

FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

THE EPIPHANY.

"And, lo, the star which they saw in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was."—Matthew ii., 9.

Resplendent Star, whose strange unwonted sheen

The dazzled sight of rev'rend sages met,
With adoration breathless were they seen

To stand, and gaze and gaze on thee, till set.

Thy radiant glory 'gainst Aurora's light.

Oh, messenger of heaven's wondrous will,
What secret magic streamed on Persia's night
Of cloudless splendor, silv'ring stream, and hill,

And fields, in thy bright beams, to bend the lore

Of old Astronomy to seek a child?

'On pathway devious, worn by saints before,
Sull streams the Star of Bethlehem's infant mild.

"The sceptre, learning, physio," yet shall bow;
The Child, the homage of all hearts must know.

The Rectory, Maitland, N.S. J. M. W.

MAUDIE'S TEXT.

BY THE HON. KATHARINE SCOTT, AUTHOR OF
"MISS BROWN'S DISTRICT," ETC.

"Mamma, may I go to church to-day?"

Maudie's little rosy face was peering up over the window-sill into mamma's sunny sitting-room.

Mamma was lying on the sofa, looking very pale.

"Yes, my darling, I think so, if father can take you, and if you go quickly and get ready."

Maudie had on a very clean white frock which stuck out all around, and was particularly apt on Sunday mornings to stick into the rabbit's house, or the chickens' dishes, and come out looking rather the worse for its visit; but to-day she had been very careful, and as she pulled her skirt round, examining it carefully, she could not discover one single disaster.

"I'm quite tidy, mamma," she shrieked in, "and I'll come to you in a minute when I'm ready."

She did look tidy; she looked dear beyond words in her white muslin, blue sash, and shady straw hat, with her rosy cheeks and deep blue eyes. Mamma's pale face grew rosy too with pleasure as she looked at her.

"Good-by, my sunshine, and mind you remember the text and the sermon for poor, sick mamma."

A tender kiss and a final arrangement of the white hat, and she was gone.

The church was very hot, and the bees outside buzzed so in the limes, that Maudie began to get very sleepy, but she wasn't going to give in and go to sleep.

Six years old and asleep in church would be dreadful! Perhaps father would help her off with her glove, it was so tight; and I must confess a shocking thing about Maudie—she did very much like what she called "a bit of thumb!" The little hot kid gloved hand crept into father's big one, and he had undone the buttons and pulled at all those poor tight finger-tips, and the fat little thumb was just inside the rosy lips, when a strange voice spoke out from the pulpit—

"What is that in thine hand?"

Maudie jumped nearly off her seat, and out came her thumb, and her round blue eyes were

fixed on her own dear little hand. She didn't see anything there at all; but she was so engrossed gazing at it that she lost a good bit of the sermon.

Was that the text? Well, it must be, she supposed, but it was a very funny one, and mamma would think so too, she was sure.

She looked around at father, who was listening very attentively, so she tried to do the same; but there was a great deal she did not understand. She heard something about Moses and a rod, and every now and then the clergyman said again, "What is that in thine hand?" But the sermon was a very short one, and when it was ended Maudie was afraid she did not know much of it to tell mamma.

Father walked home with a tall friend, and Maudie only had hold of the tips of his fingers, and could not ask him anything; so she kept saying the text over and over to herself till she got in and dashed into mamma's room, calling out, "What is that in thine hand?" as loud as she could.

"What, my darling?" what are you saying? And I'm not a bit deaf, Maudie."

"That's the text! at least, I suppose it is the text, for the clergyman said it at the beginning of his sermon, and a great many times over, and I've remembered that for you; and I didn't take my thumb, though I was just going to, mamma."

Maudie's hat was pulled off, and mamma's cool fingers were stroking back her soft hair.

"You are hot, my childie; you shall go and see the little ones now, and after dinner you'll come and read to me."

Father and mamma were sitting out in the shade in the afternoon, and the little ones were in the garden, when Maudie appeared, hauling along a very small chair with a very big Bible on it.

"Here comes Maudie with her sermon," said father, "and this curious text will have to be fathomed to the bottom. It's a good thing you have the benefit of my comments on it first."

"Well, mamma," began Maudie; "I did tell you the text, didn't I? and now what *did* he mean?"

Maudie's eyes were open as wide as they would go, and the dear little brain was puzzling over it, for it was the pride and delight of her heart to bring home a sermon for mamma; and many little bits of comfort had mamma got from those dear rosy lips.

"Now, Maudie, you must find the place in the Bible."

"The place? Is that funny thing in the Bible? And how clever you are to know."

"Begin at the beginning, and turn over the pages till you get to Exodus."

Very carefully they were turned.

"EX—is that it, mamma?"

"Yes, chapter three—three strokes, you know." And then Maudie read very slowly—

"And—the—Lord—said; What—is—that—in—thine—hand?" There it really is!"

"Yes, that's the text; now, it's rather a difficult part for you to read, so I'll tell it to you. You remember about Moses, don't you? the dear little baby whose mother had to hide him in the ark of bulrushes to keep him safe!"

"Yes, mamma, I know about him."

"And when he was grown up, God called him to do a great and difficult work. He was to take a whole nation of people, like a great army, away from Egypt, and take care of them, and teach them and guide them on a long journey to a new country; but first he had to get the great King of Egypt to allow the people to go away, and he had to take him messages from God. It was not at all easy, for he was not a good king; and at first Moses was very frightened, and said he could not go to the king, and he did not know what to say or do, because he was not prepared to do such difficult work. And it was when God was telling

him for the third or fourth time that he was to go and do this, that He said, 'What is that in thine hand?' What was it, Maudie?"

"A rod, mamma."

"Yes, just a long stick, that perhaps he had used when he was taking care of the sheep, or even to walk with. Now, this is rather difficult, darling, so listen well. Moses was told to do a very hard thing, and he thought he needed to be different from what he was, or to have something different from what he had; but God taught him that He had given him all he needed, if he would only use what he had, and be content with it. Maudie, what we have to learn from this, is, that if there is some work for us to do, we must not say, if I were well I would do it, or if I were rich, or if I were big, or if I were wise, I would do it, but we must think, what has God given me? What have I in my hand quite ready for my work? There's sure to be something if we only try and find it. Sometimes mamma wishes she were well, and could do a great many things for you all and father; and some times you wish you were big, and then you would do a lot to help me! But we must see what we can do just as we are."

Maudie was so interested she was standing up close to mamma.

"Mamma, your hands always have a cool, kind feeling. Could mine have that? Yours never feel *slappy*."

"I'm glad of that, Maudie! I shouldn't like them to! Yes, darling, your little hands could be always gentle, and if you try all through this week we shall find that you and I have something ready in our hands for everything God tells us to do. We'll try all the week, shall we, dearie?" And mamma and Maudie had a good hug, and that was the end.

The end of the Sunday lesson; but now the lesson had got to be *done*, and that is far the most difficult part.

Maudie never much liked Monday morning, and this really was a bad Monday. The rain was pouring down, splash, splash, on the summer grass, and no hope of getting out to the rabbits or the chickens. Mamma had a bad headache, and nurse had to keep baby, and help Sarah to count the clothes for the wash; and Dollie and Stella had nothing to do; and Rosie would climb up on a box, and then she fell and began to cry, and woke up baby.

Maudie was very comfortable, sitting in a nice corner in the passage with her favourite doll Teddie. He was a sailor boy, and she was very busy putting on his nice collar and tie, and making him all complete, when nurse's voice called, "Miss Maudie dear, do come and amuse these children—they are all crying and slapping. Come, dear, do."

"Oh! Nan, I can't. I wish it was fine, and I could take them out; but I've nothing to amuse them with here."

"What is that in thine hand?" suddenly sounded in Maudie's ears, so clearly that she really answered out loud, "Teddie!" and then she remembered. Why, here she was with the very thing ready to make Dollie and Stella quite good. She hesitated a minute, and then ran into the nursery.

"Here, duckies, would you like to have a play with Teddie? and Maudie will play with Rosie." Mamma sometimes called her a sunbeam, and she certainly brightened up the nursery at that moment as much as a real one. Dollie and Stella jumped up quite happy, and Rosie stopped crying, and came toddling away from the dangerous box; and wonderful to say, Teddie and Maudie together kept them so good that nurse got baby to sleep, and went to look after mamma, and Sarah got all her work done and changed her gown by twelve o'clock, when it was time for the little ones to go to bed.

Father was away, the sitting-room was empty, and the rain-drops were scuttling after one another down the window pane, so that one could not see out. As she entered the room Maudie's eyes suddenly fell on a corner—"the