

EASTER MORNING.

The world itself keeps Easter day,
And Easter larks are singing,
And Easter flowers are blooming gay,
And Easter buds are springing,
The Lord of all things lives anew
And all his works are rising too.

There stood three Marys by the tomb,
On Easter morning early,
Whom day had scarcely chased the gloom
And dew was white and pearly,
With loving, but with erring mind,
They came the Prince of Life to find.

But earlier still the angel sped,
His words sweet comfort giving;
"And why," he said, "among the dead,
Thus seek ye for the living?
The risen Jesus lives again,
To save the souls of sinful men."

The world itself keeps Easter day,
And Easter larks are singing
And Easter flowers are blooming gay,
And Easter buds are springing;
The Lord is risen, as all things tell,
Good Christians, see ye rise as well.

CHOOSING TIME.

(Concluded.)

Mrs. Scammon started in the morning. She took her luncheon with her, and was to return in the late afternoon. Meantime Marion, while doing her daily tasks, was trying to think—no, I believe she was trying not to think—what life would seem when this bright presence, from the far off outside world of grace and culture and taste, would have banished.

The November winds would wail, the long, lonesome winter would close in, round the lonesome house at the foot of the hill, and she and her mother would be alone there again—the same, yet never quite the same, as before the stranger guest had come and gone.

In the afternoon, when her work was done, she took her station at a window which commanded a full view of Sunshine Summit, armed with Mrs. Scammon's field-glass, which she was permitted to use. After a while her keen, searching eyes saw the graceful figure making its way downward, and watching it from step to step. Suddenly she cried,

"Mother, she has fallen! Come!"

Fear lent strength to Mrs. Grey; and the two sped on to the place where Mrs. Scammon had come to grief. She had had a lovely day, she said, had slipped in coming down, and sprained her ankle, but if Marion would be staff for her on that side, she should get home easily.

"It was so like you to see me," she said, smiling into Marion's face—"you, with those eyes that see everything."

Then came some weeks of confinement in those pleasant rooms—a confinement which Marion shared, whenever she had freedom from household tasks. But when October came Mrs. Scammon's ankle was strong again, and the day was set for her departure.

Marion was brightening the fire with pine cones, and drawing the crimson curtains before the windows to shut out the importunate wind, when Mrs. Scammon said: "Marion, sit down please. I have something to say to you."

Marion took a stool at Mrs. Scammon's feet.

"I have become strongly attached to you, Marion," the lady went on. "I had begun to think of asking you to come to me, before the day of my accident. In fact, I went to the Summit to think it all out, quite as much as to see the view. I have seen still more of you during these past weeks; and now I have no doubt." She paused a moment, and then went on: "I am quite alone in the world. If you will come and share my life, I will give you every advantage. You have what people call genius; but genius is nothing without study, and the opportunity to study. If you come to me, we will pass this winter in Rome. You shall see visions and dream dreams." I can give you all your mind craves—

"And I can give you nothing," Marion answered, quietly.

"Yes, you can give me what you have given me already—love, and the elements of youth in my life; the pleasure of companionship; the interest of watching your career; and—I want you."

"My mother!" The girl seemed hardly

aware that she spoke, for the words were hardly more than a whisper.

"Yes, I know," Mrs. Scammon said, gently. "She will miss you; but you would have to leave her if you married. She will be your mother always, and you will come back to see her often. Do not answer me to-night. Think of it all. Think what you owe to art—for I truly believe you were meant to be an artist—what you owe to yourself, and whether even your mother would not rather you should have wings to fly with than nestle forever under her eaves."

Marion took the white hand and held it a moment silently to her lips.

She went down stairs, and found her mother sitting before the fire in the tidy kitchen. Marion looked at the poor little woman in her black gown, with her sad, shy eyes, and her folded, work-hardened hands, and, moved by a sudden impulse, went and kissed her. Then she said good-night, and went again upstairs, to her own chamber under the eaves.

Scarcely was she settled there when Mrs. Scammon went down to the kitchen in her turn, and unfolded to the mother all her plans for Marion. She dwelt on the shining gifts which were sure to make for the girl a high and honorable place in the world, if only they could be cultivated—on her own affection for her, and her power to supply all her wants. Finally, she said:

"If Marion married, Mrs. Grey, she would leave you, and only come to visit you, as she will come, if she goes with me. It is but anticipating things a little, for the girl's own good."

"Thank you; thank you kindly," Mrs. Grey answered; but a dazed look was in her eyes, and her voice trembled. Mrs. Scammon saw it was kindest to go away and leave her to work out the problem alone, with her strong heart and her feeble mind.

For Marion, indeed, "choosing time" had come. It comes for all of us, at some time in our lives. Sooner or later we stand at some place where the road divides, and all heaven watches to see which path we take.

Hour after hour the girl lay and thought. Not every one knows how strong a true artistic instinct is—how desperately the painter loves his picture, the sculptor his statue, the poet his poem. Marion knew. Mrs. Scammon had spoken of Rome; and Marion had read of those old, gray ruins over which the blue Roman sky arches: of the stately halls in the Vatican, and museums and palaces, where immortal pictures hang, and where statues gleam in their white beauty.

It was in her power to see it all—now—this very winter; and if not now, then never! Her heart beat so that it seemed to her she could hear nothing but the noise it made. Rome—ruins—pictures—statues—she fairly gasped for breath. Then suddenly she cried out, a strong cry—"O Father, Father in heaven!"—just that and no more. She hardly knew whether she was crying to the father she had known on earth, or to that Father of All, eternal in the heavens. She was only aware of a great need for help and guidance.

The winds that had been going mad about the house were hushed, and the October moon, whose face the clouds had been hiding, looked down into her window, out of a clear sky—and now her own soul was clear, too, and filled with light; and she knew, beyond a doubt, which path to take. She turned on her side and slept.

In the early morning Jane Grey stole upstairs, and stood in her daughter's room.

"I have been thinking all night, dear," she said, "and I have come to tell you to go. I see that it is best for you, and I shall be proud of you, and that will comfort me."

Marion sprang from her bed, with her bright, morning smile, and kissed her mother.

"It was not 'choosing time' for you, mother dear. It was for me: and I will tell you, by-and-by, how I have chosen. You must not mind if I tell Mrs. Scammon first."

Poor Mrs. Grey went away with just a touch of heartache. It never occurred to her that Marion could have made any choice but one; and she was too unselfish to reprove—but oh, if the child's face had not been quite so bright!

"You are sure you will never regret your choice?" Mrs. Scammon said to her two hours later.

"No, I shall not regret it—for [I know it is right. Don't think I did not care. I longed so to go with you! But, don't you see, I couldn't leave mother? With his last breath father told me to take care of her. You do not need me, and the world will do very well without me to paint its pictures. But mother has only me. If father were here still, I could have gone; but I cannot go and leave her all alone."

In three days more Mrs. Scammon was far away. She had left, as a parting gift to Marion, many books and photographs, and she sent others when she reached Boston. Then they heard of her as gone to Europe, accompanied by her young cousin; and after that there was utter silence from the world without, and Marion and her mother settled back into the old life. Only it was not quite the old life, for a door had been opened out of it into the great world, and closed again.

Marion watched her mother, as the winter went on, with a more and more anxious tenderness; for it seemed to her that the pale little woman grew constantly paler and frailer. Not a day passed in which she did not say to herself, "Thank God that I am here to watch over her and care for her, instead of far away!"

At last the winds of March stormed through the valleys and shook the old house at the foot of Sunshine Summit. One morning the mother woke with a look upon her face as if she had dreamed a wonderful dream. Her first movement awakened Marion, who slept beside her. She leaned over her mother to hear what she was saying.

It was only a line from one of the books of poems Mrs. Scammon had left behind her:

"All in the wild March morning
I heard them call my soul—"

and then a smile of recollection broke over her poor, pale face as she met Marion's eyes, and she said: "Good child, dear child! You have taken the best care of me, but you must not mind if I am glad to go to father."

Almost with the words upon her lips she was gone. Her hold upon life had been so frail that to loosen it cost little struggle. Marion dared not grieve, even in her loneliness, for the smile on her dead face was of such joy and peace. She knelt beside the bed and cried:

"O Father in Heaven, I thank thee that I chose aright, that I was here and not elsewhere."—*Louise Chandler Moulton, in Youth's Companion.*

THE CRUCIFIXION.

City of God! Jerusalem,
Why rushes out thy living stream?
The turban'd priest, the holy seer,
The Roman in his pride, are there!
And thousands, tens of thousands, still
Cluster round Calvary's wild hill.

Still onward rolls the living tide,
There rush the bridegroom and the bride:
Prince, beggar, soldier, Pharisee,
The old, the young, the bond, the free;
The nation's furious multitude,
All maddening with the cry of blood.

'Tis glorious morn—from height to height
Shoot the keen arrows of the light;
And glorious in their central shower
Palace of holiness and power,
The temple on Moriah's brow
Looks a new risen sun below.

But woe to hill, and woe to vale!
Against them shall come forth a wall;
And woe to bridegroom and to bride!
For death shall on the whirlwind ride;
And woe to thee, resplendent shrine,
The sword is out for thee and thine.

Hide, hide thee in the heavens, thou sun,
Before the deed of blood is done!
Upon that temple's haughty steep
Jerusalem's last angels weep;
They see destruction's funeral pall,
Black'ning o'er Zion's sacred wall.

Like tempests gathering on the shore,
They hear the coming armies' roar;
They see in Zion's halls of state
The sign that maketh desolate—
The idol standard—Pagan spear,
The tomb, the flame, the massacre.

They see the vengeance fall; the chain,
The long, long ago of guilt and pain;
The exile's thousand desperate years:
The more than groans, the more than tears,
Jerusalem a vanished name,
Her tribes earth's warning, scoff and shame.

Still pours along the multitude,
Still rends the heavens the shout of blood:
But in the murderer's furious van
Who totters on? A weary man;
A cross upon his shoulders bound—
His brow, his frame, one gushing wound.

And now he treads on Calvary.
What slave upon that hill must die?
What hand, what heart, in guilt imbrued,
Must be the mountain vulture's food?
There stand two victims gaunt and bare,
Two culprit emblems of despair.

Yet who the third? The yell of shame
Is frenzied at the sufferer's name;
Hands clenched, teeth gnashing, vestures torn,
The curse, the taunt, the laugh of scorn,
All that the dying hour can sting,
Are round thee now, thou thorn-crowned King.

Yet, cursed and tortured, taunted, spurned,
No wrath is for the wrath returned;
No vengeance flashes from the eye;
The sufferer calmly waits to die;
The sceptre-rod, the thorny crown,
Make on that pallid brow no frown.

At last the word of death is given,
The form is bound, the nails are driven;
Now triumph, Scribe and Pharisee!
Now, Roman, bend the mocking knee!
The cross is reared. The deed is done;
There stands Messiah's earthly throne!

This was the earth's consummate hour;
For this had blazed the prophet's power;
For this had swept the conqueror's sword,
Had ravaged, raised, cast down, restored;
Persepolis, Rome, Babylon,
For this ye sank, for this ye shone.

Yet things to which earth's brightest beam
Were darkness—earth itself a dream;
Foreheads on which shall crowns be laid
Sublime, when sun and star shall fade;
Worlds upon worlds, eternal things,
Hung on thy anguish—King of Kings!

Still from his lips no curse has come;
His lofty eye has looked no doom;
No earthquake burst, no angel brand,
Scatters the black blaspheming band;
What say those lips, by anguish riven?
"God, be my murders forgiven!"

He dies! in whose high victory
The slayer, death himself, shall die.
He dies! by whose all-conquering tread
Shall yet be crushed the serpent's head;
From his proud throne to darkness hurled,
The God and tempter of this world.

He dies! Creation's awful Lord.
Jehovah, Christ, Eternal Word!
To come in thunder from the skies;
To bid the buried world arise;
The Earth his footstool; Heaven his throne:
Redeemer! may thy will be done.

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