



The Family Circle.

BRAVE AND TRUE.

Whatever you are, be brave boys!
The liar's a coward and slave, boys!
Though clever at ruses,
And sharp at excuses,
He's a sneaking and pitiful knave, boys.

Whatever you are, be frank, boys!
'Tis better than money and rank, boys;
Still cleave to the right,
Be lovers of light;
Be open, above board, and frank, boys.

Whatever you are, be kind, boys!
Be gentle in manners and mind, boys;
The man gentle in mien,
Words, and temper, I ween,
Is the gentleman truly refined, boys.

But, whatever you are, be true, boys!
Be visible through and through, boys;
Leave to others the shamming,
The "greening" and "cramming."
In fun and in earnest, be true, boys!
—Leicester, Eng., Post.

MRS. HARRY HARPER'S AWAKENING

BY FANSY.

CHAPTER I.—CARRIED BY A GOOD CURRENT.

A fair-faced, blue-eyed, golden-haired beauty! A child-wife. There were times when you could not help feeling it to be almost pitiful, that, so early in her girlhood, she had assumed the cares and responsibilities of womanhood. Especially as her girlhood had been spent in a fashionable seminary, where she learned about as much of the responsibilities of life as a bright-winged bird, hovering over a summer garden, learns of the affairs of state. Two experiences in her life stood out with ever-vivid clearness and freshness. Indeed, both were so recent that they could hardly yet be said to be among her past experiences.

One was, when white-robed and flower decked, and with just the requisite number of buttons to her white kids, and just the right tint of yellow to her rich laces, she had stood, with pink cheeks and shining eyes, and held her daintily perfumed sheets of tinted paper, delicately tied with a ribbon that matched her eyes, and with sweetly modulated voice that could not be heard twenty feet away from the platform, and with a strong throbbing of her frightened heart, that it seemed to her could be heard all over the hall, read her essay entitled: "The Procession of the Hours." During the reading a gorgeously attired butterfly looked in upon the scene, swam airily across the hall and lighted for a moment on the bouquet of tuberoses that decked the stand; and it was impossible to avoid the notion that it knew almost as much about the Procession, and took in as solemn a sense of its tremendous possibilities, as did the trembling bit of flesh and blood beside it. Nevertheless there was an immeasurable distance between them; the butterfly sailed off into space, and was thought of no more; and the reader received presently her solemn-looking roll of yellow parchment, which told that she had completed the curriculum of study laid down by that old established and intensely respectable institution; completed indeed, the circle of the sciences. Then she stepped out into life, an immortal, never to be lost sight of; living still when the butterfly's wings shall have mingled with the dust of ages!

The other experience followed fast upon this, when, white-robed again, she stood, this time with a wreath of orange blossoms about her fair hair, and a veil of rarest lace, pinned by a diamond of almost priceless value, trailed along the central aisle of Westminster Church, while the organ swelled its melody until the very arches caught the sound and seemed to repeat them. This time her face was almost as pale as the satin dress she wore; for among the long "procession of the hours" had come to her the solemn one in which she was to speak the irrevocable "I do," which would make

of those two "no more twain, but one flesh."

Thus had Mrs. Harry Harper been whirled through life; day-school, dancing-school, boarding-school, marriage vows, until she was stranded at last on the second floor of a fashionable hotel in a fashionable city, totally strange to her, and with absolutely nothing to do, not so much as to arrange the knick-knacks on her toilet-case. What in the name of common sense was this stranded young pearl to do with the hours?

Calls? Well she was a stranger; the husband was a recent importation from a large business house to this branch firm in this smaller city; only smaller though, by comparison with one so many degrees larger; for, in itself, it thought itself a large and important city. In time there would doubtless be many calls to return, for Harry Harper was not one to remain long unknown. Shopping? Why bless your heart, she was a bride! Don't you remember how that genius of the last decade characterized American mothers as those beings who acted, when their daughters were about to marry, as though all dry goods stores were to be closed for at least six months and a half year of Sabbaths were to celebrate the event. Assuredly, Mrs. Harry Harper, though she looked lovingly in at the pretty things in the windows as she passed, could not recall a single want, or, what is more extraordinary, even a single wish ungratified in that line. Books? Oh, yes; well, she had plenty of them, elegantly bound; standard works; but, truth to tell, she was weary of books. Had she not often eaten her lunch with a French reader spread open on her knee, and a French dictionary under her arm? Had she not slept many a night with a treatise on some bewildering science under her pillow? It made her sigh to think of books; sometime, perhaps, away in the future, when a silver thread was beginning to gleam in the gold of her hair, she might learn to like books again, but not now. This is one of the interesting results of the cramming process in certain fashionable schools.

Was Mrs. Harry Harper a Christian? I find that I hesitate over the question; and yet, yes, after careful thought I believe I may say, she was. A blessed wave of Christian influence had swept even over the fashionable seminary, but a few months before she graduated (and, if I had time, it would be interesting to go back and tell you of the apparently trivial line of incidents that led to this remarkable result); but she was just a babe in Christ; an un-nourished babe at that. There had been those who rejoiced over her conversion, who kissed her with tears in their eyes, and told her they were glad; and they were; and then they had left her to stumble along as best she might. True, she was a babe; her feet were tottering; she might fall, and then it would be sad, and then, possibly, somebody would run to her and try to help her up; but in the meantime no one thought to support the weak steps that they would have no need to fall.

So Mrs. Harry Harper came to this strange city, without any very settled or intelligent understanding of what she ought to do, or how in the least to do it. Her husband was a Christian, it is true; had been for years; at least he had been a church-member; but if he had ever felt the importance of the profession, and the measure of his responsibility, he had long buried the feeling in a whirl of successful business; so that up to the time when our story opens, husband and wife had never exchanged a dozen sentences on the subject of personal religious experience. As regarded the hundred avenues of Christian work, fields white to the harvest on every hand, waiting for the laborers, Mrs. Harry was as ignorant as a humming-bird, and her husband was not very many degrees in advance of her.

So behold her, on this sunny spring morning, arrayed in the most exquisite of spring costumes, ready for a walk; yet as she gave careful attention to the many buttons on her gloves, there was a shade of irresolution, even weariness, on her pretty face. She went out for a walk every morning, because Harry said she ought to exercise, and because it was less wearisome than to stay in the house. Yet she had nowhere to go, nothing to do, no interest in the people whom she met, or the sights that she saw. Her whole life had been spent in a larger and much more brilliant city. How was she going to get through with the weary hours that intervened between now and the time when Harry would rush in from his

distant store? No fear of loneliness after that. They were sufficient to each other, these two.

The weary look deepened into one of positive discontent as she moved slowly along the busy street; everybody seemed to have a special destination in view, and be eager to get there. Everybody was in a hurry save herself. Especially was she impressed with the fact that an unusual number of women were abroad; interesting-looking women; many of them in travelling attire; many of them with an air of earnestness, or of definiteness; that in her listless mood, impressed her keenly.

Who were they, and where could they all be hurrying? Why were there so many more of them this morning than usual? She would like to know some of them; their faces interested her, rested her; yes, for she actually felt tired! There is really nothing that will tire one so utterly and hopelessly as idleness. Presently, as she studied the faces of the people who were all going in an opposite direction from herself, a new feature about them attracted her attention. They wore on the left shoulder, or fastened to their pins, or chains, somewhere about them, modest-looking bits of white ribbon, bearing the cabalistic letters: "W. P. B. F. M." What could those letters mean? She found herself utterly unfamiliar with them. It must be a convention of some sort. She shuddered at the thought! A convention of women! What a disagreeable sight must that be! Did they argue, she wondered? Did their faces grow red with passion? Did they call each other hard names, and fling bitter sarcasms at one another, as she had heard her father and brother tell of the political conventions belonging strictly to the male sex? But what could the letters represent? "Woman's Right's?" No. The "W" would do; but what about the rest? Perhaps it was a benevolent society, and they had a fair somewhere in the city. She would rather like to attend, if that were the case. Then she tried to fit the letters "Woman's Fancy Bazaar"—was it W. F. B.? No, there were other letters, and this wasn't the order in which they came. She studied the next badge carefully. What could that stand for? and the B. was before the F. It couldn't mean Fancy Bazaar; she knew there was a great rage in this country for copying the French; but surely the fever would not have led them to want to say "Bazaar Fancy." She tried again: "Woman's Purchasing Bazaar for—" Well for what! Ignoring the fact that it would be a very awkward sentence thus far, what was she to do with the "M."? She amused herself by fitting all sorts of probable and improbable words to it, trying to make a reasonable conclusion.

"I wonder where the meeting, or the fair, or whatever it is, is held?" she asked herself. "How they are crowding along! Why as many as a hundred ladies must have passed me! I believe I will turn and follow them. It must be a proper enough place to go, since so many ladies are hurrying that way. Nice-looking ladies, too; some of them are noble-looking." Possessed with that silly idea, common to womankind, that to turn squarely around in the street and walk in the opposite direction, would draw the attention of the crowd, she turned instead into a stationary store, near at hand, and made a purchase of the first article on which her eye alighted, which proved to be a very small blank book. Then she boldly joined the W. P. B. F. M., bent on learning the attraction, whatever it was. Only a short walk around the corner, down another block, and the procession of women ahead of her filed into a great church. She hesitated. What if it were a matter belonging strictly to themselves? A secret society, such as the gentleman had—was it proper for her to follow? But then, such a company of them, and in the broad sunlight of a week day morning and in a church; it must be proper enough to see what there was of interest.

"We are late," said a sweet-voiced lady at her elbow; "I am sorry; I dislike to enter a meeting after it has opened." This sounded friendly; Mrs. Harry could not do other than smile upon her, and admit that it was unpleasant.

"Walk right in: this way, ladies," said the cheery voice of an usher. "You will not disturb the meeting; they are just attending to a little item of business." Then Mrs. Harry found herself following his lead and entering the audience-room of the

handsome church. There seemed to her to be more genuine cordiality in the invitation than she had received in a church since she left her own home. Instantly her eye was attracted by the display of flowers and vines on the platform. How perfectly aglow with beauty they were! The whole church was pervaded with a faint, delicate perfume like the breath of a summer morning, and the ladies on the platform were as though they dwelt inside a bower of the Lord's own fashioning. Whose hand but his could have furnished the cool, green, graceful ferns, bending their feathery branches on every side? Whose hand but his could have fashioned the lilies in their glory, as they smiled on this young worshipper of beauty, and drew her instinctively down the aisle, instead of dropping into the first seat that offered? The bright faced lady who had addressed her was just at hand, and smiled an appreciation of the beauty, and murmured as they took seats together: "Consider the lilies." Doesn't that platform make you think of it? No, it hadn't. The young bride was all too unaccustomed to the Bible to have familiar verses spring to her heart to match the sight of her eyes. But she thought of it now, and supplied the rest of the verse, and took a new lesson in the power and care of the beauty-loving God.

CHAPTER II.—DID SHE BELONG?

The choir were singing a strong, grand hymn; new to her, as indeed most hymns were; but the tune carried her back to a certain evening in the seminary chapel, when, with beating heart and tear-wet eyes, she bowed her head in prayer, and felt, for the first time, the presence of One to whom she said, "My Lord and my God." The rush of recent events had, sadly enough, already set this sweet memory in the background, but it came back to her in full force this morning, and helped to deepen the sense of sweetness and restfulness in the atmosphere about her.

She bowed her head and joined in the prayer that followed and though it sounded strange indeed to her coming from a woman's lips, overshadowed by the sanctity of the pulpit, yet the words were so simple, so earnest, so impassioned, that she could not, but in a degree, forget the surroundings and join in the petitions. In the little rustle that followed the prayer, she ventured to address a word of enquiry to the cordial lady beside her.

"Is the woman who prayed a missionary?"

"Oh, no; she is just a worker here at home; but she is very much in earnest."

Mrs. Harry Harper suppressed outward token of her surprise, but she had not deemed it possible that any one not actually engaged in the missionary field could have such a keen, throbbing eagerness of heart for the cause. Truth to tell, she had never even realized that missionaries felt as much as that prayer indicated; though, of course, they were, by some mysterious process, unknown to other Christians, gifted with superhuman powers of self-abnegation. Mrs. Harper did not put that belief into actual words, but she represents a by no means small majority, who, in their secret hearts, seem to feel it.

I feel myself unable to picture to you the strangeness of this scene to the child-wife looking on. A great church filled at that hour of the morning with women; a sea of upturned faces—earnest faces, bright faces, young and beautiful faces, old faces crowned with silver hair—all of them belonging to women. Women on the platform many of them; unembarrassed, at ease, apparently at home in all the details of management. All of them wearing those fair white ribbons, with those clear black letters, whose significance still eluded her. This was no fancy bazaar: who ever heard of one being thronged at ten of the morning by an army of plainly attired, quietly seated women, bowing their heads in prayer, led by one of their number! Mrs. Harper was at home in the management of fairs and festivals and fancy tables, and every contrivance of the sort beginning with "F" that she could think of, and none of them presented this front. She glanced about her curiously, the inscriptions on the walls being the next thing that caught her eyes—done in evergreen, evidently prepared for this present occasion; large plain letters, enclosed in evergreen frames, Africa, China, India, Syria, Persia. What had all those far-away countries to do with this gathering of women in the very centre of America? Surely