

A Time of Gladness.

There never was such gladness
As comes with Easter-tide,
For everything seems living
That in the autumn died;
And we who feel within us
Death either far or near,
Can look along the future,
Forgetting pain and fear,
For Christ, with joy of Easter Day,
Bids care and sorrow pass away.

Oh, merry is the singing
Of bird-songs new and old,
And merry is the playing
Of lambs about the fold;
And merry is the rushing
Of free sun-lighted rills,
And merry are the breezes
That sweep across the hills;
And everything is full of mirth
When Easter blessing wakes the earth.

It is the resurrection
That follows after death,
Which moves the life below the sod,
And stirs Spring's balmy breath;
And flowers arise in thousands
To answer to its call,
For everything is happy
That God is over all;
And Easter is his gift to men,
To teach them they shall live again.

'Mid primroses and violets,
The while they take their way,
They read the Father's promise,
And trust the coming day;
For shadows are but passing,
And transient is the night,
And the day that lasts forever
Is gloriously bright;
And death no heart shall enter in
When that glad Easter shall begin.

Accept our thanks, Lord Jesus,
For all thy mighty love,
And for thy great salvation,
And for our home above;
Oh, teach us how to serve thee,
And evermore to be
As faithful, loving servants,
Devoted unto thee;
Living, because our Lord has died,
In the full joy of Easter-tide.

LISBETH'S EASTER JOY.

BY M. M.

"WHY dost thou weep, Lisbeth, my liebchen!"

The voice was very sweet and tender, and the hand that smoothed the child's fair hair was a loving, caressing hand, though hard with toil.

"Tell thy mother, who loves thee well, why thou dost weep so to break thy heart? Thou art my brave, strong child in these dark days. Why dost thou give way now?"

"Ah! liebes mutter, I know not. Only my heart pains me when I think of the little home in dear fatherland, and this great strange country, and the father so sick and the hard work thou hast to do, and I cannot help thee."

"But thou dost help me, Lisbeth. Dost thou not care for the sick father, and little Elsa, and make ready the food, and keep the house tidy, and, more than all, lighten thy mother's heart with thy love?"

"Ah, mutterchen, it is so little I can do! And—" here fresh sobs shook the slight form of the child—"and then I fear so!"

"Fear? Why dost thou fear, child?"

"O, it is all so strange here in this land! And I sometimes think the dear Christ who loves the poor, and helps the little children to be good, is dead! Only last night I was so angry with Fritz when he said Elsa and I were paupers! And even when we told him to look into the baskets, and see only the cloths with which the clean clothes had

been covered, and the loaf of bread which we had bought and paid for in a silver piece, he still laughed, and cried, 'Little paupers!' And I was so angry that when I was saying my prayers I found my heart saying, 'Bad, wicked Fritz!' and I was frightened."

"But thou wast sorry to be angry, little daughter?"

"O yes, so sorry!"

"Then tell the dear Christ so. He will hear thee."

"But is he living here? He does not come to make my father well, and he lets my poor little mother work so hard and so long for a little money which goes away so quick, and yet we cannot get the food and medicine the dear father needs to make him well."

And again the child sobbed aloud.

"Ah, mein Lisbeth, thou must believe that the good Christ lives, and that he loves us, too. Thou art tired now, and must rest. Some of the good hot soup will warm and strengthen thee. There! weep no more, or thy mother's heart will grow heavy."

It was strange, indeed, that the brave, bright Lisbeth should give way thus, and the mother's heart was troubled. What if she, too, should have the fever! But the little German mother was a true believer in the present care and love of the Lord, who loves his poor children dearly, and she put away the fear from her heart as she whispered a prayer over the sleeping child.

It was not yet a year since the little family, rich in nothing but simple love and goodness, had come from the fatherland to the "new country." A cousin, who had emigrated two years before, had urged them to come, and had promised to find work without delay on their arrival. But the cousin died before they reached America, and when they landed they found themselves friendless and almost penniless.

So they stayed in the great city, and the months since then had told one story over and over again—the old, sad story of poverty and struggle, which was now bringing forth its fruit in the long sickness of the father.

It was not much wonder that Lisbeth questioned if the Christ were not dead! Such sin and misery as she was forced to see every day as she went in and out the poor tenement house where they lived. Little children quarrelled, and fought, and swore dreadful oaths, and tormented one another in many ways. Gentle Lisbeth and Elsa shrank from them, and so brought jeers and persecution upon themselves.

"Thinks theirselves too good to play with such as we," said a big, bold girl, as the sisters passed silently, hand in hand, through the alley one day.

That was the signal for all sorts of sly pranks and tricks thereafter. And Lisbeth had some reason for thinking the Christ who helps "little children to be good" must be dead!

One Sunday morning, not long after Lisbeth had wept out her griefs in her mother's arms, the two little sisters stole out for a walk. The sick father was just beginning to sit up, still very weak and faint. The mother was sitting by his side with the old German Bible and hymn book in her lap. Church-going was a thing of the past in this family, but the Bible-reading and singing of hymns was kept up, and the Lord heard and remembered.

It was a sweet, soft morning in April. The world was full of glorious sunshine, and birds were singing out the gladness of their little hearts. The quaint-looking little girls, with their innocent, wondering blue eyes, wide open to all the beauty of the day, made a part of the fair picture of the

lovely Easter day. It was not yet time for the service in the church, but the chimes were beginning to send out their sweet music, and the little German girls, drawn toward the sweet sounds, soon found themselves in front of a beautiful church. The doors stood open, and people were beginning to turn in that way. Two or three children from the street went in, and did not come back.

"O, Lisbeth," said Elsa, "do you think we may go in and see what it is like?" Lisbeth hesitated a little, but finally yielded, and the little girls went softly in and sat down in a far corner. It was beautiful to see the fine ladies and gentlemen come in, and O, how the little German girls gazed at the children, the bright, beautiful, care-free children, who came with parents and friends and fairly lighted up the sombre old church with their bright presence! By and by the music began. O, such glorious music! The organ peals rose, and swelled, and died away, carrying upward the very hearts of the music-loving children. Such sweetness and warmth and melody Lisbeth had never known before, and not knowing what she did she rose to her feet. "Hark! do you hear that, Elsa?" she whispered.

"Christ the Lord is risen to-day!" Lisbeth burst into a passion of tears. "I knew he was dead! And he's been buried, and has just come to life to-day!"

The old sexton came to the weeping, radiant child, and said,

"Come, come, you had better run home. The seats are wanted, any way," and so Lisbeth and Elsa went forth, but the sudden joy born in Lisbeth's heart went with her.

A fair, young girl sitting near the children had seen the burst of tears, and the quick shining after the rain. She slipped out of her seat, and followed them to the door.

"Come back, little ones, and sit in my seat and hear the music."

The old sexton stared, but what Miss Lillie, the great doctor's daughter, chose to do could not be gainsaid, and so Lisbeth and Elsa heard all the lovely Easter music that morning, and went home with glad hearts.

But before they went the doctor's daughter asked them a few questions, and the very next day a carriage stopped at their door. How wonderful it all was! Just like a story, but sometimes stories come into real life, just as real life sometimes comes into stories.

Miss Lillie was a petted child, and the sudden fancy which she took to Lisbeth was "just one of her whims," her smiling mamma declared, but, whatever it was, it brought great help to the home of the immigrants, and ended by establishing them that very spring in a dear little cottage in the country, where, as the doctor's head man on his summer home farm, the father had steady work the year round.

Ended, did we say? O, no; a good thing never ends! Lisbeth will never forget how hope and help came to her and loved ones on Easter day, and Lillie—well her own heart grew larger and sweeter because she cared for others, and so the good did not come to an end for her, either.

"You are very old," said a merry little girl to a gray-haired man, "but I am very new." "Yes, you are very new. But do you know that a stain shows very easily on a new dress. So you must look out not to get the stains." Some of our little readers are quite new. But you are not so new that there are no stains on your soul. Bring these at once to Jesus, and have them washed away.