

# The Family Circle

## THE TRULY BRAVE

Who is the truly brave?

The boy with self-control,  
Who curbs his temper and his tongue;  
Who, though he may be big and strong,  
Would scorn to do the slightest wrong  
To any living soul.

Who is the truly brave?

The boy who can forgive,  
And look as though he had not heard  
The mocking jest, the angry word;  
Who though his spirit may be stirred,  
Yet tries in peace to live.

Who is the truly brave?

The boy whose daily walk  
Is always honest, pure, and bright,  
Who can not and who will not fight,  
But stands up boldly for the right,  
And shuns unholy talk.

Who is the truly brave?

The boy who fears to sin;  
Who knows no other sort of fear,  
But strives to keep his conscience clear,  
Nor heeds his comrades' taunt or jeer,  
If he hath peace within.

## WORTHLESS BOBBY

'Please, Mr. Harro! Oh, please try me a little longer. A week—just one week. Please, Mr. Harro!'

Mr. Harro looked into the pleading little face before him, and once more the kind heart was touched and softened.

'I can't depend upon you, Bobby, that's the trouble; you neglect my work. Understand, I appreciate your love for books, I am glad you love them; but your first duty is to attend to the business that I give you to do, and you don't do it, Bobby; you know you don't.'

'Oh, Mr. Harro, I will try to be good. Take my books away from me, and try me just once more.'

'I will not take your books from you, that would be no test; but I shall put you on your merit once more, Bobby, and see what you will do; but if there is no improvement it is your last chance—you will have to go. You understand now, do you?' said Mr. Harro, as he stepped into the carriage.

Bobby turned away to hide the tears, as Marion Harro, a sweet girl of nineteen years, ran merrily down the path and took the seat beside her father.

'Well, Marion, that youngster has got the best of me again, and I have taken him another week on probation.'

'Dear father, I am so glad'—her face brightening—'I thought you would give him another trial.'

'What a tender heart you have, dear; but I love you to be so; the more of your sainted mother I see in your character the more I feel you are developing into the highest type of womanhood. Foster it, my darling; cultivate it; there are always plenty to say the hard, sharp word, and under a cloak of frankness wound even those whom they really love.'

They were driving along the beautiful country road to the station, and as they drew up to the platform for Mr. Harro to alight, Marion put her hand tenderly over his and said: 'Dear father, I am trying to be like her.'

'Surely the mantle of the mother has fallen upon the daughter,' replied Mr. Harro, with quivering voice, 'and you will never know, my darling, what hope and joy you bring into your father's life.'

As Marion drove leisurely home her thoughts turned to Bobby. How could she help him? He was one of seven, his father was dead, and his struggling mother trying to keep the family together. They were honest and respectable but very poor. Bobby was thirteen. John, the eldest, a boy of fifteen, had a position in the village grocery store, which was a great help to his mother. He was an industrious, hard-working boy, but Bobby did not love work, and would shirk everything that he possibly could to pore over his beloved books. History, geology, anatomy, astronomy—anything that fell into his hands—he would read, and think and wonder, though he could not understand. That, in fact, was the fascination. He wanted to know about things, and he knew there were men in the world who did know, or these books would never have been written. Mr. Harro, knowing how the boy yearned for education, offered to take him in his home, allowing him the school privileges, and paying him well for doing chores about the place, thereby laying some money aside for his higher education, for it was very plain that Bobby would never earn a living by the sweat of his brow. 'Absolutely worthless!' was the opinion nearly everybody had of poor Bobby, and it was through much apparent tribulation on

their part that Mr. Harro and Marion were trying to make something out of the boy. He had been with them six months, and Mr. Harro, thoroughly discouraged, had threatened often to send him back to his mother—only to be won over every time either by the stress of the boy or the coaxing of his idolised daughter.

This was a day early in November, and the light clouds that had hovered around in the morning thickened and gathered, and by noon rain was falling. A great storm was upon them, that hourly increased in its fury. Trembling hands were held on either side of the anxious faces that peered into what was already the darkness of night as faithful John, who acted as coachman and man-of-all-work about the place, drove down the carriage drive and out into the street on his way to meet his master.

Two hours passed, and they had not returned. Marion walked restlessly about the house.

'Where is Bobby, Hannah?' she said, stopping at the kitchen door, where the odor of the savory dinner would have been most appetising had it not been for the great anxiety for her father's safety.

'Clar to goodness, Miss Marion, I dun know! Seem's if dat boy don't know 'nuff to come in out a' de rain. He tok de lantern and went out to de barn, an' I just 'spects he's scared to come back.'

In the meantime John had safely reached the station, and after waiting a long time for the belated train, Mr. Harro finally appeared at the carriage door. The usually sluggish little stream that ran between the home and the station was a river. It had risen until even with the bridge, and the opposite end had loosened from its foundation and was ready to break away; but they did not know that, and were about to urge the frightened horse above the bellowing waters when they saw a lantern swung back and forth upon the other side.

'Stop, John,' cried Mr. Harro, quickly; 'that's a danger signal.'

'I see it, sir,' said John, backing the horse and taking to the street; 'that means a five-mile drive to the upper bridge.'

'Yes, but our lives are spared. Nothing could have saved us if we had got into that torrent. I haven't seen such a fresher for many years. Some brave fellow has risked his life for others in this storm to-night.'

The upper bridge was found intact, and as they neared home the storm seemed to abate somewhat in its fury. Both looked with eager eyes for the lantern at the lower bridge. Finally they reached the spot. The light was still there—but the bridge was gone! Mr. Harro leaped from the carriage to thank his benefactor, just as the bearer of the lantern came rushing forward.

'Dear, dear Mr. Harro! Are you safe?'

'Oh, Bobby! Brave little Bobby!' cried Mr. Harro; but Bobby had fainted. Tenderly he was lifted into the carriage, and Mr. Harro supported the dripping, unconscious little form as John drove home as rapidly as possible.

Weeks of fever followed, and with moist eyes Mr. Harro would bend over the little sufferer as in his delirium he would frantically swing the imaginary lantern or cry out to Mr. Harro not to cross the treacherous bridge.

One day, while convalescing, Bobby put his little, thin hand upon Mr. Harro's and said, 'Mr. Harro, I'm most afraid to get well, for fear I will not be good, and you will send me away.'

'Why, Booby, you saved my life, and I am not going to let you go away from me again; this is your home now. You shall go through college and choose for your life-work whatever you love best. You have a bright mind, and I am sure I shall not be disappointed in you.'

And be it said for Bobby that Mr. Harro was right.

## THE SPIDER'S STRENGTH

In his book, *The Seven Follies of Science*, Dr. Phin describes, among other strange things, how a spider contrived to lift from the ground a snake that was, of course, many times heavier than itself. The story is of interest chiefly for the scientific explanation which is given of the way in which the thing was done:—

'Some years ago, in a small village in New York State, a spider entangled a milk-snake in her threads and actually raised it some distance from the ground, in spite of the struggles of the reptile, which was alive.'

'By what process of engineering did the comparatively small and feeble insect succeed in lifting the snake by mechanical means? The solution is easy enough if one only gives the question a little thought.'

'The spider is furnished with one of the most efficient mechanical implements known to engineers, namely, a strong elastic thread. There are few substances that will support a greater strain than the silk of the spider. Careful experiment has shown that for equal sizes the strength of these fibres exceeds that of common iron. But notwithstanding its strength, the spider's thread would be useless as a mechanical power if it were not for its elasticity.'

'The spider has no blocks or pulleys, and therefore cannot cause the thread to divide up and run in different directions; but the elasticity of the thread more than makes up for this and renders possible the lifting of an animal much heavier than a snake.'

'Let us suppose that a child can lift a six-pound weight one foot high, and can do it twenty times a minute. Fur-