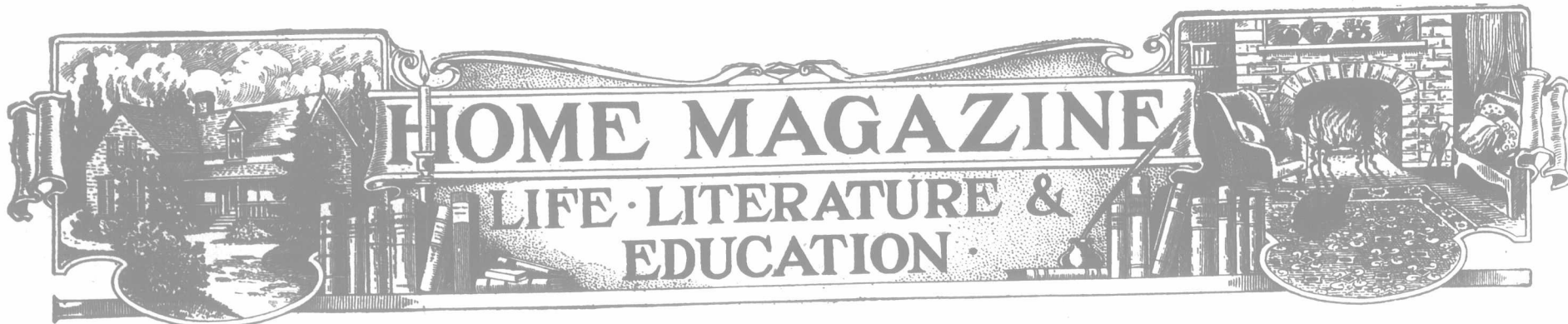




Easter.

A song of sunshine through the rain,
Of spring across the snow;
A balm to heal the hearts of pain;
A peace surpassing woe.
Lift up your heads, ye sorrowing ones,
And be ye glad of heart,
For Calvary Day and Easter Day
Were just one day apart.

—Susan Coolidge.

Little Trips Among Eminent Writers.

The Garden of Gethsemane.

(From "Out-of-doors in the Holy Land,"
by Dr. Henry Vandyke.)

Come down, now, from the mount of vision to the grove of olive-trees, the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus used to take refuge with his friends. It lies on the eastern slope of Olivet, not far above the Valley of Kidron, over against the city gate which was called the Beautiful, or the Golden, but which is now walled up.

The grove probably belonged to some friend of Jesus or of one of His disciples, who permitted them to make use of it for their quiet meetings. At that time, no doubt, the whole hillside was covered with olive-trees, but most of these have now disappeared. The eight aged trees that still cling to life in Gethsemane have been inclosed with a low wall and an iron railing, and the little garden that blooms around them is cared for by Franciscan monks from Italy.

The gentle, friendly Fra Giovanni, in bare sandalled feet, coarse brown robe, and broad-brimmed straw hat, is walking among the flowers. He opens the gate for us and courteously invites us in, telling us in broken French that we may pick what flowers we like. Presently I fall into discourse with him in broken Italian, telling him of my visit years ago to the cradle of his Order at Assisi, and to its most beautiful shrine at La Verna, high above the Val d' Arno. His old eyes soften into youthful brightness as he speaks of Italy. It was most beautiful, he said, "bellissima!" But he is happier here, caring for this garden, it is most holy, "santissima!"

The bronzed Mohammedan gardener, silent, patient, absorbed in his task, moves with his watering-pot among the beds, quietly refreshing the thirsty blossoms. There are wall-flowers, stocks, pansies, baby's breath, pinks, anemones of all colors, rosemary, rue, poppies—all sorts of sweet, old-fashioned flowers. Among them stand the scattered, venerable trees, with enormous trunks, wrinkled and contorted, eaten away by age, patched and built up with stones, protected and tended with pious care, as if they were very old people whose life must be tenderly nursed and sheltered. Their boles hardly seem to be of wood; so dark, so twisted, so furrowed are they, of an aspect so enduring that they appear to be cast in bronze or carved out of black granite. Above each of them spreads a crown of fresh foliage, delicate, abundant, shimmering softly in the sunlight and the breeze, with silken turnings of the under side of innumerable leaves. In the center of the garden is a kind of open flower-house, with a fountain of flowing water, erected in memory of a young American girl. At each corner a pair of slender cypresses lift their black-green spires against the blanced azure of the sky.

It is a place of refuge, of ineffable tranquility, of unforgetful tenderness. The inclosure does not offend. How else could this sacred shrine of the outdoors be preserved? And what more fitting guardian for it than the Order of that loving Saint Francis, who called the sun and the moon his brother and sister, and preached to a joyous congregation of birds as his "little brothers of the air"? The flowers do not offend. Their antique fragrance, gracious order, familiar looks, are a symbol of what faithful memory does with the sorrows and sufferings of those who have loved us best—she treasures and transmutes them into something beautiful, she grows her sweetest flowers in the ground that tears have made holy.

It is here, in this quaint and carefully-tended garden, this precious place which has been saved alike from the oblivious trampling of the crowd and from the needless imprisonment of four walls and a roof; it is here in the open air, in the calm glow of the afternoon, under the shadow of Mount Zion, that we find for the first time that which we have come so far to seek—the soul of the Holy Land, the inward sense of the real presence of Jesus.

It is as clear and vivid as any outward experience. Why should I not speak of it as simply and candidly? Nothing that we have yet seen in Palestine, no vision of widespread landscape, no sight of ancient ruin or famous building or treasured relic, comes as close to our hearts as this little garden sleeping in the sun. Nothing that we have read from our

of sacrifice, and the anguish of that wrestling wrung the drops of blood from Him like sweat. Here, for the only time, He found the cup of sorrow and shame too bitter, and prayed the Father to take it from His lips if it were possible—possible without breaking faith, without surrendering love. For that He would not do, though His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Here He learned the frailty of human friendship, the narrowness and dullness and coldness of the very hearts for whom He had done and suffered most, who could not even watch with Him one hour.

What infinite sense of the poverty and feebleness of mankind, the inveteracy of selfishness, the uncertainty of human impulses and aspirations and promises; what poignant questioning of the necessity, the utility of self-immolation, must have tortured the soul of Jesus in that hour! It was His black hour. None can imagine the depth of that darkness but those who have themselves passed through some of its outer shadows, in the times when love seems vain, and sacrifice futile, and friendship meaningless, and life a failure, and death intolerable.

Jesus met the spirit of despair in the Garden of Gethsemane; and after that meeting, the cross had no terrors for Him, because He had already endured them; the grave no fear, because He had already conquered it. How calm and gentle was the voice with which He awakened His disciples, how firm the step with which He went to meet Judas! The

in the vestibule, with its tall candelabra; then in the Angels' Chapel, with its fifteen swinging lamps, making darkness visible; then, stooping through a low doorway, we came into the tiny chamber, six feet square, which is said to contain the rock-hewn tomb in which the Saviour of the world was buried.

Mass is celebrated here daily by different Christian sects. Pilgrims, rich and poor, come hither from all parts of the habitable globe. They kneel beneath the three-and-forty pendant lamps of gold and silver. They kiss the worn slab of marble which covers the tombstone, some of them smiling with joy, some of them weeping bitterly, some of them with quiet, businesslike devotion, as if they were performing a duty. The priest of their faith blesses them, sprinkles the relics which they lay on the altar with holy water, and one by one the pilgrims retire backward through the portal.

I saw a Russian peasant, sad-eyed, wrinkled, bent with many sorrows, lay his cheek silently on the tombstone, with a look on his face as if he were a child leaning against his mother's breast. I saw a little bare-foot boy of Jerusalem, with big, serious eyes, come quickly in, and try to kiss the stone; but it was too high for him, so he kissed his hand and laid it upon the altar. I saw a young nun, hardly more than a girl, slender, pale, dark-eyed, with a noble Italian face, shaken with sobs, the tears running down her cheeks, as she bent to touch her lips to the resting-place of the Friend of Sinners.

This, then, is the way in which the craving for penitence, for reverence, for devotion, for some utterance of the nameless thirst and passion of the soul leads these pilgrims. This is the form in which the divine mystery of sacrificial sorrow and death appeals to them, speaks to their hearts and comforts them.

Could any Christian of whatever creed, could any son of woman with a heart to feel the trouble and longing of humanity, turn his back upon that altar? Must I not go away from that mysterious little room, as the others had gone, with my face toward the stone of remembrance, stooping through the lowly door?

Easter.

At all times in the earth's history, early spring has been a time of especial rejoicing. In Egypt, in the early days, Easter-time marked the vernal equinox and the rising of the Nile, a very important time in that land so dependent upon this great stream for its fertility. Hence great ceremonies marked the month, and the priests watched for the "turning of the sun northward" from what seemed to them its southward journey.

The Phœnicians, who worshipped the sun under the name Baal, held their sun festival at this season; and later the Israelites adopted the same time for their feast of the Passover; the early Christian church, in turn, associating it with the resurrection.

The name "Easter," however, is derived from Ostara, goddess of the Saxons, who was worshipped in England by the Druids, and throughout Northern Germany, as the personification of the east, of morning, and of spring.

At first, the date of the Christian Easter was identical with that of the Jewish Passover, but in A. D. 325, the Nicæan Council decided up-



One of the Old Olive Trees in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Bibles in the new light of this journey has been for us so suddenly illumined, so deeply and tenderly brought home to us, as the story of Gethsemane.

Here, indeed, in the moonlit shadow of these olives—if not of these very branches, yet of others sprung from the same immortal stems—was endured the deepest suffering ever known to man, the most profound sorrow of the greatest Soul that ever lived. It was here that the Son of God, the Son of the Father, the Son of the Virgin Mary, the Son of the world, the Son of the Church, the Son of the human race, was enacted the drama of His life. It was here that He was crucified in the purpose

bitterness of death was behind Him in the shadow of the olive trees. The peace of Heaven shone above Him in the silent stars.

The Place of the Holy Sepulchre.

(From "Out-of-doors in the Holy Land,"
by Henry Vandyke.)

The center of all this maze of creeds, ceremonies and devotions is the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre, a little edifice of precious marbles, carved and gilded, standing beneath the great dome of the church in the middle of a rotunda surrounded by marble pillars. We bought and lighted our waxes, and waited for a lull in the stream of pilgrims to enter the stone. First we stood