not enjoying such a lovely thing only she's so mortified about denying herself before people."

"It is lovely, isn't it?" said Mrs. Hark, repeating the story to her husband. "I wish it would keep for an ornament for the parlor. I don't want Charlie to have it, but it would be a shame to destroy it."

"What is this temperance girl's name?" asked Mr. Hark looking at the initial on the stand of the parasol.

"I don't know," his wife answered.

"It think it must be Courage," said he, putting his hand on hers which held the gift. "Where courage leads faint hearts may follow," and he shook the little tempter into the grate fire.

Mrs. Hark told Mrs. Newsbiggle all about it when she called soon after.

"Well!" exclaimed Mrs. Newsbiggle, "it will be a wonder, indeed, if a slip of a girl can carry out her principles in the Newcombs' house. You know they're up to all the New York fads and even put a dash of old rum in the chocolate and bouillon for their afternoon receptions."

She walked home thoughtfully. "Maria," she said to her cook, "I am not going to use any more brandy or cider in mince pies, but I'd like you to make a couple tomorrow with the spiced vinegar I saved from my sweet pickles. I want you to take one to old Mrs. Sniffen, and you must tell her it is a temperance pie so she won't be afraid to give that weak son of hers a good piece."

Young Sniffen told his friend, Joe Nail, that if all his home cooking was as good as that temperance pie, the saloon's free lunches would not get much patronage from

him. Joe told his mother and added: "Why not take a room near the polls at the next town elections and give the boys coffee and sandwiches, no matter what party they vote for? Plenty of coffee must certainly mean a less quantity of beer and whiskey."

Since her own dear boy had asked her, Mrs. Nail put aside her pride and invited her friends to join her in the experiment. On the long election day they were busy serving all who would partake—the good citizens and the bad, the sober and the half-seas-over. If it did not work a revolution, it told on the right side of the election and on the profits and tempers of the saloon-keepers.

It told, too, on Mrs. Nail, who came home in such a languid condition that, till he knew the cause, Joe deeply regretted his suggestion. She went to bed early and not only slept heavily all night, but till noon the next day. Then she woke with a headache and realized that she had been overcome by the liquor and tobacco atmosphere of the previous day, and that the afternoon barely furnished time to rid her dress and wrap of the same taint before she put them on for prayer-meeting.

She did not think of her bonnet till the church-bell was ringing. It had been shut up in a bonnet-box for twenty-four hours. Now, Mrs. Nail had often expressed the opinion that a stout middle-aged matron in a fancy hat was a sight she did not care to see; but on this occasion she did not hesitate to leave her bonnet hanging out of a window and wear a broad affair of lace and feathers she had bought for a niece in Texas.

If her appearance excited some surprise among the sisters of the congregation, it was small to that produced by her rising to speak, for "Sister Nail" was a conservative who sat in a back seat to be hardly seen and never heard. In a few simple words she told the tale of her sleep and of her bonnet. If there was anything funny about it, the sisters respected her courage too much to smile, and the brethren said, "Amen!" heartily when she asked if it was not time to protect the town from two poisons that made even the air unsafe.

Major O'Rear, who had had temperance locked up in his heart for many a day, came to the front with a vow to battle for the right. John Appel stood up for groceries without wine and liquors. Thomas Handy protested that any short lives among truckmen, van-men, etc., were due not to over strain, but over drain of beer mugs. A long hidden desire for reform burst forth. The meeting was so dead in earnest that when the fire-bell rang, even the men in the seats by the door did not go out. It was actually not till smoke pervaded the room that the meeting broke up.

Strange to say, Mrs. Nail's house was one of those in danger, and a lurid light lit up her airing bonnet. It reminded somebody of the temperance lunch at the polls, and that the saloons and drugstores were always very careful that the fire-laddies' throats should not be dried up by heat and smoke. Hot coffee and cold milk were soon being quickly served from tea-kettles and milk-cans, in cups, glasses, bowls and pitchers.

"Comrades!" called a grimy young Hercules, as the defeated fire sizzled away, and Joe Nail, from a ladder, gently poked his mother's bonnet, safe and purified, within her unharmed home. "Out with the money you've saved to-night for a temperance coffee-room!"

An embarrassed, derisive laugh started among the fire-men, but the crowd changed it to a rousing cheer as the speaker held up a fire-bucket and slowly dropped in a handful of coins. It did not have to wait for company from firemen and on-lookers.

"Big trees from little acorns grow." But did Pleasant Plain's coffee-room, temperance lecture hall, day nursery, kitchen garden and bands of hope really begin with a bucket? Or with Mrs. Nail's illustrated tale of a bonnet? Or with a young girl's refusal to sell her colors for a treacherous parasol?

I think the temperance movement in Pleasant Plain started in a mother's last, best wish as she sent her daughter out into fashionable society.—Union Signal.

THE MORE HONESTY a man has the less he affects the air of a saint.—Lavater.

'WHERE WILL TEACHER BE?'

BY MRS. HARVEY JELLIE.

It was one of those marvellously clear days we sometimes get in the springtime, when the earth seems giving out one song of praise all round. The busy town lay quiet in the Sabbath rest, and as the time drew near for afternoon school, little parties were to be seen here and there wending their way to the different places.

Teachers, too, were eagerly hastening to their work, and two of them were passing a house where little Rosie, the favorite of all in the class, lay dying. She had often of late been absent from the school through illness, but the springtime only developed the disease which was stealing her life away. For twelve years she had been the joy of happy Christian parents, and, but for her weakness and suffering, they would have entreated the Lord to spare her.

"There goes your teacher, Rosie dear, perhaps she will call when going home."

"If I was well, I should be just starting, shouldn't I, mother? There are my books, you'll come and read my verses to me, and my hymns, and tell me one of those beautiful stories!"

"Yes, dear, and we will pray for teacher and the class."

Propped up by pillows, looking as fragile and fair as a flower, the gentle child listened to the words she had early learned to love.

"Now, darling, you must sleep," and with a fond kiss the mother laid her back to rest, and an hour passed by. With a sob and look of distress, the dear girl opened her eyes. "O mother, was it only a dream? I have been in such a lovely place, it must be real and true, and I was well again, and Jesus was holding out his hand to lead me away over such glorious hills. You can't guess how beautiful, and you were there, and father, and little Katie, who used to go with me to Sunday-school; but when I looked about, I could not find teacher. I called her, and I thought I asked Jesus where she was, and He did not answer, but she wasn't anywhere near to Him; and I wanted her, and it made me cry when I was waking for I do love my teacher."

"There, Rosie, don't think about it; it was only a dream, and you must be happy and forget that part."

"But I don't want to forget, mother; it was all so lovely there, and it will be true soon. Only, where will teacher be? I cannot bear to lose her up there. Do ask her, when she comes, to be near Jesus, then I'll find her easily."

"I will, dear, if you take your tea and keep quiet a little now." And the little child, by Jesus called, and blessed, and charged with a saving message, was content.

"I must call, I suppose, and ask how Rosie is to-day," said the teacher to a friend and fellow-worker, as they met in the street and walked on together.

"Isn't it delightful to see those eager faces on Sunday! and doesn't it make one long and pray to be more Christlike for their sakes!"

"You are just made for a Sunday-school teacher, and revel in the work; I can't, it seems so tiring to be shut up with children, on bright afternoons, and they seem to be so forgetful. I shall give up, I think, unless I have a larger and more interesting class," and they parted at the corner of the road where Rosie lived, and fond as she was of those children in her class, she knew in her inmost heart that she lacked some qualification which her friend possessed.

"I am so pleased to see you," said the mother, "for my Rosie cannot be happy till I tell you a dream that made her so disturbed. You will smile at it; only to satisfy her I must repeat it, and you will soon make her at rest about it."

The words of a suffering one, be they young or old, are imprinted on the thought and memory, and mothers ponder these sayings, perhaps, as others cannot. Any way, the words that had told of her child's discomfort were repeated in just the tones she had received them, and with the full pathos of their first utterance, bringing tears to her own eyes.

"She will be so glad to see you, and you will make her forget it all; she is weak, and even a dream troubles her," said the mother, leading the way.

But the teacher did not "smile" at it, or

think it 'only a dream.' Had an arrow struck her heart, or some big weight of sorrow suddenly entered there? Why did that simple dream-question flame out in such overpowering consequence, refusing to be put aside, and making a trembling listener of the one who went in there as teacher?

"Are you better, Rosie?" she asked, bending near over the bed.

The pale face flushed over with pleasure, and putting her tender arms round her teacher's neck, she said:

"I heard mother telling you about my dream; kiss me, teacher dear, and promise me you will be quite near Jesus in heaven, so I can find you quickly."

A great revelation came to her soul then and there, and spoke the plain truth within. "I am not quite near Jesus now, how can I expect to be then?" and she longed to rush away and hide herself. "I will come and talk to you, dear, soon; I am in a hurry now," she said, fearing to trust herself.

"But, teacher, tell me first for certain where you will be. I might go before you come again, and I must know where to find you there, please tell me."

The most difficult question ever put to her, and she a teacher—yet scarcely knowing how to answer her own little scholar, who held her hand so lovingly and would not be denied. The mother spoke to Rosie to take her attention, thinking the sight of the dying child was causing the tears and choking sensation, but she did not know the Angel of the Lord was wrestling there with the heaven-sought soul of that Sunday-school teacher. Recovering herself so as to speak, she said, pressing a farewell kiss on the pleading face—

"Yes, Rosie, darling, you shall find teacher quite near to Jesus."

"Now I am so happy; I won't cry any more. You come again and see, teacher, if I do. Good-bye."

Threedays after it was as another creature she trod that same street. Earth was more lighted up with heaven, and life a new and solemn trust. Nearing the house again she said to herself, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Oh, blessed messenger to me, she has saved her teacher!

The pure frail casket lay before her; the happy soul was set free to take the Saviour's hand, and joyfully go forth to the land of perfect health to await the loved ones' coming.

"Thank you for all your kindness to my Rosie in the class," said the mother. "She loved you, and after your visit she did not cry or seem to have a wish. Just before she went from me she said, 'Will teacher come?' and then, as if she thought you would not see her again, she said, 'I'm so glad I know where I shall find her now'—and she laid her head upon my arm—but there was no sight of death to her. She passed away all smiles."

Tears and thanksgiving and prayer made a richer wreath than floral decoration for the scholar who had helped the teacher to make sure of a crown.

As she goes forth, baptized from above, to her new life of love and service, and her scholar Rosie enters the homeland, we wonder if all our teachers can confidently answer that question, 'Where will teacher be?'

Where? When the great harvest home is gathered. Where? When, 'with rapture through and through,' the children roam the fields of glory, and gaze upon their Saviour's face. Will they greet you there? Will they find you close to Jesus then?

They never think it can be otherwise. Your life to them is a pattern. Your words their guide. Your death to be all radiant and your place in heaven to be sure, and near the Lord! Will they be deceived and disappointed? You may be able to prepare a splendid lesson, and keep order in the class, but forgive the question put in faithfulness and love, and before you meet those trustful scholars again, answer in the sight of God. 'Where will teacher be?'—The Christian.

No MAN is born into the world whose work is not born with him. There is always work, and tools to work withal, for those who will, and blessed are the horny hands of toil.—Lowell.