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Biographical Article

Hannah Whital Smith

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PLEMENT TO THE WOMAN

OUR NEW SECRETARY.

MRS. HANNAH WHITALL SMITH AND HER BOOKS.

THE new Secretary of the B.W.T.A., Mrs. Hannah Whitall Smith, is undoubtedly the most distinguished member of that Society of Friends whose good words and good works have endeared its members to all right-thinking people. Born near Philadelphia, the daughter of a merchant in that city, the wife of a wealthy manufacturer, the mother of children gifted with good, Mrs. Smith has been rarely fortunate in nature, in nurture, and the work of a lifetime. Her name has for thirty years or more been prominently associated with reform movements on both sides of the water.

In 1877 she was chosen Editor of THE UNSIGNAL, a weekly paper now published at Women's Temple, Chicago, and edited by M. Willard; it is the most successful woman's paper ever devoted to great causes. Mrs. Smith has been for many years Superintendent of Bible study in the National, and now in the World's, W.C.T.U., but though so efficient as an executive officer and so popular as a speaker on all themes pertaining to a good life, and the



MRS. WHITALL SMITH.

good deeds that are its outcome, Mrs. Smith is best known by her books. "The Christian Secret of a Happy Life" has passed through nearly 100,000 copies, and has been translated

into French, German, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, and Hindustani. Probably, no other woman has written a book that has secured a wider circulation, and certainly no religious work by a woman has approached the success attained by this practical, unconventional, and thoroughly delightful little volume. The one central thought of and every other book of the many written by Mrs. Smith is that we may get to know God as he is revealed to us in the face of Jesus Christ. The "freshness and originality" with which she has propounded the deepest spiritual truths made a powerful impression on the religious thought of the century. What she teaches is nothing new, it is all to be found in the writings of the old mystics and in the thoughts of religious writers of our own time, but "tells it out" as if by the fireside of every life, and the highest truths come to us as something not beyond our comprehension nor too high for our capacity, but as simple realizations suited to our everyday and commonplace needs.

Another book that has had a wide circulation is "Frank, the Record of a Happy Life," which is the biography of Mrs. Smith's eldest son,

a gifted young man who was a student in Princeton College, near New York City, and was an unconventional, hearty, cheery Christian life of the same type which has so greatly endeared his mother to the Christian world. This has been translated into several languages.

Another book, and the most recent, is "Everyday Religion; or the Commonsense Teaching of the Bible;" and another, "The Science of Motherhood," ought to be studied by all the local Societies of the W.C.T.U., for the type of Christianity therein conveys that broad, unsectarian outlook which must prevail before the "children of this world" will ever be persuaded to become "children of light."

What women will do with theology when their influence comes to be felt within the solemn realm is prophesied in these bright books by Mrs. Smith. Home-like religion and first principles will commend themselves to the people more strongly than those of the seminary cloister.

Besides the books that we have mentioned, Mrs. Smith has written innumerable leaflets of the same attractive faith in God, in goodness, and in humanity.

It should be stated for the benefit of our readers that all of these books and leaflets are for sale at Memorial Hall. F. E. V.