

## An April Joke.

BY CAROLYN WELLS.

Oh, it was a merry, gladsome day,  
When the April Fool met the Queen of  
May;  
She had roguish eyes and golden hair,  
And they were a mischief-making pair  
They planned the funniest kind of joke,  
On the poor, long suffering mortal folk—  
And a few mysterious words he said,  
His fool's-cap close to her flower-crowned  
head.  
Then he laughed till he made his cap-  
bells ring.  
At the thought of the topsy turvy Spring  
" 'Tis a fair exchange," he said, with a  
wink—  
"It is!" she said And what do you  
think?  
The flowers that should bloom in the  
month of May,  
Every one of them came on an April  
day!  
And they looked for April showers in  
vain,  
But all through May it did nothing but  
rain!

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## Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, MARCH 25, 1899

## EASTER.

The festival of Easter, often called the  
Queen of Festivals, is held to commemo-  
rate the resurrection of Christ. Formerly  
the churches were ornamented with  
large wax candles, bonfires were lighted,  
and Christians saluted each other with  
a kiss and the words, "Christ is risen,"  
to which answer was made, "He is  
risen indeed." In the present time, as  
you well know, we celebrate the day by  
going to church, and by making pres-  
ents of painted eggs and Easter cards.

In olden times the festival of Easter  
was celebrated with many ceremonies,  
sports and observances. Chief among  
them then, as now, was the giving of  
coloured eggs, called "pasch" or  
"pace" eggs, which the boys and girls  
rolled down some grassy hill-side until  
they broke, the one whose eggs held  
out the longest being the victor, and  
claiming those of the other contestants.  
While they were doing this they would  
sing some ditty with the refrain, "Car-  
land parland, paste egg day." In a  
royal roll of the time of Edward I., pre-  
served in the Tower, appears an entry  
of eighteen pence (thirty-six cents) for  
four hundred eggs to be used for Easter  
gifts. The game of ball was a favour-  
ite sport on this day, in which the town  
authorities engaged with due dignity and  
parade. At Bury St. Edmunds, in Eng-  
land, within a few years, the game was  
kept up with great spirit by twelve old  
women.

In some parts of Ireland there is a  
legend that the sun dances in the sky  
on Easter Sunday morning. In the  
northern part of England the men par-  
ade the streets on Easter Sunday morn-  
ing, and claim the privilege of lifting  
every woman they meet three times  
from the ground, receiving in payment a  
kiss or a silver sixpence. The same  
is done by the women to the men on  
the next day. This custom had no doubt  
originally a religious significance, in-  
tended to typify the rising of our Lord  
on the third day.

## "ALL THERE."

BY MARY A. F. STANBURY.

Mr Harris is a wide-awake young busi-  
ness man, and the superintendent of a  
mission Sunday-school. Although he  
works hard at his desk during the week,  
his interest in the children is not laid on  
the shelf, with the song-book and lesson-  
leaf, until the next session of the school.  
He finds time to visit them in their  
homes, to learn how they live, and to  
know something of the influences which  
surround them. For some of the older  
boys he has found good employment,  
either in the city or country, and for this  
reason any boy who wants a "place"  
feels himself very fortunate if he can  
secure a recommendation from Mr.  
Harris.

One day, last year, the young merchant  
heard a gentle ring at his office bell, and  
in answer to his "Come in!" the door  
opened, and showed the sturdy little  
figure of Tommy Trothers.

"Well, Tommy," said Mr. Harris, peasi-  
antly, as he looked up from the column  
of figures in his ledger, "what can I do  
for you?"

"If you please, sir," answered Tommy,  
coming forward, with his ragged cap in  
his hand, "I've a chance to get in at  
Pratt & Crawford's, if so be as I can get  
a good word from you, sir."

Mr. Harris looked at the boy doubt-  
fully. His kind heart could scarcely  
endure the thought of refusing the re-  
quest. Yet what could he say? He  
knew Tommy only too well as one of the  
dullest pupils in his school. Although  
past thirteen, the boy knew hardly more  
than his letters, in spite of his teacher's  
persistent efforts to teach him to read.

"What would you expect to do at  
Pratt & Crawford's, Tommy?" he asked,  
trying to gain time for decision.

"I dunno 'xactly, sir. Anything they  
wanted of me."

Mr. Harris' brow cleared. Tommy's  
answer had given him a hint as to what  
his own should be. For whatever were  
the boy's deficiencies, he was at least  
faithful. He would certainly, as he had  
said, do "anything" which might be  
"wanted" of him, to the best of his  
small ability.

"Sit down, Tommy," said he; and, as  
the boy obeyed, he took up a sheet of  
paper, and dashed off a note to the  
junior member of the firm of Pratt &  
Crawford, who chanced to be one of his  
personal friends:

"My Dear Crawford:—The bearer of  
this, Tommy Trothers, is not the bright-  
est boy in the world, but you will find, if  
you try him, that whatever there is of  
him, is all there! Yours cordially,  
"Harris."

As Mr. Harris made the rounds of his  
school-room, on the next Sunday, he stop-  
ped in front of the bench where Tommy  
was sitting, and asked, kindly:

"Did you get the place, my boy?"

"Yes, sir, and it's thanks to you, sir.  
It must 'a' been a fine recommend that  
you gave me, sir, for Mr. Crawford jus'  
read it an' laughed, an' says he: 'Well  
try ye, Tommy! Go an' report yerself  
to Mr. Hagen, down in the basement.'"

"I am very glad, Tommy. And you  
will do your best?"

"I'm a-tryin', sir."

Soon afterwards Mr. Harris was sent  
abroad in the interest of his own firm.  
Returning, after an absence of two  
months, he met his friend Crawford upon  
a railroad train. When the first cordial  
greetings were over, Mr. Crawford ex-  
claimed:

"Well, Harris, you little suspected  
what a treasure you were sending us in  
Tommy Trothers! But for him, I should  
hardly be here to-day."

"What do you mean?"

"Have you not heard of the fire in  
our block?"

"No, indeed! Tell me about it."

"The flames started in some mysteri-  
ous way, in a small room on the first  
floor, and were already well under way  
before they were discovered. An alarm  
was turned in, and the fire department  
was soon on hand. The stairways were  
not yet cut off, and there were many  
people in the building,—the firemen fight-  
ing the blaze, and our own men attend-  
ing to the goods."

"It seems that Tommy was intent up-  
on carrying out a valuable case of cut-  
lery, when one of the other boys rushed  
past him, crying out, 'Run, Tommy!'  
The door of the powder-room's open."  
Now the powder-room, as he called it, is  
a sort of fire-proof vault in the base-  
ment, where all the explosives are stored,  
and the strictest orders had been given  
that the door should always be kept  
closed and locked, except when it was  
necessary to enter. Some careless em-  
ployee, however, had disobeyed the rule,  
and inside the wide-open door lay, dark  
and silent, the terrible death in ambush,  
ready at any instant to leap in flame and

thunder to the destruction of scores of  
lives.

"What did Tommy do? Let me tell  
you, Harris! He simply set down the  
case of cutlery at full speed through  
the long wareroom, and plunged down  
the basement stairs. A spot in the  
upper floor had already burned through,  
and brands were falling just in front of  
the vault. The boy never faltered, but,  
dashing through the fiery shower, he set  
the spring-lock of the heavy door, and  
shut it fast. Then he ran back up the  
stairway, and picked up the box he had  
set down.

"When I asked him how he dared  
close the door, he gave me an astonished  
look and answered: 'Everybody would  
'a' been blown up, sir!' 'Yes, I know.  
But you had time to run away,' I said.  
The boy's amazement changed to a look  
of reproach. 'An' leave the rest as  
didn't know, sir? Would you 'a' done  
that, sir, in my place?"

"But I doubt to this day, in spite of  
all the praises he has received, whether  
Tommy fancied himself to have done any-  
thing extraordinary."

It can readily be understood that, not-  
withstanding his slow wits and his lack  
of book-knowledge, Tommy is in high  
favour at Pratt & Crawford's. For the  
number of talents which one may pos-  
sess in this world is of very little con-  
sequence compared with the use which  
he makes of them, and small powers are  
sufficient for great work if only they are  
"all there" at the call of duty.—Young  
People's Weekly.

## EASTER EGGS.

BY REV. D. F. RANDOLPH.

Pace Saturday (Easter) is one of the  
gala days of the children throughout the  
length and breadth of Germany. The  
thrifty housewife gladdens the children's  
hearts by dyeing eggs for the afternoon  
games, sending her contributions to her  
little friends in canary yellow, and with  
possibly half a dozen eggs apiece the  
children in the country collect in some  
old grass field, where the moss forms  
a cushion for the eggs.

How happy and merry every one is! As  
the eggs are tossed, now high, now low,  
they challenge each other; and what  
shouts of glee when, in the general melee,  
a number of the eggs are broken!

The Scotch children are taught by their  
nurses to crush the egg-shell after eat-  
ing its contents, or to push the spoon  
through the bottom of it. This shell  
crushing is a relic of a great supersti-  
tious belief that witches lived in empty  
eggshells, and made boats of them, cast-  
ing spells upon the household.

In Germany and the north of England  
there is a common belief that hares lay  
eggs; and when a hare is seen bound-  
ing over the fields in March, which gave  
rise to our saying, "As mad as a March  
hare," the children clap their hands,  
crying, "Hare, hare, good little hare,  
lay plenty of eggs for Easter Day!"

Here the eggs are rolled and tossed  
on Saturday afternoon in the field  
adjoining the parish church, and eggs and  
oranges are freely exchanged between  
acquaintances and friends.

## "DID HE DIE FOR ME?"

A child sat on its mother's lap. Its  
soft blue eyes were looking earnestly in-  
to the face which was beaming with love  
and tenderness for the cherished darling.  
The maternal lips were busy with a story;  
the tones of the voice were low and seri-  
ous, for the tale was one of mingled joy  
and sadness. It was a tale concerning  
the death of the Saviour—how he so  
loved the people as to give his life a  
ransom for them to redeem them from a  
lost and ruined state. Sometimes her  
voice was scarcely heard above a whis-  
per, but the listening child caught every  
sound. The crimson deepened on its  
little cheek, as the story went on increas-  
ing in interest. Tears gathered in its  
earnest eyes, and a long sob broke the  
stillness as its mother concluded. A  
moment and its ruby lips parted, and in  
tones made tremulous by eagerness, the  
child inquired:

"Did he die for me, mamma?"

"Yes, my child; for you, for all."

"May I love him always, mamma, and  
dearly too?"

"Yes, my darling, it was to win your  
love that he left his bright and beautiful  
home."

"And he will love me, mamma; I know  
he will. He died for me. When may  
I see him in his other home?"

"When your spirit leaves this world,  
my darling, and goes to a better and  
happier one."

"My spirit?" murmured the child.

"Yes, your spirit; that part of you  
that thinks, and knows, and loves. If

you love him here, you will go to live  
with him in heaven."

"And I may love him here? How  
glad you have made me, dear mamma!"

And the mother bowed her head, and  
silently and earnestly prayed that her  
child might grow up to love and revere  
the Saviour.

## GOOD FRIDAY THOUGHTS.

We knew a lady in Toronto who every  
Good Friday used to retire to her room  
for devout contemplation on the love and  
tenderness of Christ; as she thought how  
he was wounded for our transgressions  
and bruised for our iniquities, her heart  
was melted to tears. The picture before  
us shows in part what those sufferings  
were. The cross was so heavy and cruel  
that beneath its weight our Saviour stag-  
gered and fell, and the cross was laid  
upon the broad, strong shoulders of  
Simon the Cyrenian, and he bore it  
through the crowded streets of Jerusalem.

Is it not a striking thought that it was  
a coloured man, a native of Ethiopia, on  
whom this honour was laid? Africa has  
been the burden-bearer of the nations  
ever since. Its sons have been slaves  
in many lands, but now Ethiopia is  
stretching out her hand unto God, and  
devoted missionaries are taking to them  
the knowledge of the cross which Simon  
bore, and of the Saviour whom he suc-  
ceeded.

In our picture we see the mocking,  
taunting priest pointing the slow, un-  
moving finger of scorn at our blessed  
Lord. We see the sneer of contempt,  
and almost hear the laugh of derision as  
they say, "He trusted in God that he  
would deliver him. Let him now deliv-  
er him if he will have him." In the  
foreground is the stern, unmoved and  
unrelenting Roman soldier, his naked  
sword in his hand, the symbol of au-  
thority and judgment. This reminds us,  
too, of the words, "Smite the shepherd,  
and the sheep shall be scattered." Our  
last Sunday's lesson was about the Good  
Shepherd. We are told that he giveth  
his life for the sheep. To-day we are  
reminded of the last act of that life of  
love and mercy.

## A Song for Easter.

BY MARGARET SANGSTER.

Every face is beaming,  
Every step is light,  
All the world is beautiful,  
From merry morn till night.  
The little streams are dancing  
And flashing, just for fun,  
And joyfully to meet the sea,  
The mighty rivers run.

And twice ten thousand flowers,  
And twice ten thousand more,  
Are waking in the lonesome woods,  
And by the cottage door.  
To count the Easter lilies  
Is more than you or I  
Can hope to do the long day through,  
How hard soe'er we try.

Uplift the song of Easter,  
Let none to-day be still,  
When this great world is like a cup  
The flowers overflow.

When blossoms deck the orchard,  
And bouquets are pink and white,  
And winds go by, like wings that fly,  
From merry morn till night.

## FIRE AND FROST.

Suppose some cold morning you should  
go into a neighbour's house and find him  
busy at work on his windows, scratching  
away, and should ask him what he was  
doing, and he should reply:

"Why, I am trying to remove the  
frost; but as fast as I get it off one  
square it comes on another."

Would you not say: "Why, man, let  
your windows alone and kindle a fire,  
and the frost will come off."  
And have you not seen people try to  
break off their bad habits one after an-  
other without avail? Well, they are like  
the man who tried to scratch the frost  
from his windows.

Let the fire of love to God, kindled at  
the altar of prayer, burn in your heart,  
and the bad habits will soon melt away.

## RESURRECTION.

Jesus once had a body like ours, which  
was often tired and weak. He died, and  
his body was laid in the grave. But he  
was stronger than death; and no grave  
could hold him. So, on the third day,  
when some loving women came to look  
for his body, they found an empty grave,  
and a shining angel, dressed in white,  
said: "He is not here; he is risen."  
Rising from the grave is called a resur-  
rection.