

Family Department.

EPIPHANY GIFTS.

Princes may bring their richest gifts
As offerings to His shrine,
But humble prayer the soul uplifts,
And may that prayer be thine.

I may not go with jewels rare,
For lowly is my lot—
I may not give what others spare
To deck that hallowed spot.

His Altar, stands before my sight
A Holy, Sacred thing,
Encircled by a halo bright,
And here, my soul I bring.

No spotless gem—but stained with sin,
And burdened sad with care,
Scorning the most that all within
Is all—to bring Him there.

The "Simplest touch of garment" here,
Will stay the bitter flood,
And chase away the doubting fear,
Thus healed by his own Blood
—N. Y. Guardian.

"NOT MY WAY."

A TALE.

(Written for the Church Guardian.)

By T. M. B.

[Continued.]

"Your brother is amused at my familiar acquaintance with the dwellers in the Coomb," said Mr. Ray, with a smile to Sybil; "he tells me, as a boy he had a hankering after them on account of the skill they were credited with possessing in the matter of snares and gins and fishing tackle, but that of late years he has lost sight of them: I tell him that when he renews acquaintance he will find them by no means the least interesting and attractive of his people." "O, Mr. Ray, I was so glad to know that you had made friends with them," said Sybil eagerly; "like Percy I have always had a hankering after them, not so much for the snares and gins," and she laughed, "as for the sake of the dear gipsy-like little children whom I have met on my walks by the Coomb. I have longed to make friends with them, and I do know some of the people."

"I know you do," said Mr. Ray; "I have heard not a few mentions of 'Parson's Maid,' by which title you are known there, and I am coming very soon to confer with you as to the feasibility of starting a little school among them, in which matter you could be of the greatest possible help to them and me."

"When I return home for good," said John Carruthers, "I shall beg leave to join your conferences on that subject; it is one in which I am, I think, especially interested, inasmuch as the Coomb people are really squatters on the Carruthers estate, which, as perhaps you are not aware, Mr. Ray extends to the other side of what is called the Ridge. The Coomb was supposed to be debatable ground, but my father not long since had the question finally sifted and settled."

"I am glad indeed to hear you acknowledge that these poor folk have a claim upon you," said Mr. Ray, his playful manner changing to deep seriousness, "and to hear you express a personal interest in them. Ah, Mr. Barrington," and he turned to Percy with his kindest smile, "you will find these old friends of yours worthy of being cultivated after all."

"I have not a shadow of doubt of it," returned Percy, "and I only hope they won't be above their old acquaintance."

They had reached the Park gates by this time, and Mr. Ray did not refuse John's urgent invitation to go on with them to the Hall. It was one of the Squire's "well days," as he called them, which meant that the bracing air and sunshine gave him a little fictitious strength, and he welcomed his guests with his old gracious and affectionate courtesy, while Nellie's beautiful face was radiant with the pleasure of seeing all her favorites round her. To her Percy specially devoted him-

self. From the time they had been children together he had always been chivalrously kind to the frail, suffering girl, never omitting an opportunity of giving her pleasure or showing his affection for her, and Nellie loved him very dearly. Had not her affliction denied her even the dreams and hopes of youth, this love for Percy might have become the absorbing feeling of her life; as it was he occupied a place in the inner chambers of her heart, and was her ideal of knightly grace and kindness. To have him sitting by her couch as in the old days, and to have a long, long talk with him, was one of the greatest pleasures of her life. She was scarcely less disappointed than Sybil when he told her of his speedy departure, and she was less reticent than Sybil in questioning him about this friend for whom he was going to desert them all. Percy's sketch of Sir Michael, drawn involuntarily in the most pleasing colours, somewhat attracted her.

"He must be rather like you, Percy," she said, and Percy, conscious that his friend was scarcely the model which she would select for him, laughingly replied that "Stanton might think that a questionable compliment."

CHAPTER V.

Percy's visit to Sir Michael had been made, and the two young men had returned to Oxford together whither John had preceded them by a few days, each to resume the life habitual to them. Time moved on with its ceaseless and even flight, "without haste, without rest," though to some it seems to drag so wearily, and to others to speed past with such measureless swiftness. Week added itself to week and month to month, until the time arrived which John Carruthers had fixed as the limit of his sojourn at Oxford.

A telegram had preceded him to Longmoor which he well knew was anxiously expected. "Graduated with honours" was its brief message, but one which he felt would be the source of happiness to his father and Nellie. Before leaving Oxford John had sought Percy at his rooms and found him, as it chanced, alone. For months the two young men had not had an undisturbed talk together, and John had felt a strong desire to take a special farewell of Percy, so far as their mutual college life was concerned.

"Old fellow, let me congratulate you," cried the latter, springing up as his friend entered, and clasping his hand fervently, "I don't know when I was more glad than I was just now in hearing of your success, and yet it was only what I felt must come—if ever a man earned what he got, you have done so."

"I wish I could take the same view of it," replied John; "it is true that I have worked, but yet it seems to me now as though I had but half earned what has come to me."

"How like you," laughed Percy, as he pushed John into an easy chair and threw himself into another; "you are the most uncomfortably conscientious fellow under the sun. If such an impossible thing could happen as that I were in your place, how serenely I should accept all the honours heaped upon me, and how my own conscious virtue would sustain me under the burden."

"Don't call it an impossible thing, Barrington," said John, looking with a half regretful admiration into the handsome, genial face smiling into his own, "what have I which you do not possess that can make a man succeed? Neither talent nor incentive certainly."

"But I may have what a man is better without," said Percy, still laughing, yet with a graver look, compelled by John's earnestness, stealing over his face, "or I may lack what is as necessary as either talent or incentive—earnestness of purpose. But don't worry about me, old fellow, I shall come out all right. When are you going home?" Thus, as many a time before, Percy evaded listening to what John Carruthers longed to express, and the latter could but comfort himself with the hope that under this carelessness of manner there was a clearness of perception of the right which must lead to a more serious view of life's duties.

"To-morrow, I think—when shall I tell them to expect you?"

"Well, in about a fortnight. I am going to take a run into Wales with Stanton to a friend's place,

where he tells me there is excellent fishing; but tell the mother and Sybil that I shall be with them very shortly, and prepared to be a good boy for the rest of the vacation. I long to see them all, but this is an old promise to Stanton which I cannot break. My love to Nell; what rejoicing there will be over you, old fellow. I do hope you'll find your father better."

The somewhat noisy entrance of a number of Percy's friends, among whom Sir Michael Stanton was conspicuous, put an end to the conversation, and John soon after took his leave.

It was not without a strong feeling of affectionate regret that on the following day he left the University, thus closing as it were the chapter of his youth, and entering upon a man's life with its grave cares and duties. Happy years had been spent in that fair and rosy city—years which would leave their impress on his whole life—years during which his mind had developed and been stored with knowledge which was not to lie unproductive, but to bring forth good fruit in a noble life; years in which, too, he had dreamed dreams, and yearned after those ideals, without which life lacks its morning sunshine and the sweet promise which is even better than its own fulfillment.

As Percy had said there was great rejoicing over John Carruthers when he returned to the home where he was henceforth to be master. Gladly and thankfully the Squire laid down the authority which had grown so heavy a burden to himself, rejoicing in the thought of the young and vigorous hand to which he had intrusted it. In a little while John had thoroughly adapted himself to his new position, and every tenant on the wide Carruthers' estate realized that a new era had begun. The old Squire had always been respected and beloved as a just and generous landlord, and it was soon felt that his son was something even more than this. Under his rule there would be reform and progress in all things, no less in the condition of the people individually than in the external management of the estate. Had it been for his father's sake alone John would have thrown himself with all his heart into his new duties, above all things he desired to brighten the evening of the beloved life which was drawing to its close.

To Nellie her brother's presence was a source of constant comfort and joy, the years of his absence had seemed to pass so wearily, and of late her father's condition had been a source of anxiety almost too great to be borne by one so helpless. But now, how different it all seemed, to know that John would never leave them any more, that the very sight of him gladdened her father, how good it seemed to the thankful, gentle soul of Nellie.

(To be continued.)

BOOK NOTICES.

"GETTING TO BE WOMEN," by George Klinge. New York: Thomas Whitaker, 2 and 3 Bible House.

A charmingly written story for the young, full of good wholesome teaching, but given in so attractive a manner as to win children's hearts; with plenty of fun too, blended with serious thoughts, and a great variety of incidents and characters. The book is handsomely bound and printed, with several illustrations; it is admirably adapted for a gift book. Sold at Messrs. Buckley & Allen's, Granville Street, Halifax. Price \$1.50.

We have received from Messrs. Buckley & Allen a bright and attractive Christmas Annual entitled "THE YULE LOG." It contains coloured illustrations of Shakespeare's *Seven Ages of Man*, each followed by a capitally written story. The Annual is accompanied by a charming coloured lithograph, "A Christmas Errand." Price of both together only 30 cents.

"VICK'S FLORAL GUIDE" for 1883 fully sustains its character. The sons of the late James Vick, so widely and favourably known as a florist and seedsman, appear to be carrying on the enormous business of their father with the same thoroughness and ability for which he was famous. In a short preface to the Guide for 1883 one of the sons very touchingly alludes to his late father's career and speaks of the humble beginnings from which an industry so extensive and we may add so widely useful and popular has grown.