

A SONG OF EASTER.

BY CELIA THAXTER.

Sing, children sing!
 And the lily censers swing;
 Sing that life and joy are waking and that
 Death no more is king,
 Sing the happy, happy tumult of the
 slowly brightening spring;
 Sing, little children, sing!

Sing, sing, in happy chorus, with joyful
 voices tell
 That death is life, and God is good, and all
 things shall be well;
 That bitter days shall cease
 In warmth and light and peace—
 That winter yields to spring,—
 Sing, little children, sing!

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Sunbeam.

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EASTER.

In old German mythology Ostera, whose name came from the Saxon word, "oster"—to rise, was the goddess of the rising sun, or returning light of spring. The Anglo-Saxon name for this same goddess was Eostur or Eastre. In the Eostur month, our April, bonfires were kindled on the nearest mountains, and offerings of the first flowers of the season were made to the goddess of the spring. To the early Christians, who from their close connection with the Jewish church naturally continued to observe Jewish festivals, the Passover feast celebrated at the Easter season became the festival consecrated to the remembrance of our risen Lord.

It would be impossible in limited space to give any idea of the various customs

which have been handed down from time immemorial as belonging to Easter. Most of them are of pagan origin, but have been retained in the Christian observance of the day with a change of signification to accord with the idea of the resurrection. Thus the ancient meaning of many Easter customs is lost. The habit of distributing eggs at Easter, one of the most characteristic, widely known, and oldest, belongs to this class. The coming forth of the chicken from the egg to life is regarded as typical of the resurrection. In Germany it is believed by the little children that the coloured eggs of Easter are laid by hares. For weeks before Easter it is customary for the country children to prepare nests in the hedges for the hares, and it is only the good children who are rewarded by finding their nests full of bright-coloured eggs.

The flowers used to decorate the churches at Easter are emblems of the resurrection, having risen in the spring from the earth in which they have been buried.

It is an old superstition that on Easter some new article of dress must be worn. If not, one must expect nothing but bad luck for the ensuing year.

"At Easter let your clothes be new,
 Or else be sure you will it rue,"

is the advice given in "Poor Robin's Almanac."

Of late years the sending of cards and tiny books appropriately decorated as Easter gifts is more popular with us than any other way of remembering our friends at Eastertide.—*Selected.*

A BEAUTIFUL SURPRISE.

Here's a little box on the library table for you, Edward," said Mother Waddell; "it came in the mail."

Edward opened the little box with eager fingers, stripped off the tissue paper and the soft cotton batting, and found—a dirty thing that looked like a spoiled onion!

"It is just a mean trick!" said the little boy, angrily. "Somebody was trying to fool me." He went to the window, and, raising the sash, threw the dirty lump as far as he could. There was a large flower-bed under the window, and presently a gardener came along with a spade and a rake. He did not notice this dingy thing which Edward had thrown out, but turned the earth up and patted it down; and behold! the round thing that came out of the box was hidden under the earth.

When midsummer came, Mother Waddell found a tall green stalk in her flower-bed that she did not know.

"Simmons," she said to the gardener, "did you plant this?"

"Sure, no, mum," answered Simmons, whose quick eye saw what was about to

happen to that stalk. "Where would I be having anything so fine as a gold-banded lily?"

And, sure enough, a few more weeks of sunshine and dew and breeze, and three glorious white lilies, striped with yellow gold, hung proudly on that green stalk. At first nobody could guess where this fine creature had come from; but suddenly Mother Waddell remembered what Edward had told her of the box that came to him in the mail, and how he had thrown the "horrid dirty onion" out of the window.

"Your ugly, soiled bulb that you called an onion, my little boy," said Mother Waddell, "was like these bodies that we hide in the earth when we die; and now every time you look at this exquisite lily I want you to remember that it is only a dim picture of the beauty and glory and sweetness that God is going to give us when we are raised by His great power and made like our Lord Jesus Christ."—*The Child's Hour.*

EASTER TIME.

BY LAURA E. RICHARDS.

The little flowers came through the ground,
 At Easter time, at Easter time;
 They raised their heads and looked around,
 At happy Easter time,
 And every pretty bud did say,
 "Good people, bless this holy day!
 For Christ is risen, the angels say,
 This happy Easter time."

The pure white lily raised its cup,
 At Easter time, at Easter time;
 The crocus to the sky looked up,
 At happy Easter time.
 "We hear the song of heaven!" they say;
 "Its glory shines on us to-day;
 Oh! may it shine on us alway
 At holy Easter time!"

'Twas long and long and long ago,
 That Easter time, that Easter time;
 But still the pure white lilies blow
 At happy Easter time.
 And still each little flower doth say,
 "Good Christians, bless this holy day!
 For Christ has risen, the angels say,
 At blessed Easter time!"

A man, looking up from sawing his wood, saw his little son turning two boys out of the yard. "What are you about, George?" asked the father. "I am turning two swearers out of the yard," said George. "I said that I wouldn't play with swearers, and I won't." That is the right time and place to say "I won't." We wish that every boy would take the stand: No play with swearers. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."