

Whether Common or Not

HAROLD AND HIS PA

"Papa, what is the matter with Mr. Bryan?"

Harold's father laid down his sporting section and looked severely at the earnest face of his son.

"My boy," he said, "I am willing to help you in your studies by giving you the benefit of my experience and to stimulate in every way your ambition to know the history of your country, but there's one subject I can not discuss—I can't control myself."

Harold's youthful form shook with glee.

"I saw two men get into an awful fight about Mr. Bryan yesterday," he said, "and I know what you mean, and that's why I asked. You see, our current-events teacher wouldn't tell because she said we must be neutral in all things, and these two men, I guess they didn't care."

Harold's father, in spite of himself, was becoming interested—especially at the mention of a fight.

"What did they do?" he said.

"Didn't they agree?"

"Agree! Well I should say not. One man said that Mr. Bryan was a force for good and a man of peace, and the other man laughed scornfully, just the way mother does at you, and he said Bryan was the limit, and he was a four-flusher—whatever that is—and a traitor to his country and no decent people could stand for him, and then the other man said, 'You don't know what you are talking about. He is the only man to save us from the grafters, and he put Wilson in, and he stands for righteousness,' and before I knew it there was a regular scrap on and it was great."

Harold's father's face flushed.

"I wish I'd been there!" he exclaimed. "Of course that man was right. I hope he did the other man up."

"Which man was right, father?"

"Why the man who said Bryan was no good."

"Oh, that's what you think, do you,

father? I wish you would tell me why, and I promise not to get mad, because you know I'm only a boy and I really want to know."

Harold's father's voice actually trembled with agitation as he replied:

"My son, I'll try to control myself, because for the good of our beloved country I think all our future citizens should be set right about men like Bryan."

His voice trembled some more.

"Listen carefully," he continued. "Mr. Bryan is a man who has been running for president ever since you were born."

"Yes, father, my teacher said that much, but is there anything wrong about that. I am awfully anxious to run for president, and mamma often says I'm a good boy."

"No, Harold, it is all right to run for president, but not the way Mr. Bryan does. He started out by advocating free silver."

"Oh, papa, wouldn't that be great! Think of what I could buy if all the silver was free."

Harold's father made an effort to control himself.

"Our gold standard," he said dramatically, "is the fundamental basis of our government. But more than that, Mr. Bryan forced the President to make him secretary of state, and then at a critical moment resigned his job when the country needed him, just because he wanted to be president."

"But, papa, if the country needed him, why shouldn't he be president?"

Harold's father got up. His face flushed some more.

"Look here!" he exclaimed. "I'm trying to show you that Mr. Bryan is the biggest blatherskite we ever had to contend with. He would just love

to have us invaded by a foreign enemy!"

"But, papa, what I don't understand is, why, if he is all that, anybody cares? If he is no good why do people get so mad about him? It's awful funny to me why—"

His father grabbed him by the collar.

"Come, now!" he roared. "That will do from you. Go out and play! And if you value your young life, never mention that man's name to me again!"—Life.

The Answer

They were speaking of marriage proposals the other evening, when this story was recalled by Senator Benjamin R. Tillman of South Carolina:

Some time ago a young man became very much enamored of a beautiful girl, and, meeting her at a reception one night, he determined to know his fate.

"Miss Smith," said he, leading the beautiful girl amidst the glad palms and seating her on a soft sofa, "there is something that I must tell you, something that I—"

"All right, Mr. Jones," interposed the pretty one, "only you must hurry. I don't want to miss the next waltz."

"It is a question that lies near to my heart, Miss Smith," continued the young lover. "Could you—do you think you could marry a man like me?"

"Why, yes," was the calm rejoinder of Miss Smith, "that is, if he wasn't too much like you."—Philadelphia Telegraph.

Of Course

The inspector was examining a school and all the class had been specially told beforehand by its teacher, "Don't answer unless you are almost certain your answer is correct."

The subject was history.

"Who," asked the inspector, was the mother of the greatest Scottish hero and king, Robert Bruce?"

He pointed to the boy in front of him and then round the class. There was no answer. Then, at last, the heart of the taught leaped with joy. The boy who was standing at the very foot indicated that he knew.

"Well, my boy," continued the inspector, "who was she?"

"Mrs. Bruce," said the lad.—Chicago Journal.

Had Poor Chance

A new minister in a rural district who wished to make the acquaintance of the members of his congregation and also to discover whether they were pleased with his discourse, met an old farmer whose face he recognized as one who had attended the church the previous Sunday, and, stopping him, said:

"Mr. Brown, how did you like my sermon last Sunday?"

"Well, parson," replied the old man, "you see, I didn't have a fair chance to judge. Right in front of me was old Mrs. Smith and the rest of that gang with their mouths wide open just a swallerin' down all the best of your sermon; 'n' what reached me, parson, was purty poor stuff, purty poor stuff."—Chicago News.

In the Long Run

Mayor Thompson, of Chicago, was talking at a dinner about the monstrous parades for and against Sunday closing that have been thrilling the Windy city.

"The Sunday closing law is now being enforced by us," he said. "But can we keep it up? We have the ad-

vantage, but to make our advantage permanent we must work very hard. Otherwise our opponents will be in the position of the bachelor at the Christmas ball—down and out at first, but victorious in the long run.

"This bachelor, tall and lean and distinguished looking, approached a careworn fat man and held out his hand.

"'Hello, Smith,' he said, cordially. 'How glad I am to see you. It's seventeen years since—'

"But Smith frowned and said in a worried, cold voice:

"'Beg pardon. You have the advantage of me.'

"'Yes, I know I have,' said the stranger. 'That's why I'm so pleased. We were rivals for Minnie Madden's hand—don't you remember?—and she rejected me and married you.'—Washington Star.

Too Literal

"Serbia and Belgium and such little countries mustn't take England too literally when she says she is going to help them." The speaker was Kurt Ziegler, German consul to Denver. He went on:

"To take England literally when she offers you help is to be as foolish as the dyspeptic farmer.

"A doctor brought a dyspeptic a big brown pill one day.

"I want you to try this pill tonight at bedtime," he said. "It's a new treatment, and if you retain it on your stomach it ought to cure you."

"The next day the doctor called again.

"'Did you manage to retain the pill on your stomach?' he asked eagerly.

"'Well, the pill was all right,' the

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