

Family Department.

EPIPHANY GIFTS.

"Call them in!"—the poor, the wretched,
Sin-stained wanderers from the fold;
Peace and pardon freely offer,
Can you weigh their weight with gold?
"Call them in!"—the weak, the weary,
Laden with the doom of sin;
Bid them come and rest in Jesus,
He is waiting;—"call them in!"

Call them in!"—the Jew, the Gentile;
Bid the stranger to the feast;
"Call them in!"—the rich, the noble,
From the highest to the least.
Forth the Father runs to meet them,
He hath all their sorrows seen;
Robe and ring and royal sandals
Wait the lost ones;—"call them in!"

"Call them in!"—the broken-hearted,
Cowering 'neath the brand of shame;
Speak love's message, low and tender,
" 'Twas for sinners Jesus came."
See! the shadows lengthen round us,
Soon the day-dawn will begin;
Can you leave them lost and lonely?
Christ is coming;—"call them in!"

"NOT MY WAY."

A TALE.

(Written for the Church Guardian.)

By T. M. B.

[Continued.]

And Sybil's life, too, was the happier for the return of her old friend; true, Percy seemed removed further from them, since John was no longer at Oxford to give them constant news of him, when he himself failed to write, and she had lost the comfort of knowing that his truest friend was near him, but personally, she could not but rejoice that John was once again at the Hall. He did not seek to be much alone with her; his time was spent chiefly with his father, when not engaged in matters connected with the estate, but Sybil had never felt such affection for him, as when she noted his unwearied and beautiful devotion to the squire. Altogether, these summer months were calm and happy ones. Percy had come and gone—he had looked his brightest, and been more loveable than ever. Mr. Ray had seemed strongly attracted towards him, had walked and talked with him, and told Sybil, thus securing a higher place than ever in her regard, that he had never met a man he thought more capable of gaining the affection of others. After his return to Oxford, the weeks passed quietly away at Longmoor, until once more the fields were white to harvest, and the branches of the fruit trees were bowed under their ripened weight. The park was putting on its loveliest autumn tints, and gossamer threads lay like a silvery net-work over the meadows. It was then that the Reaper, whose approach had been long foreseen by the eye of watchful and most sorrowful love came to Carruthers Hall. A hurried step came to the low window of the room where Mr. Ray sat late over his books. Looking out, he saw Sybil's pale, sad face leaning out of the darkness—"Will you come to the Hall at once," she said, in a hurried, smothered voice—"the squire we fear, is dying—I have the pony carriage for you outside." Without a word he seized his hat and hastened out to her, helped her into the carriage, sprang in after her, and taking the reins urged the pony to its best speed. They scarcely spoke during their short drive through the soft, dark autumn evening. Sybil's heart was too full for words, and her companion was thinking deeply of the momentous issues of life and death. He had of course, long foreseen such a summons, and during these past months had been unwearied in his ministrations to him who would now soon be past into that other world, for which the faithful priest had laboured to prepare him. There seemed to be

a hush of awed expectancy about the mansion whose master was about to leave for ever this scene of his youth and manhood and old age, of his joys and cares and sorrows. The servants stepped softly to and fro with grief and awe upon their faces. Sybil herself led the way to the room where the last scene in the life of Sydney Carruthers was being enacted. John was sitting with his hand clasping that of the dying man, while Nellie, reclining on a low seat beside him, had hidden her face in the pillows which supported her father's head. Noiselessly Sybil entered, followed by Mr. Ray; John greeted them with a look, and the clergyman knelt beside the bed. Sybil, too, fell on her knees, and covered her face with her hands. She felt that she had a right to be here, that even the sacredness of their sorrow could not exclude her, for she had loved this old man almost with a daughter's love, and her own beloved dead had been to him as a brother; and had he not himself shared her sorrow more deeply perhaps than any other? "He is going to him—he will be with him soon," she whispered again and again to herself, as the tears fell from her eyes, and then the voice of Stephen Ray, that low, penetrating voice which none who had once been familiar with it could forget, broke the stillness—"O, Father of mercies and God of all comfort," he began, and as that wonderful prayer went on it seemed as though the soul of the speaker, in the intensity of its love and faith, were endowed with strength to lift those other grief-stricken ones into a region of holy calm and perfect resignation. The dying man turned his face towards Stephen Ray and smiled upon him with a look ineffable, a look which told him that he had indeed helped him, had been his faithful guide until now, when the master had come to take the servant's place and himself lead him by the hand through the shadows of this dark valley into the land of light. Had it been for that look alone John Carruthers would have ever loved Stephen Ray. Then there came a whispered word of farewell to his children, and John beckoned Sybil, that she, too, might have a last look and word, and again the lips moved faintly and the chill hand responded to the girl's yearning pressure, and Sybil stooped and kissed him, then crept back to her place, blinded with tears. Again a silence, and once more Stephen Ray's voice in the commendatory prayer.

CHAPTER VI.

So John became in name as well as in fact master of Carruthers Hall, and after a period of mourning for the late Squire, during which the mansion saw but few faces except those of the young Squire, his sister, Sybil Barrington and Stephen Ray, John felt that his position in the county required that he should take upon himself some of the social duties which his father for years before his death had found himself unequal to. He was the more encouraged to do this as Nellie's health had of late somewhat improved. Mrs. Barrington and Sybil were of course consulted, and Mrs. Barrington cheerfully acquiesced in the proposition that she should act as hostess on the occasion of John's first hospitalities to the neighbourhood, and no one could have desired a hostess more gracious, more graceful or self-possessed than Mrs. Barrington. It was considered an event of no small importance when the young Squire 'took his place' among the gentry of the county; he was welcomed with every demonstration of pleasure, and attentions innumerable were shown him on all hands. Had John taken a less serious view of life he might very readily have drifted into the usual round of somewhat stereotyped amusements and excitements of many of the wealthy country gentlemen in England. The season in town as the chief event of the year, a houseful of guests to while away the summer,—then the shooting season with some chosen friends, and winter with its mild dissipation, and all this leaving little time for the business of life, the duties which the possession of wealth and the position of an extensive land owner must entail. But John's views of life were not ordinary ones, and his ambitions ran in a very different direction from all this. Beyond the friendly relations which should exist between neighbours and the recognition of their mutual claims upon each other, he had no thought when he deliberately

emerged from the life of almost seclusion which he had led before and since his father's death. The real business of his life was the care of those whom Providence had made more or less dependent upon him. He felt himself responsible for them. He was proud of his name, of the place he held, and the highest ambition that he knew was to leave the Carruthers estate the better for his having held it.

(To be continued.)

EPIPHANY THOUGHTS.

"Gentiles shall come to Thy Light."

The Epiphany Season, which commemorates the glorious fact of the Light Divine being shed upon all nations, is one which should be hailed with thankful gladness and which we should endeavour to make very real to ourselves. "Fellow heirs and partakers of God's promise in Christ." Do we understand and value the glorious privilege, the wondrous inheritance which was bestowed upon us? By faith alone can we lay hold upon the truth that we "sinners of the Gentiles," that we who "walked in darkness," have had the fulness of Blessing outpoured upon us and been made children of the day,—transferred from the region of the shadow of death into the Kingdom of Light and Grace, with an eternity of glory and joy opening out before us. Faith will make all this our own—by faith we can grasp what indeed passes man's understanding, and having so laid hold upon it, gratitude to God for His unspeakable gift will lift our hearts towards Him, and we shall shun the works which are unworthy of His children!

The Epiphany, the showing forth of Christ to the Gentile world—is it not that which gives their true meaning, as regards ourselves, to all the Church's seasons. What were the birth, the life, the death and passion, the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ to us had there been no Epiphany—had He come but to His own, the chosen nation, the peculiar people, and not to save the whole wide world from infinite ruin?

But now God will have "all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." The darkness is rolled away, and full in view, uplifted in the sight of all men, is Jesus the "Mediator between God and man." But though the Light is there it is not forced upon us. It still rests with ourselves whether we open our eyes and hearts to it or not. God grant that this be a true Epiphany to us! that in our hearts, our souls, our lives Jesus Christ may be manifestly shown forth; that, having received His Light, it may indeed become our own, and that we may in turn let it "shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in Heaven."

GOOD BY DEGREES.

Do not think you can be quite good all in a minute, even though you have asked God to forgive you your sins, and to send you help to do better.

There is such a thing as growth in goodness as well as in plants; and if you want to be a really strong young tree in the garden of the Lord, you must be content to pass through many seasons, and wait for many suns and showers, and even then not to have reached your full size.

Do you understand me? You can be a little good directly, for you can try to be good; and that is the beginning of all. But do not be disappointed if you fail, or sit down to say rebelliously, "I have tried, and I was good for a little while, but now I am naughty again, so it is of no use praying, or trying any more."

Such thoughts are sent by the Wicked One to discourage you. He wants you to give up goodness altogether. He 'hates' to see you trying ever so little.

Rather lift up your head again after a fit of naughtiness, and say, "I am still a little plant in God's garden, and though my leaves are soiled with sin and earthliness, He can wash them with His showers, and brighten them with His sun, if I only look up to Him, and do not despair and sink into the earth."

"But I want to be very good, a very strong