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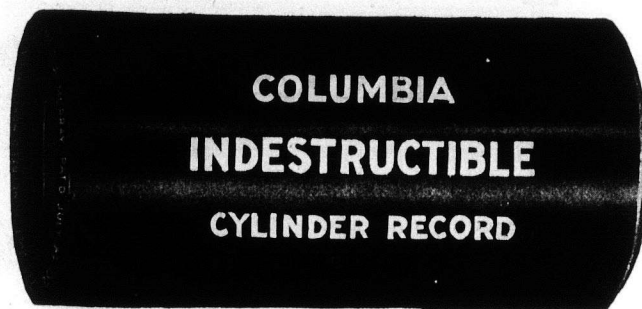


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name and—perhaps He will be there. Anyway, He won't be angry to us for praying and singing to Him on Easter Sunday."

There was a thrilling silence. Then the girl of ten said, "Let's do it! Shall our church be in the barn?"

"Oh, no, no!" objected Carrie. "Let's make a church in some deep place in the woods!" And with eager faces they made a rush through the orchard and across a field to reach the privacy and beauty of the virgin forest.

The spring was well forward, and Easter Sunday fell in the second week of April. Tree-buds were swelling against the pale blueness of the sky. With a cry of joy, Carrie pointed to the pussy-willows, "See, there are our flowers for the altar!"

And in a mighty tangle of wild grape-vine, that fell like a lovely curtain from tree to earth, was selected the site for the church. Six rails, laboriously carried from a distant fence, were upreared, three at a side, their top ends meeting, and within that space four legs supported a starch-box pulpit, which Millie was to furnish with a "fair white cloth" and Carrie's own little Bible. The work was hard and at intervals they rested and earnestly discussed and elaborated their plans. Then arose the question of creed. "What is this church?" asked Aleck. "Dad used to be a Baptist once, and Mom and Gran are Methodists."

"Oh, we don't need any name," largely answered Carrie. "It's just the same God always, in all the churches. Ours will be just the Lord's Church."

They were all so curiously serious over their talk that never once did they break into romp or rough squabbling. The sun was low when they stood admiring the great triumph of their day. To finish their structure two small saplings growing close together in a direct line with the pulpit, by a united effort, were drawn down and their tops tied together, and when released they sprang up again and formed an arch that at once became the door through which they would enter their church on Sunday morning. Then binding themselves to secrecy, they wearily went home, where they could scarcely eat their supper, so nervously exalted were they, so enlarged by the mystery and secrecy beloved of small people.

Next day, Saturday, the sun shone after a shower with June force, but all remained at home lest curiosity should be directed toward that for-true church in the woods. They met in the hay-loft, and Carrie commenced to arrange her rubric for Sunday's service on the back of an envelope. The oldest boy was offered the position of preacher, but blushed red behind his freckles in "lowing he would help with the hymns and the amens, but he didn't know nothin' 'bout preachin'." Every one else shirked duty in like manner, and finally the whole responsibility was thrust upon Carrie; and she too reddened with confusion. Her service called for a prayer, then a hymn, after a reading from the Bible. Then a sermon, another hymn and prayer, and then dismissal. But she couldn't preach the sermon. For a moment the whole Easter scheme seemed tottering to its fall. The crooked elbow was already on its upward way to hide her tears, when memory came to her of a Quaker service she had attended; sitting amazedly through the long waits for the spirit-moved speech of some member. With radiant eyes, she announced:

"We will be just Quakers at the sermon-place, and then do all the rest the way we have it here."

Easter Sunday dawned with a soft and balmy air and a radiance of sunlight that made small Carrie's heart swell with rapture. There were many secret nods and signs exchanged between the small fry, and while Carrie repeated her verses and Millie's mane was plaited, Will was sent to gather catkins to decorate the pulpit.

He was also entrusted with the fair white cloth and the Bible, and was carefully instructed not to enter the church by the front way, but to creep in behind the pulpit, prepare it, and then back out and meet the congregation.

This plan was carried out to the letter. They crossed the field in open order; but in the wood, with serious faces, they

fell into line, walking sedately—Carrie and little Tom, Millie and Aleck, and Will behind. Chipmunks flashed and zig-zagged over the ground; squirrels skipt from branch to branch, and from deep in the woods came the strong drumming of the woodpeckers; while now and then small nuthatches corkscrewed their way about the great tree boles.

But the small congregation moved steadily on without comment, and came at last fair upon the arched entrance to their temple. They looked within, and then looked at one another—then within again, and gasped. For the floor space, that they had laboriously cleaned of ruck, was now a restless, waving sea of violet-pink wind-flowers. It was as if God had breathed upon the spot. Carrie's heart swelled high.

"Oh," she cried, "no other church has such flowers as these that themselves have bloomed for Easter!" And very carefully they entered through the arch, and picked their way over the sheet of blossoms that spread to the very pulpit's edge only to find glorious as a temple veil the fall of grape-vines, covered with the pink-gray velvet of half-opened leaves.

Carrie went to the pulpit, while the congregation sat down flat. After the first prayer, the hymn was given out. "On Jordan's stormy bank" rose on high, clear, childish voices. Then Carrie opened her small Bible and read some verses from the Sermon on the Mount. Then she closed the book and stated seriously, "Now we will be Quakers for a while and see if the spirit moves us to speech," and left the pulpit and seated herself with the congregation.

A perfect silence is a thing unnatural and uncanny to a child. These young creatures had their nerves tuned up to a high pitch; their imaginations were warmed and ready for action. Sitting with closed eyes and with inhaled breath, a thousand cracklings and small rustlings seemed to assail their ears as never before. Then something strange happened—from far it came, a slow deep sigh from the whole waiting wood. Then they felt an air pass above them; soft, warm, out from the East it came. They left some living presence was there. The color faded from their tanned cheeks; they tumbled to their knees and clung tight, each to the other, before this the miracle vouchsafed to them. Carrie in an agony of joy and terror cried, "Dear Savior, we are only little children; please don't frighten us, because we love you so!" Then ventured to open her eyes, and saw like a sign a bolt of living blue sweep downward on strong wing from the swaying grape curtain, and springing to her feet, with a very rapture, she cried, "He is not angry to us. We are not good enough for a dove to be sent, but He sends a bluebird! Now let us give thanks, and then we will be dismissed."

Down they dropped again, and with quivering voices said aloud the prayer that is suitable alike for infancy or old age. Then in one line, holding hands, they marched out of the solemn wood, and not one of that small group doubted the Presence at that grotesque but honest service of love and prayer and praise.

Carrie yet holds that Easter Sunday as one of the most spiritually satisfactory of the many she has known. I speak positively—yes, for I am justified, as you will see if you take from the corner shelf that small Bible, and look at the fly-leaf—for there you will find written in clerkly hand:

"This book was won at the First Presbyterian Sunday-School by Clara Morris, for the recitation of the greatest number of verses from the Bible." And to this very day, Christian as I hope I am, I still have a secret faith in the old pagan tradition, that the sun dances upon Easter morning.

The transition from winter's cold to summer's heat frequently puts a strain upon the system that produces internal complications, always painful and often serious. A common form of disorder is dysentery, to which many are prone in the spring and summer. The very best medicine to use in subduing this painful ailment is Dr. J. D. Kellogg's Dysentery Cordial. It is a standard remedy, sold everywhere.