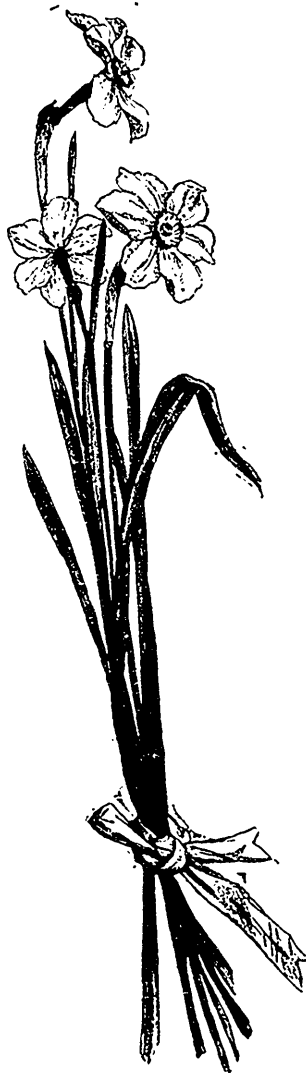


WHITE WINGS.—AN EASTER PARABLE.

BY THE REV. THERON BROWN.

Incident at the death-bed of the Dowager Empress Frederick.



O rare wings! O fair wings!
There was no answer why
Like a blossom dropped upon her breast
The milk-white butterfly,
But it thrilled the silent company
That saw the Empress die.

Slow, to her last weak breathings,
Its beckoning pinions stirred,
And the stately mourners reverent watched
As if some star-born bird
Had left the listening skies to meet
A whispered prayer just heard.

Then it rose in buoyant beauty,
And soft as floating down
It touched the queenly heart and kissed
The head that wore a crown,
And they saw a glory light her face
Through sorrow's frowning frown.

In the hush that round her pillow
Fell like the falling dew,
From the palace window joyously
The insect angel flew.
"The golden gate swings wide," they said;
"Our mother has passed through."

O blind hour, O kind hour
At the ebb of all the seas!
One Fall to the grey-leaved beggar bush
And the green-leaved royal trees,
And mean estate and grandeur mate
Where souls have no degrees.

But the springtime, the wing-time,
Feather and flower of May!
They burst from breaking tombs to speak
The same sweet truth alway:
Death cannot hold the chrysalis
Beyond its pluming-day.

Bright emblem of the morning
Out of the mortal night,
To high and humble ever yet
On fitting fans of light
The milk-white butterfly repeats
The lesson of its flight.

And only man outslumbers
The sleeping worm that rose,
The while for nobler life he waits,
That comes, but never goes,
And preens his wing for endless spring
Whose sunrise hour God knows.

—*Christian Endeavor World.*