

"According to Thomas"

How the Easter Joy came into one Doubting, Unbelieving Heart

WHERE'S Luella's cally?" inquired Mr. Dunmore, as he sat at the breakfast table on Easter morning and directed his glance toward the bay window. Luella's face flushed, and her mother answered quickly: "Mrs. Vance came along yesterday and saw it in the window. She stopped, and nothing would do but she must have that calla to put in their church to-day. She paid Luella two dollars for it."

"Whew! two dollars for a cally! Seems to me that's a pretty steep price; but Mrs. Vance's able if she want's to."

"Yes; she found out what Luella wanted the money for. Luella told her about the missionary thank-offering—the Easter collection, you know—and she gave it of her own accord. But it was a most beautiful plant."

"You're going to give all that money to the heathen?" inquired Mr. Dunmore, directing a glance of disapproval toward Luella.

Luella was a timid girl, and her voice shook a little as she replied: "Why, yes, I wanted to. It was my calla; and it's only once in a while that I have any money."

"You see, John," calmly said Mrs. Dunmore, "everybody that loves our Lord likes to make an Easter gift. In the city churches they buy heaps of flowers, I've heard, just to trim them up. Now if Luella was spending her two dollars that way it would be different; but for missions, why, I calculate it's just handing out the Bread of Life to starving people."

"Pshaw! you better burn it up and done with it; I don't believe in foreign missions, anyway. I don't believe half the money ever gets there, and if it did what good would it do?"

"John Henry, get the Bible. We must start for meeting early, it's such bad going." That was Mrs. Dunmore's only response to her husband's remarks.

John Henry, a boy of fourteen, who had been silent thus far, brought the Bible, and Luella read the story of the resurrection as told by John in his gospel.

Then Mrs. Dunmore and the children knelt, and she prayed.

Her husband sat upright beside the window, looking out across

the fields. He always sat there in the morning, but never seemed to listen to lesson or prayer. His wife had prayed "all around him," as she expressed it, for twenty years; but so far as results were concerned, he might as well have been the huge granite rock which was the picturesque "centrepiece" of his orchard.

After prayers Mrs. Dunmore and Luella did the morning chores, and John Henry harnessed the horse, drew the wagon out into the yard, and then came in to dress for church.

A gust of air came in with him, and as he closed the outer door the sitting-room door was drawn open a little.

Mr. Dunmore was still sitting beside the win-

dow, and he heard Luella saying in a grieved tone: "But if he don't believe, that's no reason why he should want to keep the Bible from other people, seems to me. I should think he'd be glad to give 'em a chance."

"Don't worry, Luella," said Mrs. Dunmore, as she brushed off the stove; "your father can't understand about missions till he believes. Give your money if you feel moved to, and he won't scold, I guess."

"Father's just like Thomas," struck in John Henry's voice.

"He's always saying: 'I don't believe, I don't believe.'"

"Yes, dear. Let's pray that he may have Thomas's experience. Now we must get ready. If you get down first, wrap some papers round the geraniums, Luella."

It was after ten o'clock when the wagon rolled out of the yard toward the village, two miles away. Mrs. Dunmore and Luella sat upon the back seat, and each held a geranium in full bloom, well wrapped in newspapers. Luella's was a beautiful "Martha Washington," but she sighed a little to think of her calla holding up its pure white lilies in Mrs. Vance's church. But the two-dollar bill was safely clasped inside her Bible, and she glowed with satisfaction to think that for once she would not be ashamed to have the other girls in her class know how much she gave.

The country road was still very rough, where heavy teams had left deep ruts in the mud, and the wise horse chose her way care-



"Consider the Lilies."