

FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

A CHRISTMAS HYMN.

By H. M. Bird, for the Church.

The Christmas snow of purest white
Lies on the frozen ground,
And Christmas stars, their clear, cold light
Are casting all around,
Upon what scenes of joy and woe,
Those stars their life have shed,
Since eighteen hundred years ago,
Within His lowly bed,
The child of Mary, and of God,
Human and yet Divine,
God's holy and incarnate Word,
Was born in Palestine.

How strangely was that wondrous birth
To man, by God, revealed;
Angels came down from Heaven to earth,
To shepherds in a field,
"The glory of the Lord shone round,"
The shepherds "sore afraid,"
Trembled and sank upon the ground,
And then the angel said:—
"Fear not, for tidings of great joy:
To all mankind I bring;
This day was born a royal boy,
A Saviour and a King!"

This day Emmanuel was born,
But not in royal halls;
His eyes divine greeted the dawn
Within a stable's walls.
The Virgin, chosen to assume
Duties so grand, so sweet,
Could find in crowded inn "no room."
So turned her weary feet
Unto an humbler resting place—
And there her babe was given,
Her babe endowed with every grace,
The Lord of earth and Heaven.

Unto that stable poor and old,
Led by a brilliant star,
Three Magi bringing gifts of gold
Travelled from lands afar.
Three wise and honored men were they,
And yet adoringly,
They knelt before the child who lay
Upon His mother's knee.
Oh, sacred gift of Love divine,
God's well-beloved Son,
Thy holy life and death have shown
That Thou and God wert One!

The little home at Nazareth,
The stable and the inn,
Have passed away—God deemed it best—
No longer are they seen.
But every year at Christmas-tide,
The angel's blessed song
Is sung again, and far and wide,
It rings out clear and strong.
And every loving heart will thrill
In answer to its call—
Of peace on earth, to men goodwill,
A Christmas true to all.

December 12, 1886.

THE EPIPHANY; OR, THE MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST TO THE GENTILES.

"What Star is this, with beams so bright.
More beauteous than the noon-day light?
It shines to herald forth the King,
And Gentiles to His cradle bring."

Just twelve days after Christmas Day comes another joyful Festival—this Festival of the Epiphany, which we are celebrating to-day.

Now, first of all, let us see what the word Epiphany means: it means *manifestation*, or *showing*. And on this day the Holy Child in the manger at Bethlehem was first made known, or shown, to the Gentiles.

The Gentiles were all the people in the world who were not Jews. We are Gentiles: that is to say, we should have been called so if we had lived in those far away days.

The shepherds who on the first Christmas eve kept watch over their flocks by night were Jews, and it was to the Jews that the Birth of Jesus was first made known; but the old prophets had foretold that Jesus would come to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. He was to save the whole world, not one little corner of it.

In the first Morning and Evening Lessons for the Epiphany we read the very words in which the prophets foretold these things; and the rest of the services tell us how wonderfully it all came to pass.

In the Holy Gospel we read the beautiful story of the Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles.

There was some wise men—some people say they were kings, living a long, long way from

Judea—who spent all their time looking at the stars, trying to find out new ones, just as wise and learned men look up at the heavens now, trying to discover new wonders there.

Well, one night these three wise men of the East saw a beautiful strange light in the cloudless sky, and God put it into their hearts to know that it meant something very great and wonderful.

Do you know what they did? They left their home and their country, and undertook a long, weary journey, following that glorious light, until it stood still over the little city of Bethlehem, where Jesus was lying in the stable with the ox and the ass.

It must have seemed strange to them to see the star standing still over a poor desolate manger; they could not believe that the Saviour of the world, the promised King, should be in such a place as that, so they went to king Herod and told him their trouble, and asked him where He was who was born King of the Jews. Herod could not tell them; he himself was very anxious to find the Holy Child, for he wanted to kill him. He was afraid the long-promised Messiah would take his kingdom from him; so he bade the wise men go and look for Him, and let him know where He was.

The wise men made their way at last to the manger, over which the star shown in all its brightness; and there they found Him, Whom they had come all that way to seek; and they knew then that it was the Saviour of the world Who was lying there, a little helpless Babe upon his virgin mother's knee; and they fell down before Him—those wise men fell down before that little child—and gave him the treasures and gifts that they had brought from their distant home; gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Now each of these gifts had a special meaning; gold, showed that He was a King; incense, that he was God; and myrrh, that He was to suffer.

Dear children, holy men of old have told us that the star which led the wise men to Bethlehem took the form or shape of a cross. It is a beautiful thought; it ought to comfort us very much when we think of it; for just as those three Magi of the East were led to Jesus by the cross, which spoke of suffering, so God leads us either a long or a short journey over long and difficult roads; but we shall find Jesus in the end waiting to welcome us to our own true country, and we shall fall down and worship Him as our King.

There are three Epiphanies, three different Manifestations of the Incarnate God. This one to the wise men. Another we read about in the second morning lesson, when Jesus again showed His obedience, and He Who had done no sin went out into the wilderness to be baptized with the baptism of repentance by St. John Baptist; and then as he was coming out of the water the heavens opened and the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove, and a voice from heaven said, "This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." Jesus was then manifested, or shown to be the Second Person in the Ever-blessed Trinity. And the third Manifestation was when He showed forth His power in His first miracle, by turning the water into wine at the marriage feast of Cana of Galilee, of which we are told in the Gospel for the Second Sunday after the Epiphany.

NEW BOOKS.

A MODERN TELEMACHUS: by Charlotte M. Yonge. MacMillan & Co., New York and London. Cloth, \$1.50.

The well known author of "The Heir of Redclyffe" sends out another of her ever attractive novels and tales under the above title, the idea for which, she says, was taken from *The Mariner's Chronicle*. The story (which is told

in Miss Yonge's best style) is based upon historical facts and, illustrating the adage that truth is stronger than fiction, portrays the adventures of a Jacobite family—that of Sir Ulick Burke, otherwise *Le Chevalier Bourke* (who in 1719 was killed in the battle of Alamanza), who setting out by way of the Mediterranean to join their father (who had been appointed ambassador to Sweden) were captured by the Moors, at a Spanish port, and on their way to Algiers were wrecked. Estelle (Mademoiselle De Bourke) was saved by Laurent (otherwise Arture)—the mother, brother and others losing their lives. The story then relates the sufferings of Estelle and her maid and of Arture during their captivity, their final escape and adventures wonderful, indeed, if true. The high moral tone of Miss Yonge's books are well known, and this is no exception.

SHOTS AT SUNDRY TARGETS—By Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D.D. E. B. Treat, 771 Broadway, N.Y. \$2.

This volume of 655 pages—authorised by Dr. Talmage and containing *fac simile* of his letter and wood cut of himself—contains selections from the best specimens of his pen, pulpit and platform efforts at different times. The "shots" are aimed at WRONGS to be righted; ERRORS to be corrected; DANGERS to be avoided; BURDENS to be lightened; FOLLIES to be shunned; SORROWS to be mitigated; VICTORIES to be won. The distinguishing characteristics of this well known Brooklyn preacher are widely known, and they are well illustrated in this volume. Dr. Talmage is ever fearless and outspoken in his condemnation of what he considers wrong, and in his support of what he believes right, and this book is "warlike not only in name but in spirit, and comes forth as a champion of the right and an avenger of the wrong." It is filled with that originality of expression and illustration which are peculiarly Dr. Talmage's own.

D. L. MOODY AT HOME—S. R. Briggs, Toronto. Cloth, \$1; paper, 50c.

The object of this volume is according to the statement of the compiler, "to depict the home life of Mr. D. L. Moody: to describe with some approach to symmetrical completeness the extensive educational institutions which have arisen under his care, and to furnish a series of addresses which may be taken as representative of the deliberations of the Northfield Conferences of Christian workers." The first two chapters treat of Northfield and its schools; and of the contents of these Mr. Moody has "purposely been kept without knowledge." The remaining chapters contain addresses and discussions at different times and places. To many the book will be welcome and interesting.

SCHOOL ROOM GAMES AND EXERCISES—By Elizabeth G. Bainbridge. The Interstate Publishing Co., 30 Franklin street, Boston and Chicago. Cloth, 75c.

A very valuable manual prepared by a teacher of experience, and one thoroughly familiar with the needs and tastes of children is brought out under the above title by the Interstate Publishing Company, of Chicago and Boston. The author believes that the introduction of such exercises as the book contains will not only rest the pupils, but will brighten their faculties, concentrate their attention, and strengthen them for a renewal of more difficult mental work. It is really teaching by new methods; no less teaching that there is amusement in it. Many of the games lead to exactly the same results as what are called serious studies, and there are none of them but what call for some healthy exercise of the mind. The volume has been compiled from many sources, and is one which can be warmly and conscientiously commended to school superintendents and school teachers everywhere.