

Family Department.

AN EPIPHANY SUMMONS.

BY THE REV. EDMUND LEAF.

"Day unto day uttereth speech."

O, all ye sons of God,
Behold the land ye tread,
Whither God's hand and roil,
Your soul-tried fathers led.

Wide spreads it forth to view,
With all good gifts supplied,
Gifts from the heavens that fall
And in the earth abide.

Behold ye sons of God,
If sons of God ye are,
Go ye, and through the land
The love of God declare.

The people come from far,
Toilers with us to be,
To live and labor 'neath
The banner of the free.

Go ye and gladly tell,
O'er hill and level plain,
The blessed One hath come
In every heart to reign.

Forth from the eastern wave,
When to the westward sea,
Of God's own love proclaim
The message full and free.

From North to South upbuild
The Altars of the Lord,
Till all the people know
The tidings of His Word.

The teeming throngs await—
Of white and black and red—
The day when all shall be
Into one kingdom led.

Then O ye sons of God,
Tell forth Messiah's birth
Until His light completes
The circuit of the earth.

—St. Michael's Rectory, Birdsboro, Pa.

Little Trouble-the-House.

BY L. T. MEADE.

CHAPTER I.—DON'T BLAME HIM, NURSE. (Continued.)

At these words the little children ceased sobbing, and regarded Miles with faces of the most absorbed interest.

One hand was on the mantelpiece, and with the other he had just secured the coveted box, when there came an interruption. The door was unlocked, and Miss Cecil, the governess, came in. It was the hour when Lucy and Hugh always repeated their evening prayer at their mother's knee; and the four children all thought, with an angry feeling swelling their little hearts, that Miss Cecil had come to take their mother's place; but she had no such intention.

She was a cold looking, stately person, and she moved gravely across the room without addressing the children. She would have gone away after fetching what she wanted, without speaking one word, had not her attention been attracted by the sight of the match box in Miles' hand.

"Put that box down, Miles," she said; "you know you are on no account to touch the matches." She went over herself, and removing the box from his grasp, placed it far out of his reach.

As she left the room, a little blaze of light leaped up in the grate, and fell on the boy's face; it was flushed and impatient.

"There, now," he said; "I'll have to mount on a chair to reach 'em. How tiresome of Miss Cecil!"

"But, Miles," said Polly, "you won't ever light the gas up now?"

"Why not?" asked Miles.

"Miss Cecil said 'No.'"

"Polly," said Miles, "once for all I will say that I won't be forced to obey Miss Cecil. I'm a big boy, now, and I'll soon be having a tutor, and have nothing more to say to nurse or our governess. Of course I've always got to obey father and mother—I know that quite well—but Miss Cecil, why she's just a tiresome old woman."

This last was said in a tone of great contempt.

Polly, looking puzzled but not convinced, resumed her seat on the hearth-rug, and Miles turned to Hugh.

"Shall I make a big blaze?" he said to the child.

"Yes, yes; I'd like it, Milesie," exclaimed the little fellow, clapping his hands.

"Very well, you shall hold the match for me, while Polly keeps Lucy quiet; you won't be afraid?"

"No," said the little boy in a tone of delight.

"Then," here goes!" said Miles! and with a great flush of triumph and determination on his face, he jumped on a chair again, and securing the match box, drew a match therefrom, and prepared to strike.—As he did so he was assailed by a memory. Words his mother said to him some months before returned to his mind. These were the words:—"It is God's will that you should obey those who have authority over you."

After she said the words, she explained them, and in her explanation she showed him very clearly, that for the present, as long as he was under her care, Miss Cecil was one of those people whom he had to obey; and what was more, whenever he disobeyed Miss Cecil, he disobeyed his father and mother, who had placed her over him; and when he disobeyed his father and mother, he disobeyed God, and thus committed a great sin.

Miles did not like this memory; he did not wish to consider his present act as sin; he would rather have tried to persuade himself that what he was about to do was quite right and proper; but this his conscience would not allow, and it gave him now one or two very sharp pricks, and said to him as plainly as possible:

"What you are going to do is wrong. You will be sorry for this by and by," but instead of listening to, and being guided by his conscience, he endeavored to silence it by at once doing what it told him not.

With all his might he struck the match against the side of the box, and when it blazed up he gave it to Hugh to hold for him, then jumping on another chair under the gas jet, he drew it down as he had often watched nurse do, and turned on the gas in quite a clever way.

But here a difficulty presented itself to Miles. Hugh had found the match burning down very low, and in a fright had thrown it from him, and it now lay on the hearth-rug, burning a little hole into it.

"How troublesome of you, Hugh!" said Miles in a voice half impatient, half angry, and then he jumped in a hurry off his chair, and seizing another match, he struck it, and applied it to the gas, which, turned full on, flared up with a noise that really frightened Miles.

"There! I have done it! Hurrah!" he cried, springing to the ground,—"but I rather wish it would not quite roar so much."

Just then the door was opened, and the children's father and nurse came in.

Miles had again mounted a chair, and was trying to lower the flaring gas, and little Hugh stood underneath, gazing at him, and holding the smouldering end of the last used match close to his linen pinafore.

Nurse had her handkerchief pressed to her eyes, but at this scene she flung it from her, and rushing forward, took the match away from Hugh, and lifted Miles off his chair.

"Mr. Miles, how very, very wicked! You might have set your little brother on fire!"

"Don't blame him now, nurse," said Miles' father, coming forward and taking his hand.

CHAPTER II.—BE GOOD, MILES.

The moment Miles heard his father's voice he felt that something was very wrong indeed, and instantly, with that knowledge came the strongest desire he had ever experienced in his young heart—he wished he could undo the work of the last few moments; he saw very clearly that in disobeying Miss Cecil he had also disobeyed his mother and his God.

This was his first thought, but when from hearing his father's voice he came to glance at his father's face, all other recollections were swallowed up in a quick and sudden fear.

In the entire of his short life Miles had never seen his father look as he did now. He was not crying, but his eyes had an expression in them which no tears could relieve.

When Miles went up to him, which he did at once, he put his arms around him, and pressed his face down for half an instant on his curly head.

"I want you, Miles," he said then; "you are to come with me."

And taking the boy's hand, he led him from the room.

As they walked down the hall together, Miles heard the nurse sobbing in a very free and unrestrained manner, but seeing that his father shed no tears, he was determined to push back his own.

All the same he was terribly frightened.

Where were they going?

Oh!—with a sigh of relief—to mother's room.

The instant he found himself in this corridor, with the oriel window at the end, his fears fled away; he looked with pleasure at the flower-stand, and the door with the white handle—he recollected how proud he had been when first he learned to turn the handle of that door.

What a delightful, delicious room there was within! There never were any ornaments like the ornaments on mother's dressing table, no pictures like the pictures on her walls, no view like that from her windows—and, above all, no face like the face that, morning after morning, as long as he could remember anything, had smiled on him, the lips that had kissed him, the heart that had loved him.

Oh yes! he need not feel frightened; things were all right, as he was going there.

His mother had sent for him to him her good night kiss.....to tell him to come to her as usual in the morning. He was sorry he had disobeyed her about the gas.....well, he would tell her of it, and she would forgive him, his mother always forgave him at once when he asked her; his beating heart grew tranquil again, and when his father turned the handle of the door, he looked up at him, and said with a smile—

"I'm so glad mother is better.....I never can sleep quite sound when she has those headaches."

His father stared at him blankly, tried to speak, but finding no words, shut himself and Miles into the room.

"I cannot break it to him," he said in a hoarse whisper to a gentleman with white hair, who was standing by the bedside.

Miles heard the whisper, gave an eager glance round the room, and immediately his nameless fears returned, stronger than before.