

The Watch at the Sepulchre.

From east to west I've marched beneath the eagles;
From Pontus unto Gaul,
Kept many a watch on which, by death surrounded,
I've seen each comrade fall.

Fear! I could laugh until these rocks re-echoed,
To think that I should fear—
Who have met death in every form unshrinking—
To watch this dead man here.

In Dacian forests, sitting by our watch-fire,
I've kept the wolves at bay;
On Rheneis Alps escaped the ice-hills hurling
Close where our legion lay.

On moonless nights, upon the sands of Libya,
I've sat with shield firm set
And heard the lion roar: in this fore-arm
The tiger's teeth have met.

I was star-gazing when he stole upon me,
Until I felt his breath,
And saw his jewel eyes gleam: then he seized me,
And instant met his death.

My weapon in his thick-veined neck I buried,
My feet his warm blood lysed;
And then I bound my wound, and till the morning
Lay couched upon his side.

Here, though the stars are veiled, the peaceful city
Lies at our feet asleep,
Round us the still more peaceful dead are lying
In slumber yet more deep.

A low wind moaning glides among the olives
Till every hill-side sighs;
But round us here the moanings seem to scower,
And gather where He lies.

And through the darkness faint pale gleams are flying,
That touch this hill alone;
Whence these unearthly lights? and whence the shadows
That move upon the stone?

If the Olympian Jove awoke in thunder,
His great eyes I could meet;
But his, if once again they looked upon me,
Would strike me to his feet.

He looked as if my brother hung there bleeding,
And put my soul to shame;
As if my mother with his eyes was pleading,
And pity overcame.

But could not save. He who in death was hanging
On the accursed tree,
Was he the Son of God? for so in dying
He seemed to die for me.

And all my pitiless deeds came up before me,
Gazed at me from his face;
What if he rose again and I should meet him?
How awful is this place!

An Easter Blessing.

BY MARGARET K. SAINGER.

RUTH MASON, pale and wan, was sitting—as for seven long weeks she had sat—at the little west window, from which she could see the churchyard and the white glimmer of the stones above her mother's grave. The railway accident in which she had been crippled, and her mother killed at her side, had occurred during Christmas week, and for many days after that a horror of great darkness, so to speak, had fallen upon Ruth's life. Shut in to herself—in pain, in rebellion, in great loneliness—there had been no light in heaven nor on earth for poor Ruth.

A little before February she had begun to rally, and the doctor was pleased to note that she grew stronger daily; but, while her body gained, her soul was as wretched as ever. Each morning, after she was dressed by the tender hands of Aunt Harriet, who was so like her mother that Ruth could not look into the sweet face without a quiver, she would walk to the window, seat herself, and spend hour after hour gazing through distance at

the grave over which the daffodils would soon be shining in golden splendour. The old-fashioned hamlet was the suburb of a city, and the churchyard had once been in the country, but the town had overtaken it.

"Ruth is in a morbid state, mentally," the good doctor said. "Cannot you, Mrs. Hartwell, think of anything that will take her out of herself? Get her to do something for somebody else. This brooding is unnatural in a girl of eighteen."

"I feel that, doctor," said Aunt Harriet; "but I don't see my way clear to helping Ruth just now except by letting her alone. Time and prayer work wonders, you know."

"I did not think that Ruth Mason would be so selfish in her grief," pursued Dr. Loomis, a little irritably. "Don't you see, Mrs. Hartwell, that if she cannot be roused she will become a cripple for life, and, perhaps, get to be a monomaniac as well? I am at my wit's end, I confess. But there is no need, if Ruth's will can be brought into action, that she shall remain lame always. She is young, and there is no injury that is necessarily beyond cure."

"Be patient, doctor," said gentle Aunt Harriet; "I have great faith in time and prayer—or, rather, in prayer and time—for I won't put the first last, even in my thoughts."

Aunt Harriet had learned where to cast her burdens, and she hoped till her prayer was answered.

Day by day the spring drew nearer—pussy-willows and snow-drops, green grass and babbling-brooks, announcing her coming. One morning, as Ruth sat in her usual arm-chair, she surprised Aunt Harriet by calling, in her old, animated manner:—

"Auntie, dear!—Something is happening—come and see!"

Mrs. Hartwell's hand on the sewing-machine paused, and the white seam was arrested midway. Dropping her work, she crossed the room to find out what had so startled Ruth. The little incident was delightful to the good auntie.

To understand Ruth's surprise at the sight—not unusual to most of us—of a large furniture-van driving to a city door, loaded with chairs, sofas, bedding, and the miscellaneous articles of a house-keeping outfit.

"Now, aunty," she said, "I mean to look out for the people themselves. I hope they will be as nice as their things are. It's very queer, isn't it? that the Thorpe's, of all people, should rent their house. I never heard of such a thing!"

Mrs. Hartwell explained, after a few moments, that much had taken place during Ruth's illness, of which she had not been informed. Mr. and Mrs. Cyrus Thorpe—who owned the house next door—had gone to Europe. Their house had been for some time in the hands of a real estate agent, and now it had probably been rented. Just as she finished this explanation, a carriage drove up, and from it descended a little old gentleman, with a long white beard, and a gold-headed cane; a young lady, wrapped from head to foot in a gray cloth circular; and a beautiful little girl of seven, holding a wise-looking pug-dog very tightly in her chubby arms.

"Why, aunty," exclaimed Ruth, "this is like a story-book! Who do you think may these people be?"

"The lady," replied Mrs. Hartwell, after a few minutes' survey, during which the group on the side-walk had gone into the house and closed the door; "the lady, Ruth, is the new soprano at St. Stephen's Church. Her name, I believe, is Elsie Danforth. The old gentleman is her father, and the child her little sister."

"Aunty?"

"Well, dear?"

"Hasn't Elsie Danforth any mother?"

"No, Ruth. Her mother has long been an invalid, and the earthquake in Charleston hastened her death. I was told that she died of the shock."

Ruth was silent, but her tear-filled eyes wandered over to the spot where her own darling mother was lying. For the first time since her accident it came home to her consciousness that hers was not the only aching heart in the world. The girl next door, Elsie Danforth, had felt a similar sorrow to hers—known a similar grief.

Meanwhile Elsie Danforth was seldom seen by Ruth, but often heard. For always—five or six times a day—she practiced vocal exercises; and, by and by, in the twilight, Ruth found herself listening—almost spell-bound—to the glorious strains of the Easter music, which floated from the Danforth's parour, penetrating easily the thin partition-walls separating the houses.

In the days preceding Ruth's accident and the loss of her mother, she had herself been a singer—trained by one of the best masters in the city, and taking great pleasure in her gift. But the song had gone out of her life, as she thought, forever; and it had seemed to her that she could not lift up her voice again as she had done in the days of gladness which had passed. Listening now to Elsie, as day after day one and another glad anthem or silvery carol filled the air, the desire to sing came back. Several times Aunt Hattie heard Ruth hum a few bars after Elsie, and was thankful for their tuneful neighbour.

Ruth began to go here and there about the house—on her crutch, of course; and the girls who were her friends resumed, by degrees, their old habit of running in now and then, telling what the King's Daughters' were doing, what the Young People's Society had planned, and how the Easter services were to be carried forward at St. Stephen's. The house took on its olden look of life in a chastened form.

"Everybody is so pleased with the new soprano," said one of the visitors. "Such a glorious voice; and such a sweet, refined girl, but so shy and distant, we don't feel acquainted with her in the least. That black maid of hers—'Mammy,' she calls her—always comes to rehearsal with Miss Danforth, sits in a pew like a sphinx asleep till it's over, and then the two go home together. Her mother is dead, you know—"

Nellie Lothrop paused and blushed hotly. She had not meant to say this, and she felt now as though she had laid her hand roughly on a raw wound. Ruth relieved her embarrassment by gently smiling.

"Yes, Nellie," she said, "I know, and that makes me feel as if Miss Danforth and I may yet be friends. But aunty called, and she was not received very cordially, though the family were perfectly polite, and so we are not yet acquainted. But I enjoy hearing that girl sing. Sometimes I feel as if I could hear the angels singing when she lifts up such a strain as that. Listen!"

The girls hushed their chatter. Clear and sweet—every syllable liquid, and perfectly articulated—they heard:—

"Christ hath risen! Rise, my soul!
Look beyond the bounds of time!
Out of prison, fair and whole,
Thou shalt reach the happy clime
Where no sorrow dims the eyes;
Where no tears shall ever fall;
Where no morrow's dull surprise
Over love shall cast a pall.
Christ has risen! Therefore rise,
Soul, and enter Paradise!"