

Easter Bells.

Sweet bells, that gall aloud: "Arise!
Follow your master to the skies;
He broke the bars of every prison -
Glad hearts arise!"

Clearly they ring: "He lives forever -
Lift up your eyes and have no fear:
He leads across the silent river
He brings heaven near."

They swing, they chime: "Oh, see! Remember!
Sorrow itself leads up to light,
As April follows on December,
Or morn on night."

Softly they say: "Ye heavy hearted,
Throw all your weary load away;
Ho bore your burdens, and departed
To light your day."

They swell, they peal: "Oh, blest is being!
He made the eye, he made the light;
Trust him who formed them both for seeing
To guide aright."

They rise and fall: "Oh, Love eternal,
In which all human life is bound,
Stream down from azure skies supernal
The wide earth round."

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

Rev. W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, APRIL 9, 1892.

FIRESIDE FORCES.

BY THE REV. A. C. GEORGE.

A CHILD comes into a household like a baby-bird into a downy nest, carefully prepared for its reception. Every thing in the constitution of the family is meant to promote the well being of the little one whose advent has such profound significance. "What manner of child shall this be?" may be appropriately asked with respect to every new-born mortal. Due consideration being had of divine forces, traditional influences, and prenatal conditions, both physical and moral, it may be said that character comes of character, and that character is, chiefly the product of culture. Every thing depends, God's graces being presumed, on the discipline and development of the child.

The parents may look with deepest seriousness into the face of the innocent babe and ask, "Is it possible that this little darling can ever become dissolute, degraded, drunken, going down to a drunkard's death and doom?" The answer is chiefly with the parents themselves. The child is entitled to an example of total abstinence from the intoxicating cup, and of pronounced temperance principles on the part of its parents. It is entitled to thorough instruction as to the wrong and ruin of indulgence in alcoholic drinks and the peril of tast-

ing or touching the accursed stimulant. It is entitled to a home so radiant with love, so enriched with books, so cheerful with company, so melodious with music, and so sacred with sanctuary services of prayer and praise, that no worldly, and especially no unhealthful and corrupting, associations will have any charms in comparison.

Homes built on the foundation of God's Book are the inspiration and strength of sobriety and godliness. If such homes were general in Christian communities the waste and woe of intemperance would be so diminished in a single generation that drunkenness and drunkard-making could be readily suppressed in all lands.

LILLIAN'S EASTER GIFT.

BY MYRTLE LINCOLN.

LILLIAN RAYNOR was a bright, beautiful girl of sixteen, the daughter of a poor mechanic who had hard work "to make ends meet," as he sometimes said. Her mother was a frail, weakly little woman, who depended mostly upon her sixteen-year-old daughter for help and counsel. The two children younger than Lillian were also her special charge. If Willie "got stuck" on an example in arithmetic, it was always "Lillie" who helped him out. If Mabel tore her dress or soiled her clothes, it was to "Lillie" she went for help. If father came home from work tired and cold, it was "Lillie" who placed a chair in the warmest corner of the room and his slippers warming by the fire; "Lillie" who met him at the door with a kiss and cheerful smile, till it seemed that she had earned the name "Sunbeam," which her father had playfully given her.

There was not another such a happy man in the world as Greely Raynor when he brought his young wife to the pleasant home he had prepared for her in the outskirts of a little town in Vermont. But the times had been hard, and with Mrs. Raynor's poor health, and the children's clothes (which would wear out in spite of Lillian's patient toil over them after the culprits had gone to bed) to buy, he was not able to supply all their wants, till one fatal day when Mrs. Raynor was just recovering from one of her bad fits of sickness, and he could not get her all the delicacies which she required, he mortgaged their home. And this was the pass things had come to when Lillian was sixteen.

Lillian was an ardent lover of music, and her highest ambition was to own a piano. Sometimes she would sit and dream of the lovely piano she had so often admired at "Blackett & Rosco's, dealers in pianos and organs."

One day she called upon the daughter of Mr. Blackett, and their conversation turned upon music, and Lillian told her of the piano she so much admired and how she wished she might call it her own.

"Why!" exclaimed that young lady, "it is only five hundred dollars."

"Only five hundred dollars?"

Lillian had not dreamed of its ever being that much. All her father was worth now would not amount to that. Five hundred dollars! That would pay the whole mortgage and leave their home free again. She must forget all about the piano; it could never be hers.

On her way home she stepped into the postoffice, not that she expected anything for herself (for she very seldom received a letter since she left school), but she went because others did. But what was her surprise to be handed an envelope with her name written upon it. She eagerly tore it open and unfolded the sheet, when there fell from it a slip of paper which fluttered down to her feet. She stooped and picked it up and looked at it with wide-open eyes. Surely there must be some mistake! A bank note worth five hundred dollars, payable to Lillian Raynor! She could hardly believe her eyes, but when she did understand that she was the owner of five hundred dollars, the glad thought flashed upon her, "I can have my piano after all." In her eagerness she had entirely forgotten the letter which came with her precious note. She unfolded it, with hands trembling with joy, and read it half aloud, "From

Uncle Howard, an Easter gift to his little Sunbeam." Lillian hastened home to tell the glad news to her parents. She opened the door so softly that the inmates did not hear her light step. Her mother lay on a low couch while her father knelt beside her with his face buried in his hands. Lillian stepped lightly across the room and laid her hand on her father's shoulder. He started and raised his head, but his face was so wan and haggard he hardly seemed like the same father she had parted with in the morning.

"Why papa, what is the matter?" she exclaimed.

Her mother took her hand and drew her gently down to her side. "Lillie, dear, we have tried to keep it from you as long as possible, but now you must know; we can keep it from you no longer. Monday we must leave our home. We cannot pay the mortgage, and it will have to go."

Lillian in her excitement had forgotten all about the letter, but now she remembered and her face brightened, and turning to her father said, "Papa, I think I have heard you say the mortgage was five hundred dollars."

"Yes, daughter, and although it seems a small sum, yet it is as far from me as five thousand."

"Papa," and Lillian's voice fairly rang with gladness, "papa, I'll pay the mortgage!"

"You!" exclaimed both parents.

"Of course," answered Lillian, smiling through her tears. "You didn't know I was a fairy and had subjects who obey my commands, did you?" And then she had to tell them of her letter and its precious contents.

"And to think I should have mistrusted God for a moment," whispered the happy wife, "And I thought to-morrow would be our last Easter we should spend in our home," replied the husband as he looked around upon his happy family.

The next evening as they all sat around the fireside of their pleasant home, which they could now call "all their very own's," as Mabel said, the frail little mother began singing, softly, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," and the father joined in with his deep bass voice, and Lillian and Willie with their clear ringing voices, while even Mabel's baby voice lisped out the sweet strain. When it was finished Mr. Raynor said reverently, "Let us give thanks unto God for all his blessings toward us." And as they knelt there in the quiet of the evening, it seemed that the same angel was saying again, as of old, "Christ is risen."

FIRST EASTER.

THE first Easter Sunday was almost nineteen hundred years ago. You have heard the story of it ever so many times, but it never grows old:

The Jews killed Jesus, by nailing him upon a wooden cross. About sunset on a Friday he died. The next day, Saturday, was the Sabbath of that country, so his friends took down his body and hastily buried it that same evening. They did not put it in a coffin and cover it with earth, but wound it in a fine linen sheet and laid it in a new tomb, hollowed out of the solid rock. After they had rolled a heavy stone against the door the mourners went away, and Christ's enemies sealed the tomb-door to keep anybody from breaking in, and set a guard of soldiers about the place.

All day Saturday the spot was quiet. But toward sunrise of Sunday, the third day after the crucifixion, two women came to the tomb bringing sweet-spices to anoint the body. They loved Jesus dearly, and were sorrowful to think of his awful death. As they drew near the place they wondered how they should open the heavy door. But they found the door wide open, and a young man dressed in white—a bright angel from heaven—sat there and told a wonderful tale:

"Fear not," he said, "you are looking for Jesus; he is not here; he has risen, as he said. Go quickly and tell his friends."

Then the two women—each was named Mary—ran to tell their friends and Christ's friends that he had come to life, and that they should see for themselves. Excited and frightened as they were, the two Marys told this story.