

'What was that little wretch doing there, anyhow?' he said to his chum, Dick Wilson, who had stood silently by during this little episode, and now walked on with him. Dick was Morrell's ardent admirer; he could see no fault in his friend.

'He's Matthew's nephew, I believe,' he said; 'came to live with him lately. Matthews is down with chills'n fever 'n' that little chap is doing his work at the church.'

'Humph!' growled Morrell. 'Pretty-looking sexton he is—for St. Paul's. But say, Dick, what did ail the professor to-night? He never dared come down on me like that before.'

'He was mighty peppery to-night—that's a fact,' said Dick. Then, with a side glance at his friend, he added hesitatingly, 'His son is back from Germany. They say he's no end of a singer.'

Morrell was silent for a moment. His heart beat quickly, and the blood rushed to his head. 'So that's what it means,' he said, presently. 'The professor wants to pick a quarrel with me, so's to have an excuse for turning me off 'n' putting his son in my place.'

'Looks kinder that way,' assented Dick; 'but you needn't ter bother. I don't believe he can sing any better'n you can.'

Morrell raised his head proudly. His belief in his own musical ability was unlimited. He made up his mind that at the next rehearsal he would astonish the professor a little.

Whether or no the professor was astonished, certainly he was well pleased with the next rehearsal. His face beamed with satisfaction as he listened to Morrell's fine rendering of the solo on Easter morning when the great church would be thronged with the strangers who would come to hear St. Paul's choir.

'Very well—very well, Mr. Morrell,' he said. 'If you sing as well as that next Sunday I shall have no fault to find. You have done well this evening,' and he dismissed them with a gracious smile.

Two persons were sitting near the door at the back of the church as the boys passed out. One was the little pale-faced cripple with his crutch at his side. He loved to sit in the semi-darkness and listen to the sweet music that made him happier than anything else in the world. The other was a tall, slender lad with very dark hair and eyes.

'The professor's son,' whispered Dick, in Morrell's ear.

Morrell scowled at both the occupants of the back pew as he passed. 'Choice company he keeps,' he said, half aloud, to Dick.

'What makes you hate that little kid so?' Dick asked, curiously, as they walked on together.

'Oh, he makes me sick. Cripples and hunchbacks ought to be shut up for life, like lunatics and murderers,' said Morrell, roughly. 'I'd as soon see a snake as a cripple any time.'

'Pretty hard on the cripples,' Dick remarked. 'I reckon they wouldn't be that way if they could help it.'

'Probably not,' said Morrell, carelessly; 'but come, let us talk of something pleasanter.'

The next rehearsal was the last before Easter. Morrell was there; but he looked pale and ill, and asked to be excused from singing. 'I've taken a heavy cold,' he said, uneasily, 'and I guess I'll have to save myself up for Sunday. I'll be right by that time, I'm sure.'

The professor readily excused him, but shook his head as he looked after him. 'I doubt if he's all right by Sunday,' he said to himself; 'he looks to me as if he were in for a fit of sickness.'

The professor had taken a fancy to Matthews' little nephew, and often sent him on errands, for which he paid him well. He sent him the day after the rehearsal to inquire how Morrell was. The servant who answered the bell took the boy upstairs to see Mrs. Morrell. He could hear her talking to her son in the next room.

'But, Dwight,' she was saying, 'what is the use? You might just as well send the professor word that you can't sing next Sunday. You know that the doctor will not hear of your going out so soon.'

And then Morrell's voice, so thick and hoarse that the boy in this next room would not have recognized it, answered, fretfully:

'I must be well. I must sing Easter. If I don't I'll lose my place. They say the professor's son has a splendid voice, and if he

sings Easter in my place—he'll have it for good—that's all. Oh, if I only knew somebody who would sing for me just this once, and not try to get my place,' he groaned.

A little pale face—a slight, twisted body appeared in the doorway. Morrell's face was covered with his hands. He looked up as a clear voice spoke beside his bed.

'Mr. Morrell, if the professor will let me, I think I can sing the solo for you, Easter.'

'You,' said Morrell; 'what do you mean?'

'Of course, I can't sing it half as well as you can,' said the little fellow, modestly; 'but you know I've been there at all the choir practice, and the part you sing is the most beautiful of all, I couldn't help learning it, and I've sung it pretty often at home. I'll sing it for you, now, 'n' you can see if I'll do—if the professor will let me,' he added shyly.

'Sing! sing!' said Morrell, with feverish eagerness. And standing there in his shabby clothes, leaning on his crutch, the child sang in a voice as sweet and thrilling as any meadow lark's—the beautiful Easter music. He looked anxiously at the sick boy as he finished.

'Will it do?' he said; 'the gown would cover this, you know,' touching his crutch. 'I'd be so glad to do it for you, if I can do it well enough, 'n' you wouldn't be 'fraid I'd try to get your place, you know.'

Morrell had covered his face again now, and tears were running down his flushed cheeks.

'Do,' he said, when he could speak; 'you sing it better than I ever did. I'm sure the professor will let you take my place, and, and—' He held out his hand to the little lad. 'I've acted like a brute to you, but honestly, I didn't mean to kick your crutch that night in the vestibule.'

'Oh, that's all right,' said the little lad, cheerfully. 'Course I knew you didn't. A fellow that can sing as you can couldn't be so mean as that. I'll go and ask the professor,' and he hurried away as fast as he could limp.

Some who listened to the Easter music at St. Paul's were disappointed because Dwight Morrell did not sing; but the clear child-voice that sang the solo in his stead sent to many a heart a strangely sweet thrill that lived in the memory long after that Easter service was forgotten.

And the little lad from that time on lived no more with Matthews, the janitor, for the professor took him into his own home and trained his voice so well that in the years that followed many a one would have been willing to use a crutch as he did if also he might have had a voice that could so move human hearts.—'Independent.'

Why We Use Eggs at Easter.

(By Katherine E. Megee, in the 'Presbyterian Banner'.)

The use of eggs at Easter is universal and has been for many centuries. Indeed, the custom may be traced to the early Egyptians, Persians, Gauls and Greeks, among which nations the egg, from the earliest times of which we have any knowledge, was not only the symbol of life, but was regarded as the very origin of life itself, and its use at the spring-time festival of the Goddess Eastre—the personification of the morning or East, and also of the Spring—was undoubtedly as a symbol of the revivification or awakening of life in nature. When the festival came under the ban of the Church, the 'Feast of Eggs' became symbolical of the resurrection of our Lord and the life to come. Long ages gone all religious significance was abolished, yet the custom itself has survived, and generation following generation has continued to associate eggs with Easter; and poor, indeed, both in purse and sentiment, is that home in which they are not a conspicuous feature of the Easter Sunday menu.

The use of colored eggs is almost as ancient as that of the egg itself. Among the Persians it was the custom at their solar festival in March—in the month from which the beginning of the new year was reckoned—to mutually exchange eggs made beautiful with their wonderful dyes. This practice was continued by the early Christians who were wont to present each other colored eggs on Easter morning.

An ancient custom in some parts of France was for the people on Easter Sunday morning

to carry colored eggs to the church to be blessed by the priest, who then distributed them among the congregation, by whom they were prized as valuable souvenirs of the day and were preserved throughout the year as amulets or charms against disease, fire and other direful afflictions.

In other portions of the same country for weeks preceding the Easter season the largest eggs to be found were stored. On Easter morning they were taken to the church and arranged in pyramids, then with much ceremony presented to the king, after which they were blessed by the priest and distributed among the people. In other parishes the priests went from house to house and bestowed their blessings upon the inmates, in return receiving gifts of eggs, either plain or colored.

In the moorlands of Scotland, in an early day, the young people would go out at day-break on Easter morning to hunt wild fowls' eggs. In proportion to their find would be their luck during the ensuing year.

In Italy the heads of families carried colored eggs to the church to be blessed, and then home again, where they were arranged on flower-decked tables. Each guest during the Easter season was invited to eat one of the 'sacred eggs.' To refuse to do so was regarded not only an insult to the household but a sin against the Church.

Various 'egg games' were formerly indulged in on Easter morning and constituted a part of the religious ceremonies of the day. The most popular of these games was egg rolling or egg pitting, which originated in Mesopotamia, and consisted in striking the eggs in turn one against another until one was broken; then another was put up against the winning egg and so on until but one remained unbroken. Only red eggs, symbolical of the crucifixion, were used. In Scotland egg pitting is commonly indulged in at the present time; and in the United States, in one city—the national capital—this hoary custom is still honored on Easter Monday, when the White House grounds are thrown open to the children of the city, rich and poor, and who indulge to their heart's content in the ancient sport, though, of course, no religious significance is recognized and eggs of all colors are in evidence.

Only a Boy.

There is a striking story of a certain missionary who was sent for, on one occasion, to go to a little village in an out-of-the-way corner of India to baptize and receive into church fellowship sixty or seventy adult converts from Hinduism.

At the commencement of the proceedings he had noticed a boy about fifteen years of age sitting in a back corner, looking very anxiously and listening very wistfully. He now came forward.

'What, my boy. Do you want to join the church?'

'Yes, sir.'

'But you are very young, and if I were to receive you into fellowship with this church to-day, and then you were to slip aside, it would bring discredit upon this church and do great injury to the cause of Christ. I shall be coming this way again in about six months. Now you be very loyal to the Lord Jesus Christ during that time, and if, when I come again at the end of the half year, I find you still steadfast and true, I will baptize and receive you gladly.'

No sooner was this said than all the people rose to their feet, and some, speaking for the rest, said, 'Why, sir, it is he that has taught us all that we know about Jesus Christ.'

And so it turned out to be. This was the little minister of the little church, the honored instrument in the hand of God for saving all the rest for Jesus Christ.—'Forward.'

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