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THE SPIRIT OF THE EASTER LILIES.

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I SHOULD like to see them when they are all in place. It has been such a long time since I saw any." A little eager flush fell over the pretty, faded face. "The last time," went on the low monotone that comes by right of divine mercy to persons that are much alone, "was the

They are just like white hands beckoning to me. I somehow feel invited. In our little garden they were so tall and white. And—and—he loved them dearly. I am glad they've brought so many for him. Yes, I shall slip over and see them."

The supper bell rang and Miss Allen went down. It was a long way down, for Miss Allen's room was just under the sloping roof. She had begun on the second floor, ten years ago, but she had gone upward, flight after flight, till at length she had reached the cheapest chamber under the roof. For her voice had failed ten years ago and she had come off of the stage, bringing her stage name with her. Part of it had always been her own and she clung to the quaint sweetness of it, lovingly.

Her money had given out soon after the beginning, and she had found work. All day long, year after year, she sat in a dingy little window in a great clothing house and worked buttonholes in the finer garments. But there had been more than one siege of illness, and there had been trouble with her eyes. So the buttonholes were fewer and the weekly check smaller and smaller.

It was at the beginning of the year that the new preacher had come to the church across the street. When Miss Allen had lived on the second floor she used to go over to church on Sunday mornings. But as her eyes grew worse and her check grew smaller and her rooms were nearer and nearer to the clouds, she had remained at home trying to be content with such scraps of the music as drifted her way. So she was not interested in the coming of the new minister.

"I think you'll all like him", Mrs. Grimley had said, smiling at the two rows of boarders. "He's a fine man, fresh from the country. I should be awful glad if you'd go over and hear him," and she looked at them pleadingly over the top of her big pewter coffee urn.

Miss Allen had felt no interest in the new preacher, but one day when she was at home resting her eyes, there was a death in the house, and Mrs. Grimley, loud-voiced in her aggressive sympathy, had passed Miss Allen's door with the new preacher in her wake. Miss Allen had heard them coming, the loud grief of the landlady, and the flapping of her slippers on the bare floor, and, beyond

these a firm footfall with a ring in it that caused the little woman to slip the bandage from her eyes and look up. The two were quickly past, but Miss Allen had fallen back in her chair, white-faced and trembling, and presently she crept off to bed to cower under the bedclothing, weeping and afraid.

She had grown stronger after a time, and in the darkness prayed blindly for light and for knowledge of what she ought to do. What she



"Watching him with fascinated eyes as he walked to church."

Sunday I sang the new anthem in the little white church at home—that last Sunday!" she was silent now, and a far-away look had come into the soft brown eyes.

And then, somehow, the elegant church across from her window faded away and the street changed to a green meadow, and beyond that was a hill with a little white church perched upon its rugged shoulder, and a fringe of live oaks and magnolias all around it. A wee brown cottage nestled like a bird among the green. And there were tears, now, in Miss Barbara Allen's pretty brown eyes, and when she blinked them bravely away, the meadow and the hill and the church and cottage went with them, and the elegant church with the busy street before it was in its accustomed place.

Men were carrying in the pots of tall, snow-white Easter lilies, and groups of smiling busy women were making the church ready for Easter morning.

"I think I shall creep over before the church is closed and look at them and smell them and touch them



"A firm footfall caused the little woman to slip the bandage from her eyes and look up."



did do was to move up to the vacant chamber with the dormer window and sloping roof, and there were fewer days when she was away from the buttonholes at the dingy shop window.

On Sundays she had peeped out from a slit in the curtain that hung before the dormer window, and when she saw the tall figure of the minister at the corner of the street her face always whitened and she watched him with frightened, fascinated eyes as he walked down to the church. Sometimes she had seen him take off his hat, and she strained her eyes to catch the smile on his face and the glint of the sunlight on the threads of silver in his thick, dark hair.

The new minister had early won his way to Mrs. Grimley's heart, and his sayings and doings furnished her much food for conversation. She had been to his home, and one day she rounded it all up by declaring Mrs. Howell to be the sweetest and most.