

FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

EPIPHANY.

By JULIA E. GOODWIN.

O wondrous Star whose glory streaming
O'er deserts wide,
Revealed to eager hearts the gleaming
Of light that dawned with Christmas tide,
Shine down upon us through the ages,
And guide our feet
That we may haste with ancient sages,
God's priceless gift of love to greet.
With them a toilsome journey sharing
We seek His throne,
Like them of old our treasures bearing
We lay them at His feet alone,
Shine on, through sin's dark night of sorrow,
And hope impart
Until the dawn of that glad morrow
When Christ shall reign in every heart!
(The Churchman.)

THE WORK OF THE GOLDEN STAR.

IN THE YOUNG CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS.

'Who-o-op !'

No, it was not an Indian yelling his war-cry; only poor Baby Martin, almost strangled by this cruel whooping-cough which clutched him and his four brothers and sisters by the throat, night and day. It was day now, and Baby's mother, who had scarcely slept through the night, was carrying Baby upstairs to visit Mrs. Fergus.

'I can't set the young 'un down a minute, Mrs. Fergus; so I thought I'd just step up here. Don't stop your work. However in the world do ye get that kettle to shine like that? That do beat all! It's like silver, it's that bright!

'A strong arm an' a will to keep at it,' answered Mrs. Fergus, smearing the kettle's brightness by another vigorous rub with the murky-looking mixture of vinegar and ashes. 'You can make 'most anything bright that way; just keep rubbin'.

Mrs. Fergus' little daughter Annie, busily drying dishes, stopped short and listened to her mother, with eager eyes and a wide open mouth. For she had something to brighten to day that was much larger than the kettle, and very much harder to make shine. A few minutes before she had said to herself,

'I'm going to make all this house shine to-day. Please, God, help me.'

Then, all at once, she had been frightened at the thought. She was such a little girl, and this house was so dingy, and had so many people in it! Not quite so dingy as usual, though, to day, in this room; for did there not hang over the mantel a bright golden star? Last night Annie had been to the Epiphany Festival of her Sunday school, which took place this year of the Christmas tree, and she was only one of several hundred little ones who had brought back to dreary, shabby homes a precious toy, a box of candy, and, best of all, Annie thought, a golden star, holding hidden away within it the story of that blessed bright star of the East which led the three travellers to the stable where lay the Baby Jesus.

Every time she looked at its brightness she thought of the idea that a stranger who had spoken to the children gave them.

'God wants you all to be little stars in your own homes,' he said. 'Wear happy faces, and make the house shine with brightness. We can't all have homes that are beautiful on the outside; but what good would it do us to have gold paint on the outside, if we had only cross faces and trouble indoors? Shine, little stars, asking God to help you.'

'I don't think I'm a very bright little star,' thought Annie; 'but it would be mean not to try to shine.'

So it happened that she listened with ears, eyes and mouth when her mother said, 'You can make 'most anything bright that way; just keep rubbin'.

She would just keep trying.

What first? Her own home first, to be sure! She had jerked her lazy bones out of bed the moment her eyes rested on the bright star on the dull wall. She had set the table, and then at breakfast told father and mother all about last night, and the story, too, of the star of long ago.

'You're a good story-teller, lass,' her father said, going off to work with a pleased face; 'ye'll have to tell that story to ither folk.'

So she would! The Martins might like to hear it, poor little ones made prisoners by that wretched whooping-cough which Annie strangled through a year ago. When Mrs. Martin bade her mother good-bye, saying she would try now to get some work done, as Baby seemed quieter, Annie asked permission to go with her for a little while.

'I'll take them some candy,' she thought, 'but not my star; they might handle it and the baby might want it.' But—

'Gold, and frankincense, and myrrh: ' those were the rich gifts the Wise Men had given to the Baby Jesus; and she was unwilling to show her golden star!

'Mamma, please take down my star!'

Of course the children handled it; but they handled it very carefully when Annie told them the story of the 'Star of Wonder.' Of course Baby wanted it, and poor Annie could hardly keep from crying when his little fingers grabbed it; but it wasn't hurt, and Baby was soon asleep.

'Ye're a blessed child, Annie Fergus,' said Mrs. Martin, as Annie hurried back to help her mother, leaving the four older Martins contentedly munching their candy.

It seemed to Annie to be almost a waste of time to do all the work she did, peeling potatoes, sweeping, dusting, ironing; she wasn't shining much then, she thought. But when her father came in for his dinner, and said he wished that all his work fellows had as bright and fresh a place to go home to as he had, she knew the work was just part of the rubbing that made things shine.

The dishes washed, Annie went visiting again; upstairs, this time, to the darkest, saddest little home on the three floors. It was dark indeed for Lizzie Griffin, whose brown eyes had lost their sight in a terrible illness; dark for her old grandfather, lying in his bed day in and day out, never to be well again; dark for the poor thin, hard-working widow, whose heart was sad for her child and for her father.

Annie found it much harder to bring brightness here than downstairs. She offered her candy first, but only Lizzie would take it. Then she showed the star to Mrs. Griffin, and forgetting that Lizzie's eyes could take in no pretty sight, said, 'Look, Lizzie! See my star!'

'How can I see it?' asked Lizzie, turning away with a frown.

'Oh! I didn't mean to, Lizzie! Take it in your hand and feel how smooth it is. Don't you remember how the stars shine in the sky? Shall I tell you about the star that the Wise Men saw?'

So Lizzie held the star and listened; and when Annie had finished, Mrs. Griffin wiped her eyes, and stooped down and kissed her.

Annie was a little timid as she took the star in to old Mr. Waters. She slipped it into his hand without saying anything, for he was very deaf, and so hard to talk to!

'Very pretty, very pretty! What's it for?' he asked.

'It's to make us remember. It has a story

in it,' shouted Annie, climbing up on the bed.

The old man seemed pleased, 'What's the story?' he asked.

Annie was just going to shake her head; how could she shout the whole long story out? But old Mr. Waters took her little soft hand in his trembling one, and Annie knew that, if she was to be a little star, now was the time to shine some brightness into this old man's heart.

'So God wants us all to go to Jesus, like the little star, and shine for Him,' she finished.

Old Mr. Waters shook his head.

'Guess some of us are too rough and old to shine,' he said.

'No, everybody can,' said Annie; 'my ea oher says so.'

'Some tin is too old and rusty to shine,' said Mr. Waters, with a little laugh; and then he sighed.

'Not if you keep rubbing it,' Annie answered, remembering her mother's kettle; 'rubbing is trying.'

'Think God could rub me up?' he asked, as if he were the child and Annie his teacher.

But Annie did not feel at all wise. She only answered.

'God can do anything, can't He, Mr. Waters? He can make us good any time.'

Ask Him, ask Him, little daughter! Now go and play. Thank you for the star. Hang it up on the wall where I can see it; it'll help to make me good, God willing.'

Hang her star on Mr. Waters' wall!

'Oh! began Annie, 'I can't—'

But she did not finish. She stood quite still for a minute; then, thrusting her golden treasure into Mrs. Griffin's hand, said, 'Hang it up for him!' and ran down and cried out her grief on her mother's lap.

But there came a day, not many weeks later, when her star came back to her. Old Mr. Waters had been set free from his pain, and the clergyman who had been in often of late to see him, came down to Annie's room with the gold star in his hand.

'Little one,' he said, 'you lent the star to God, and God has used it to lead home to Him one of His children who had strayed far away.'

Her star had led Mr. Waters home to God! Annie understood this, although she did not quite understand Mr. Bakers's next words; but these she will understand too some day:

'They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.'

MABLE H. DESPARD.

HEART WORSHIP.

In a certain congregation, may be seen regularly an aged man silently following the course of the service, kneeling in prayer, standing in praise, and sitting patiently through the sometimes lengthy sermon; yet all the while there is visible on his countenance that pathetic, passive calm, indicating a deafness that is all but total.

'Do you not find Church going very uninteresting, now?' asked a friend, recently.

'Yes, answered the old man, 'I cannot deny I do weary sometimes when the service is long; I go for three reasons: first, I can at least honor God with my presence in His House; second, I can worship Him in spirit, if in silence; third, every church-goer if regular and faithful may influence some one who is less so.'

What a lesson for those who offer God a grudging, reluctant, and irregular attendance at His House, and go home perhaps grumbling over a sermon less interesting than usual, or a service not altogether up to the mark.

Well, undoubtedly, 'the Lord knoweth them that are His,' and how justly therefore, will He discriminate between the true and the counterfeit worshippers, that assemble continually in His House of Prayer.