

DRESSING FOR EASTER--INSIDE

By L. D. Stearn.

Beth Dillon was singing softly as she bent over the billowing waves of ribbon and silk, and lace:

"Behold, the Lord is risen,
Send wide the glad refrain;
For He has burst asunder
The bonds of death and pain."

Clearly and sweetly her voice grew in volume until it floated out into the night, a silvery thread of melody:

"Throw wide the portals of your soul,
And let the Saviour in;
The Saviour, who has conquered
The grave and death, and sin."

Her mother came wearily up the stairs, and paused by the open doorway. Then she stepped inside. "Have you tried it on, dearie?" she inquired, glancing at the snowy puff on the bed. "Is it all right?"

"Yes'm—to the last dot." She laughed happily. "It's the dearest love of a dress I ever saw. I'll feel like a queen to-morrow. I had no idea you could coax it out of father. How'd you manage?" Then, not waiting for an answer, "I knew, soon's I saw it in Carlton's the other day, it would fit to a tee."

Lifting the billowy mass she shook it out. "Isn't it sweet?" she asked ecstatically.

Mrs. Dillon looked critically at the dainty frock. "It is pretty, that's a fact," she agreed. "I'm downright glad you have it. You'll be young only once, and Easter's the time for daintiness and purity, if ever any time is."

Beth returned to her former query. "How'd you manage?" she repeated. "Was father very obdurate?"

A second her mother hesitated. "To tell the truth," she confessed at length, "I only asked him for ten dollars. The rest was some I had."

"I see." The girlish voice was a trifle indifferent. After all, what did it matter how she got it so long as it was really hers? Then the telephone rang. "I'll go," she chimed, and danced down the stairs.

Over the wire came a neighbor's voice. "I wish you'd ask your mother, Beth, to tuck that recipe for sponge cake into her Bible to-morrow, and bring it along to church. I want to get it bright and early Monday morning."

"All right," responded Beth. "I'll tell her."

Hanging up the receiver, she ran up-stairs and, entering her mother's room, found her beginning to undress. She delivered her message.

Mrs. Dillon slipped into her bathrobe. "I'll give it to her over the 'phone," she said. "I'm not going to church to-morrow."

"Why, Mother Dillon?" Beth's eyes were wide; her face showed incredulous bewilderment.

"And to-morrow's going to be grand—the best music and the best decorations we've ever had!"

"I know," quietly. "Nevertheless, I am going to stay home and put in a day of rest."

The pretty brows of the girl standing by the door were drawn into a little frown. "Mamsie," she announced, pointing an accusing finger in her mother's direction, "you've always taught me it meant a lot to be loyal to one's church."

"Yes, daughter." Her mother's voice was patiently sweet; her eyes had a far away, wistful light that did not escape the sharp young eyes of her daughter. "So it does. But it is God, you know, the Church stands for; and there might, perhaps, be circumstances that would necessitate going to church in the 'holy place called life,' which one can always find in her own heart and home, and gently putting her on one side, Mrs. Dillon went down the stairs.

Beth returned to her room. "I wonder," she mused, "just what mother meant by all that?" Then, forgetting lesser things, she returned to the inspection of the new gown. A moment later she was hurrying across the street. "I'll just run in," she exclaimed, "and tell Gladys I have it."

Pushing back the door of the opposite house she stepped into the hall. "Gladys!" she yelled. "Gladys!"

"That you, Beth? Come on up."

A girl's head appeared over the upper stair rail, and Beth bounded up the stairs. Seizing her chum about the waist, she gave her a hug. "I've got the dearest gown!" she cried. Girl-fashion, she gave a little spin and dropped dizzily a laughing, rosy heap, in the centre of the room. "Oh, Gladys! It's a perfect dear! What'd you decide on?"

A slow, dull red crept into Gladys' cheeks. "I don't believe," she said slowly, "I'll go. Father says he can't afford an unnecessary dollar, times are so hard with him just now. I can't wear my old suit, when everyone else will be having something new and sweet, so I'm just going to stay home."

Dismay and quick sympathy touched Beth's face. "Oh, but," she wailed, "whatever'll we do? We need your voice, Gladys. You must come! I don't believe I'd have had mine excepting that I'm to sing that selection alone, you know. And anyhow, dear, dress or no dress, you've got to be loyal to your church, you know."

Gladys gave a short laugh; but there was no semblance to mirth in it. "It's easy," she announced, a thin edge of sarcasm biting along the edge

of her words, "to talk about being loyal to your church when it's Easter, and you have the prettiest frock in town, with everything to match."

There was a moment of uncomfortable silence. Then Beth arose. "Good-night," she said stiffly, and marched, with hurt dignity, down the stairs.

"Behold the Lord is risen!"—she hummed the line, and stopped. The music seemed to have left her soul. "I don't see what's got into mother," she complained petulantly. "Going to bed with the birds, and staying away from church on Easter, of all days; and when I'm to sing alone, into the bargain!" and turning in at the gate rather abruptly, without raising her eyes, she ran plump into her father's arms.

He laughed. "Quite an armful," said he, looking down into her face. Then: "Dreaming of the new dress, I suppose?"

She nodded. "You'll be proud of me, father, when you see I have on the prettiest frock in town."

"Maybe." His tone was brusque. "It takes quite a deal, though, my lass, to make a father really proud of his girl."

Something in his tone brought a quick lump into Beth's throat. "And you're not thinking you'll be proud of yours?" she faltered.

The eyes of father and daughter met. Hers, questioning—hurt; his, quiet, keen and grave. "Hardly," he replied. "I suppose, as your mother says, you're young, and it's Easter, and all the other girls are having something pretty nice. But your mother's been saving that money quite a spell for a new dress and hat. She was trying to patch her old one up this afternoon when the baby got hold of the ink bottle and emptied it into her lap. She's worn that dress for six years, so I guess it isn't a great loss. But it's the only thing she has, so I don't see but she'll have to stay home until I can squeeze out money for another. I'm thinking I'll stay with her." Opening the gate, he moved briskly down the street.

Draggingly Beth went up the walk to the house. At the steps she turned. It was chilly and, she pulled her coat, a little closer. "So far as comfort goes," she observed morosely, "one wouldn't mind her winter dress."

Once inside she went straight to her room and, lifting the dainty frock once more, shook it out, passing her hands caressingly over its soft folds. "It's mine," she said slowly; "mine!"

"Throw wide the portals of your soul,
And let the Saviour in—"

Mechanically the words flitted through her brain. "But," she said sharply, "I've got to go to church to-morrow, for I've got to sing. And it's for my church."

Very softly her mother's words appeared to float back to her: "It's God the church stands for, you know."

Crossing to the window, she stood looking into the peaceful April sky. Little billows of cloud were piled here and there. As she watched, the moon sailed slowly out of sight behind one, then, a moment later, emerged on the other side. And to the watching girl the word GOD seemed blazoned in gleaming letters over sky, and moon, and cloud.

Turning slowly, she crossed to her closet and, taking down the simple brown she had worn all winter, carried it to the dresser and turned on the light. With grave, undecided eyes she scanned it. Then it dropped to the floor, and a second later she was kneeling, head on holded arms, beside it. "God!" she whispered.

"Throw wide the portals of your soul,
And let the Saviour in—"

Clear and sweet the words echoed and re-echoed through the house as, with shining eyes, she folded the dainty gown and packed it in its box. As she tied it she heard her father's step in the hall below, and flying down, box in hand, ran, for the second time, plump into his arms.

"Father," cried she breathlessly, "somehow this dress doesn't seem to fit. That is, not on the inside. Won't you come with me and take it back?"

And father—how clear her voice, how glad, and sweet, and steady her eye—"I've been looking over my brown. It will do perfectly well. Do you suppose we could pick out something mother'd like? She's gone to bed."

"I know what she selected," came the quiet answer. But on her father's face shone a sudden light. "I was with her when she tried it on. You see, we were planning on a rather simple one for you. We'll get that, too, if you like, so you'll both be decked out new."

Beth shook her head. "I guess," she said brightly, "I'll wear the brown."

Crossing to the telephone, she gave a number, and a second later her voice went over the wire. "Whatever do you think?" cried she; "that beauty dress and I don't seem to fit. I'm going to wear my old brown, even if 'tis Easter, so we'll be a pair o' sixes."

What's that? . . . Yes, a touch of almost awe creeping into her voice, "we'll dress for Easter, inside, Gladys."

Rising, she joined her father at the

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door, and as they went down the walk she hummed softly once more—"Throw wide the portals of your soul," and her father's voice, rich and full, took up the tune—

"And let the Saviour in— The Saviour, who has conquered The grave, and death, and sin."

Just as of Old.

He stood on the beach at the break of day, And he beckoned to toiling men; Famed and spent, they heard Him say, In the old kind voice, in the kind old way.

(That voice to be heard again!) "Boys, have ye aught to eat?" 'Tis He! Cried the weary fishers of Galilee.

To-day and forever the One who cared! Still, as of old, the same; Questioning kindly how they fared (Though their souls to His loving gaze were bared), Calling them each by name.

Dead? Their Master? The Crucified? Nay! though a thousand deaths He died!

Roast fowl bones make excellent soup.

The Palm Tree's Song. With eager hands they broke my boughs, And o'er his pathway scattered them, Crying, "Hosanna! David's Son Rideth to thee, Jerusalem!"

Under the feet of his lowly ass, Gray with the dust of Palestine, Did I not serve the Master then, Even as olive and fruitful vine?

The grape's blood filled the holy cup; Wherewith his covenant was made; The pitying olives sheltered Him In the dark garden where He prayed.

My branches, bruised underfoot, Where eager hands had scattered them, Made green the stony way He fared In triumph to Jerusalem.

Must Have Help.

Sir William Goode, Secretary of the British Ministry of Food, says: "Few people have yet grasped the fundamental fact that Great Britain still relies on the United States and Canada for sixty-five per cent. of her essential foodstuffs. Unless we can get this food, or nearly all of it, we shall peter out."

AN EASTER SERMON

"He is not here, but is risen!"—St. Luke, xxiv., 6.

It's Easter Day! Nature lifts her head in the newness of life. The soft, clear notes of cathedral chimes mingle sweetly on the crisp morning air with the deep-toned bells of far-away spires. In crowded city, in secluded hamlet, sleep-surfeit eyes open upon a world that has been touched as if by some magic wand. The ceaseless patter of innumerable feet, expressive of buoyant hearts they bear, sounds in strange contrast with the slow, weary tread of bygone days. From our hearts, as if touched by some mystic charm, rises a matin song!

Easter Day is here! The fast is broken! The passion has ended in praise! The memory of Gethsemane and Calvary are forgotten in the vision of an open tomb. Dumfounded, yet gladly credulous, we listen to the story of the first Easter evangel:—"He is not here, but is risen!"

Easter Day is the day of the empty tomb; it proclaims the victory of right over wrong, of truth over falsehood, of justice over injustice.

Victory Over Wrong

If ever the principles for which man suffered were worthy of vindication, surely the principles for which Jesus suffered and died were worthy of that vindication. If Jesus Christ had gone down to permanent, ignominious defeat, then were there little hope for the noblest principles for which men's lives are spent. That Jesus rose from the tomb speaks in no uncertain terms of the victory of right over wrong, of justice over injustice. Easter Day brings timely reassurance to the champions of justice and right. However long the conflict, however discouraging the odds, the principles of right, of truth and of justice must ultimately rise glorious from the dust into which they have been trodden. No bastion walls, no armament of steel, no murderous curtain of fire, not even a rock

hewn tomb shall forever smother and mock the principles which on this day Heaven has honored!

Easter Day proclaims the assurance of the eternal reality of the spiritual. "If Christ be not risen from the dead," if death is the end of the road; if the self discipline, sacrifice and suffering that have entered as indispensable elements into the development of life have no other purpose than furnishing thought for beautiful epitaphs—But they have; they make character, and character is the dress of the soul, and the soul is the immortal life from God.

A Glorious Immortality

"Easter Day," some one said, "is something more than a mere festival of immortality. If it were not, if it contained nothing more than the promise of life's continuance after death, then there are thousands that are not interested in it."

Easter Day proclaims not only immortality, but a glorious immortality; not only a life of endless years, but endless years fraught with endless growth, endless good, endless joy.

Easter Day assures us of the final perfection of life through the risen Christ, "the first fruits of them that are asleep."

A little lad, tired and worn at the close of the day, after a long struggle with the solution of a problem, cried himself to sleep. While he slept the father with rapid strokes of the pen rewrote the problem, with its correct solution, on a clean tablet. Opening his eyes, a look of gladness brightened the little fellow's face as he saw the neatly worked out problem in the place of the dirty, tear stained paper over which he had fallen to sleep.

Easter Day contains the promise for us of the Master's perfect life, to which we shall awaken after we have closed our eyes to the human, imperfect, tear stained product of our own endeavors.—Rev. Stillman R. Leiss.

Easter-tide, 1918.

For pagan or Christian the great spring festival stands for confidence in life in spite of death. It brings anew the eternal message annually reiterated. It says that:—

—manhood is the one immortal thing Beneath Time's changeable sky— That length of days is knowing when to die.

Without confidence in that principle, how can people get along with war that gathers the young to its untimely reaping; with this war especially, which gathers all the ages with a pitiless voracity that shows, as yet, no sign of satiation? It must go hard indeed with anyone who does not feel that life is something to be spent; not hoarded, but given in purchase when the treasure that is worth the price of it comes to market.

In a day that cannot now be very far distant, this heroic period we live in will reach its further limit, and there will be peace again. But what kind of a world will follow, and who will make it, the living or the dead? Be sure the dead who have died for it will make it in great measure for a generation to come. The coming world will come pledged to them; pledged to save it, pledged to realize their costly hopes for it. It cannot be the world it was. They have paid to change it, and change it must. People who reckon that the future will be another instalment of the past reckon without the dead who have died to make it different.

Human life is receiving an enormous new consecration. Not in the time of anyone alive four years ago will this world be again what it was then. The living are trying, and with mighty efforts, to shape its course, but every day and week and month they deal more and more with a world held in mortmain, that proceeds not as they will, but as the dead decree.

The world that is coming will belong to those who paid the price of it. This is their Easter; theirs who

have emulated the sacrifice whereof at this time Christians celebrate the glory. Not them shall we see come back to earth, but we shall see a resurrected world, and it will be theirs.—E.S.M.

Easter Eggs.

The "new clothes for Easter" custom is based upon centuries-old superstition that if new clothes were not worn then, for that year good fortune would depart. "At Easter let your clothes be new, or else be sure you will die it." But that was not written in war-time.

Another Easter belief, of which the Food Controller might take note, is that if anyone would abstain from meat on Easter Sunday they would be free of fever for a year. Another belief was that by eating radishes as the first food on Easter Day the quartan ague would be kept away for a year.

The Easter holiday is ecclesiastical in origin and very ancient. Rejoicings and festivities were held in every parish. Even archbishops and bishops relaxed their dignity and played handball with the inferior clergy.

The moon settles the date of Easter, the rule being that it shall be the first Sunday after the full moon, which happens upon or next after March 21st. And if the full moon happens on a Sunday, Easter is to be the Sunday after.

Easter eggs are not Christian in origin, having been used religiously by pagans before Christianity. The symbolism of the Easter egg is that, as it holds the germ of a future life, it is an emblem of resurrection and immortality.

It is always Easter on God's side of the grave.

The Christian religion is pitched on an ascending scale. It begins with an emancipation, and it ends with an ascension. The path of the just shines more and more to the perfect day: the day that is refulgent with the seen presence of the Son of Righteousness.



"The day breaketh; the morning cometh; the shadows flee away."