

# The Midwife.

## THE QUEEN'S GIFTS.

The Queen has sent Christmas donations of £10 each to the Clergy Homes of St. Barnabas, the Deptford Fund, the East End Mothers' Lying-in Home, the Governesses' Benevolent Institution, and the Girls' Friendly Society, and a gift of toys to the Princess Mary Village Homes at Addlestone, Surrey.

## INASMUCH.

When Phoebe Masters, feeble-minded, light of love, returned with the instinct of a homing bird to her own village that her baby might be born there, the wiseacres shook their heads. Nothing for her but the workhouse, they prophesied. But Widow Green thought otherwise. Jim Masters, Phoebe's father, and Nancy Green had once been sweethearts, and though they had had "words," on the subject of Jim's over-frequent visits to the "Green Dragon," and Nancy had finally told him to "go his ways," for she would never be the wife of a sot, she still, after twenty irreproachable years as wife and widow, had a soft corner in her heart for her first love, and was not going to have his child sent to the workhouse whatever her delinquencies. She took her in, mothered her, nursed her, and in due course the child was born, and then, just as the new life was launched into the world, that of pretty, foolish Phoebe flickered out.

"Now," said the neighbours, "Nancy will *have* to send the child to the workhouse"; but they were mistaken. Nancy clung tenaciously to the child, and while, to ordinary people, he was just a repulsive, yellow-skinned baby, with a mat of dark hair surmounting a wizened and wrinkled face, to Nancy he represented her world. She poured out on him a wealth of affection, and fiercely repelled anyone who dared to hint that he was not the most winsome of babies.

"It fairly beats me how Nance can care for him," said her next-door neighbour. "Fair like a little monkey he is, and never quiet, not for a minute, but just lies in 'is cot and wails, and when Nance picks him up to comfort him 'e shrinks like as if it hurt 'im to lie in 'er arms. A most onnatural child I calls him."

Christmas was drawing near when an epidemic of measles and whooping-cough swept over the village, decimating its child population, and amongst the stricken was Widow Green's adopted nursling.

There was little hope from the first; the child had no stamina, no vitality with which to withstand the onslaught of the invading germ. The neighbours talked of "a happy release," the doctor—who was also Medical Officer of Health—discoursed to his junior partner on the laws of heredity and tragic sequence; but Nancy was inconsolable, and on Christmas Eve awaited with

feelings akin to despair the advent of the undertaker who should take from her the tiny waxen form which lay so still in the cot, looking more child-like and attractive than at any time during its short life, the lines of pain relaxed, the wailing hushed.

For two nights Nancy had sat up with him, and by and bye fell into a deep exhausted sleep—so exhausted that she never heard the knock of the undertaker's man, which was answered by the next door neighbour.

"Better take 'im away without wakin' 'er," said the kindly woman.

The man looked dubious. "She'll take on ever so when she finds 'im gone," he said.

But so it was. "She can see 'im again round at my place if she wants to," he decided. Then the little body was placed in the small white coffin, and the man tramped away to deposit his light burden and to call at other bereaved homes.

The Christmas bells were ringing for the midnight service when Nancy awoke and gazed about her bewildered. The room seemed full of light, and a babe beautiful beyond compare lay in the cot of her lost darling. From the church near by floated out the refrain of the *Adestes Fidelis*.

"Oh come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord."

As Nancy knelt in adoring wonder before the crib of the Holy Child she felt strangely comforted, and the words fell on her ear:

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me." "Lo, I am with you always."

\* \* \*

"Pity 'er trouble 'as turned 'er 'ead. Seems 'appy like, and smiling to 'erself, and sayin' the kid is with 'er always. But yer know he's dead and buried, don't yer, Nancy?"

Nancy smiles.

M. B.

## CENTRAL MIDWIVES' BOARD FOR SCOTLAND.

### CERTIFIED MIDWIFE STRUCK OFF THE ROLL.

At a special Meeting of the Board for the Hearing of Penal Cases, Dr. James Haig Ferguson in the Chair, there was under consideration the case of Mrs. Margaret Simpson, Certified Midwife, No. 1294, 16, Webster Street, Bridgeton, Glasgow, who had been found guilty of a number of breaches of the Rules and whose case had been adjourned for judgment on further reports from the Local Supervising Authority as to the conduct of her practice. It was intimated that the Reports were unfavourable, and the Secretary was instructed to remove the name of Margaret Simpson from the Roll of Midwives and to cancel her certificate.

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