

listened, for he loved the lilies, and the minister was talking of them, of their beauty and wonderful life, how the bulbs must be placed in earth before they can give us their fragrance and whiteness, and so why we fill churches and homes with them on Easter Day.

'But these are not your offering to God, children. How can they be that? They are his own flowers, made by his hand. What will you offer to him on Easter Day?

"Lift up your little white hands to God, my children, your little white hands that have done so little wrong, and pray God that you may bring them here next Easter as pure from wrong as the lilies. But let them not be idle hands. The lilies are fragrant, your hands must be busy. Every day they must do kindly things, little things that only you can do, for this shall be the fragrance of our Easter lilies."

There were more words said that morning, there were sweet Easter songs, and Jack sat so still and walked home so quietly that Aunt Laura wondered if he had enjoyed no part of the service. But Jack was thinking of Easter lilies.

Aunt Laura wondered a good many times after that, but wisely kept silence. Not that there was any great change in her rollicking nephew. Easter lilies do not bud and blossom in a single day. But many a little thing might have been noticed if one were a keen observer of boys. The fact was that the simple sermon had found its way into Jack's heart, and though he had said nothing about it, he had sturdily resolved upon cultivating Easter lilies himself.

And the best of all was that he did it, too. Not in any very great way; often his efforts were very odd; sometimes the only thing he could think of doing for his lilies in a whole day was to keep his hands clean.

But in the course of the year, Jack never knew exactly how it came about, he found himself in the habit of thinking how the risen Christ would like his Easter offering, and of talking with him a little about it every morning before the day was fairly begun. And when another Easter dawned bright and clear, Jack would have curtailed the time for waffles rather than to miss the morning service.

THE SEA-GULL.

The sea-gull is a beautiful bird? It lives by the ocean, and also on the great lakes. It is a very pretty bird, and quite large. It gets all its food out of the water. The gulls fly low, and the motion of their broad wings is quite graceful. There are many different kinds of gulls. Some of them are white, and have black wings. Others are of a gray colour. Often they are seen far out at sea. They can swim on the water, but are mostly seen on the wing. Some of them live far toward the north pole, where the ice never melts away from the ocean, and some love the warmer seas.

CHILDREN'S EASTER.

BY LUCY LARCOM.

Break the joyful Easter dawn,
Clearer yet and stronger;
Winter from the world has gone,
Death shall be no longer.

Far away good angels drive
Night, and sin, and sadness;
Earth awakes in smiles, alive
With her dear Lord's gladness.

Open, happy buds of spring,
For the sun has risen!
Through the sky sweet voices ring,
Calling you from prison.

Little children dear, look up:
Toward His brightness pressing;
Lift up, every heart, a cup
For the dear Lord's blessing.

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Sunbeam.

TORONTO, MARCH 25, 1899.

A LITTLE SERMON ABOUT EASTER.

Text: "Consider the lilies,"—Matt. 6. 26.

Most of you know the rest of this verse. Christ took the "lilies of the field" for his text, and preached from them a most tender and comforting sermon.

On this glad morning, when we look at the beautiful flowers in our homes and in our churches, let them be to us also a text for an Easter sermon. I was quite sure you would like this text, because children as a general thing are fond of flowers.

Easter, you will say, means that Christ rose from the dead; how can lilies teach anything about coming to life from the dead. When we have considered,—that is, studied and thought a little more carefully about them,—I think you will see for yourselves.

I knew a little girl who was very much afraid of death, especially of being "put away in the cold, dark ground." One day (in the fall), her mother, who knew that she was very fond of gardening, said to her: "Bessie, I am going to plant my hyacinths and tulips (they are a kind of lily, you know), and I would like you to come with me and hear something I have to say." Bessie was only too glad to go, so when they reached the flower-beds, her mother took up a handful of bulbs and said: "Just look at these, Bessie; suppose they should say, 'We don't want to go in the cold, dark ground,' do you think we could have any beautiful hyacinths next spring?" And after the homely little brown bulb has lain under the frozen ground so many months, what makes that spirit-like blossom spring up with such exquisite colours, and such sweet perfume? Is it not like a resurrection, a new life out of death?

Bessie saw all of the bulbs buried in their little graves, and the next spring when she beheld with delight the beautiful flowers, she said: "O mamma, it isn't such a dreadful thing to be buried after all. God must have been all this time watching and taking care of those little bulbs in the ground, to change them into something so beautiful and so different."

I seldom see a beautiful white lily that I do not think of the soul and the body. What does that flower spring from? Why, from the earth; the "dirt," as the children call it. Do you see anything in that ugly, dirty root that gives you the slightest hint of the lovely flower that is to come and breathe in the bright sunshine? So I think how wonderfully different from this body is the spirit that leaves it when we die. Let us pray that our souls, like the lilies, may be pure and white.

EASTER.

Give flowers to all the children
This blessed Easter Day—
Fair crocuses and snowdrops,
And tulips brave and gay.

And tell them, tell the children,
How in the dark, cold earth
The flowers have been waiting
Till spring should give them birth.

All winter long they waited,
Till the south wind's soft breath
Bade them rise up in beauty,
And bid farewell to death.

Then tell the little children
How Christ our Saviour, too,
The flower of all eternity,
Once death and darkness knew.

How, like these blossoms, silent
Within the tomb he lay,
Then rose in light and glory,
To live in heaven for aye.

So take the flowers, children,
And be ye pure as they,
And sing to Christ our Saviour
This blessed Easter Day?