

EASTER DAWN.

The song of a bird that flies
Through the mist of the early dawn,
Comes back to me from cloud-filled skies
Flushed with the rose of morn;
The song is one that thrills
My heart with its tender lay,
For it speaks of a morning that brightens the hills
Of a Country far away;
A land that is dear to God
As He looks on His world below,
For the sake of the holy feet that trod
Its ways in the long ago.
The bird's song clear and free
Comes back on the morn's sweet breath,
And the name, the dear name it seems telling to
me,
Is Jesus of Nazareth.

A voice from the lilies white,
A wake in the vale below,
Comes up to me through the pale dawnlight,
From their swaying bells of snow:
It speaks to hearts that heed,
And its message is sweet to me,
For it breathes thro' their fragrance a virtue in-
deed
Of purest humility;
A virtue dear to God
As He looks on His own below,
And blesses with sunshine and rain, the sod
Where the lilies and violets grow;
The voice so clear and free,
Floats up on the morn's sweet breath,
Our Master was clothed with humility,
Dear Jesus of Nazareth.

A voice of the new born day,
Comes down like a blessing divine,
And seems to keep warning 'Watch and Pray,'
While time and strength are thine;
Ye know not the day nor hour
When the King will leave His throne,
To come to His glory, might, and power
Down to His struggling own;
Oh! people dear to God,
As He looks on His world below,
Be ready to welcome the One who trod
Your ways in the long ago;
Clear voice of the new-born day
Speaks soft on the morn's sweet breath,
And seems to keep whispering 'Watch and Pray'
For Jesus of Nazareth.

A hymn to the Easter dawn
Angels are chanting low,
Their voices come down on the wings of the morn
Through the sunrise golden glow;
Oh! beautiful hymn of hope
That driveth all shadows away,
That lightens the darkness where sad souls grope,
'Our Lord is risen to-day'
Oh! bright land dear to God
As He blesses His own below,
Rejoice for the coming of One who trod
Your ways in the long ago,
Pure hymn of the angels fair
Come down on the morn's sweet breath,
Oh! gladden our hearts that oft sinned with care,
Dear Jesus of Nazareth!
—C. M. Ambermann, in *The Silver Cross*.

A STORY THREE MONTHS LONG.

BY LOUIS WALLOON.

No wonder Rosabel and all the rest of the children loved Miss Bonn. She could tell a wonderful story,—a long one, too! And she had many odd ways of telling stories, and of doing things.

'I think I should like to tell Rosabel a story three or four months long,' said Miss Bonn to herself one day, in the beginning of the winter. 'She wanted me to tell her a story last Easter, but I put it off until it was too late; and now I think I shall begin in time. I shall begin my Easter story at Christmas; and, what is more, I'll make her work the most of the story out for herself.' She paused a moment, and added, 'It will be God's story, too,—a story of life.'

She turned, walked across the room, and opened a closet door; a number of flower-pots were standing on an upper shelf inside.

'Yes,' she said, 'my story shall be told to her eyes, and not so much to her ears. I'll make her get a part of her story out of a dark closet.' She walked to the window, and, looking out, said, 'I'll make her get some of it out of the ground.' Then she gazed up to the clouds where the sun was just coming through, and said again, 'I'll make her get it out of the clouds and out of the sun.'

Next, Miss Bonn sat down at a writing-desk, and went very earnestly to work writing a letter. She hurried to the closet, took something out, wrapped it in brown paper, and, after tying a string around it.

slipped the letter under the string, to hold it fast. Ten minutes later, Miss Bonn left the package with the maid at Rosabel's front door, and hurried back home.

The next day was Christmas. Rosabel capered and shouted as she entered the library, where the Christmas tree stood. Then she began tearing the wrapper off one present after another. There were presents from mamma and papa, from grandpa and grandma, and two Aunt Marys, and Aunt Sally, and many other relatives and friends.

After a while, Rosabel picked up a hard, heavy, round package with a note under the string. When the wrapper came off, there was a china vase or flower-pot, beautifully painted with pretty designs, and filled with moist, black-looking earth.

Rosabel didn't know exactly what that kind of present meant. If there had been a pretty flower growing in it, she could have understood it, but a pot full of earth!

She put it down, and, seeing the folded white paper lying on the floor, exclaimed, 'O mamma! here is the letter; what does it say?'

Mamma took the letter, and read it aloud:—

MY DEAR ROSABEL:

I heard, not very long ago, that you loved flowers. Now, here in this pot are not flowers, but away down in the brown earth is a blue hyacinth bulb. Now, dear, I ask you to have faith, and put this pot in a dark, cold closet or cellar, keep it quite damp with water until the last of February, and then I hope you will see a little white point. Then put the pot in the sun with plenty of water, and I hope in a short time you will see the lovely flowers.

With love and best wishes, I am sincerely your friend,
SARAH W. BONN.

The next time that Rosabel saw Miss Bonn she thanked her for the present, and said she was keeping it in a cool, dark closet, and watering it a little occasionally.

'It's going to be a good Easter story,' said Miss Bonn; 'isn't it?'

Rosabel showed two rows of white teeth as she threw back her head and, laughing, said, 'I don't see any Easter story about it,—I don't see any story at all.'

'You mean you don't hear any story,' said Miss Bonn; 'but you must look for a story, a story of life,—look for it with your eyes.'

'Look for what?'

'Look for the coming of those blue hyacinth flowers. But you will have to help the baby bulb to tell its story by keeping a loving watch over it. Then its story will be your story, and, as I gave it to you, it will be my story too; and as God gives it life and makes it grow, it will be God's story,—that's best of all.'

Rosabel looked a little puzzled, and said, 'But I don't see how that will be an Easter story.'

'I am not going to tell you that,' said Miss Bonn, 'at least not just now, for I don't want to finish my story for some weeks yet. My letter and the hyacinth bulb in the pot were the beginning. But you mustn't get impatient.'

So day after day Rosabel peeped into the dark closet, and poured a little water on the earth.

'Dear me!' she said one day. 'How dreary and cold and dark it must be down there in the earth! I should think the plant would hurry up.'

Sure enough, after weeks of waiting and watching and tending, the little white point appeared.

Then Rosabel brought the flower-pot to the window, and put it in the sun, and watered it. The little point grew taller and stronger into a healthy plant,—just as the Bible tells us the baby Jesus 'grew and waxed strong in spirit.'

It was late in March when the blue flowers appeared, so that by Easter, which came early in April, the plant was in the height of bloom.

'How about that story, Miss Bonn?' asked Rosabel, as they walked home together on Easter morning.

Rosabel looked inquiringly up into Miss Bonn's face, as though she ought to know what Miss Bonn would answer, and yet she wasn't sure.

'What was the first Easter story?' asked Miss Bonn.

'Why,' answered Rosabel, 'the Bible story of our Lord's arising from the dead.'

'Yes. Would you call that a story of death or of life?'

'A story of life, of course,' said Rosabel. 'And that little bulb which grew to a

beautiful stalk crowned with blue flowers,—what is that a story of?' inquired Miss Bonn.

'A story of life, too, I suppose; my plant didn't die, though,' said Rosabel, suspecting that Miss Bonn was going to tell her that the life of her hyacinth was like the life of our Lord.

'No, that's true,' answered Miss Bonn; 'your plant didn't die. All that I wanted you to think of was that the life which began at Christmas reached its perfectness at Easter, just as your plant-bulb reached the fullness of beauty in its crown of blue flowers. I want you to think of Christmas and Easter together, as a story of life. And who is the Lord of all life, Rosabel?'

'Christ?' said Rosabel, inquiringly.

'Yes; and I will tell you one way we know that he is the Lord of life, and that we live because he lives,—he says: "Whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die."—*Sunday-school Times*.

THE PRACTICAL SIDE OF EASTER.

BY THE REV. W. F. C. MONSELL.

Among the millions of people who observe Easter in some way there are many thousands who are influenced by the custom rather than by the theory. The young girl who gets her spring bonnet for Easter Sunday is a little concerned with the catechetical teaching about Easter as the milliner who sells the bonnet, or the sewing-girl who has put on the trimmings. Both purchaser and merchant are unconsciously governed by the tide of custom, and swim with the current.

But what made the Easter custom possible is put down as an abstruse theory or idea, and so set out of sight. Only the facts are regarded by many as worth considering. The predominant fact in Egypt in the early summer is the inundation of the Nile, and it quite absorbs the attention of any resident in the Nile valley who has a field to irrigate. These Nile farmers are, no doubt, in their own estimation, practical men, in confining their attention to the waters near them, and the opening of the mud-channels that will convey the water to the seed-beds; but to a foreigner the Nile farmer seems a very narrow being, singularly limited in his lack of interest in the causes which make the Nile overflow its banks. The native Egyptian may think the problem sufficiently solved by referring it to the 'tear of Isis'; but the foreign traveller sees at once the limitations of the practical view of the inundation, and the absurdity of remaining content with the superstition about Isis.

No doubt an intelligent Buddhist visiting America would also see how the practical view of Easter, which makes its trade profit out of the festival, without even inquiring seriously as to the causes lying back of the observance, is a very narrow and limited condition, with which no rational person can be content. The intelligent foreigner has been able to tell the native Egyptians many things about the geography of the Nile and its sources which are eminently practical, where the meteorological conditions are such as to threaten a failure of the farmer's water supply, as in the time of Joseph for seven seasons. No doubt the keen observer, Buddhist though he be, can tell us that, if we neglect to cultivate the sentiments which supply our Easter enthusiasms, the practical tradesman may some day find the spring inundation of cash unexpectedly diminishing, and the florist may have his lilies blooming in vain.

A curious and interesting feature of the Easter custom is the presentation of Easter gifts. Since the observance of St. Valentine's Day has fallen into comparative disuse, the loss has been compensated for by the large sales of Easter cards and by Easter gifts. Thus one festival has encroached upon another, and almost displaced it. Some may question the cause we allege here, but we believe that careful reflection will justify our view.

Here, then, we may find a justification for advising the most practical men not to overlook the power of ideas and the growth of sentiments which actually revolutionize trade. It is, then, a part of practical wisdom for our American merchants to remember the sentiments that lie back of the Easter enthusiasm, just as it is practical foreknowledge for a Nile farmer to inform himself of the meteorology of the district

where the Nile inundation receives the impulse for its work of enriching the Nile valley.

BECAUSE HE LIVES.

Looking into the place where Jesus lay, we also look beyond it. He is not there, but is risen. As the hours of his subjection to the power of death were numbered, so also the days of our slumbering are appointed; and because he lives we shall live also. He has brought life and immortality to light. His resurrection has begotten us again to a living hope. His trumpet shall sound and we shall be changed. He had power to lay down his life and power to take it again; much more has he power to deliver his people from captivity and bring them in triumph to their eternal home. That vacant tomb is significant of victory. The sorrow of that first day of the week is transmuted into eternal joy. Christ's death and burial were the necessary antecedents of his resurrection. He entered the grave that he might despoil it and become a conqueror. Oh, what consolations, what encouragements, what strong appeals are to be found in contemplating the place where the Lord lay? We sorrow not for Christian friends as those who have no hope, for blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. It is a faithful saying that if we be dead with Christ, we shall also live with him.—*Rev. Edward W. Gilman, D.D.*

HE IS NOT HERE.

To go to the burial ground in order to recall the departed and mourn them there, is as if a wife or mother should go down to the steamer's dock or the passenger station to recall husband or child who had left her by steamer or train for some distant country. The grave is not even the door through which our beloved have passed; it is the tenement which they have left. The released spirit has no longer need of this habitation of clay. Nature generously offers to take it and turn it into grass and flowers. And we lock it up in an iron casket in a vain attempt to prevent the kindly ministry of decay. The body is but a fetter that enchains the now free spirit. Why, when the spirit is released, should we sit mournfully by the side of the rapidly rusting fetters? The body is but a narrow cell in which the now free spirit was confined. Why, when the door is opened, and the spirit has gone forth, and nature begins to take the cell to pieces, should we sit mournfully at the empty cell, and long to stop the process of demolition? Fly forth, O soul, from thy cage! We rejoice in thy emancipation, and join in thy song.

O sorrowing hearts, sit not down in the gloom of Good Friday over against the sepulchre! The angel has already come; the stone is already rolled away. He is not here. He is risen. See the place where the body of thy loved one lay; then go quickly with this song on thy lips: He is risen from the dead; he goeth before me; and the Master came and called for him; and where the Master is, there my beloved is also.—*Christian Union*.

HE LIVETH.

I cannot leave our Easter morn as though it were the Saturday entombment day. I cannot stop here without saying in fewest, simplest words, 'But now is Christ risen and become the first fruits of them that slept. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' We believe in a Christ that has come out from the bosom of the Father that He might reveal Him to us, and is kin to us because we are kin to God our Father. We believe in a Christ who became incarnate only that He might conquer, and suffered Himself to be put to death only that He might prove himself victor over man's last enemy, death itself. We believe in a Christ who has flung open the doors of the great prison-house that He might show us that there is no prison-house, that the abode of the dead is no dark and gloomy dwelling-place, but the dwelling-place of light and life and joy and God Himself. We believe that out of every grave there blooms an Easter lily, and in every tomb there sits an angel. We believe in a risen Lord. Turn not your faces to the past that we may worship only at His grave, but above and within, that we may worship the Christ that lives. And because He lives, we shall live also.—*Lyman Abbott, D.D.*