

# From My Rosary of Easters—A Real Reminiscence.

By CLARA MORRIS.

Easter! What joy and triumph in the sound! If one wished to express Easter in one single word, I think *renewal* would be that word. The renewal of Nature's life in swift-rising sap and upspringing of grasses, the renewal of health and strength and joyfully quickened pulses in our own bodies, and, above all, the renewal of spiritual hope and faith in every tried soul. Easter is renewal—renewal is joy!

Long before the coming of our Master the power of this April time was felt and responded to by humanity, and was made a time of splendid festival in honor of the goddess of Love—Eoester. But after the blessed Lord's short and wondrous earthly life had been closed and followed by His glorious resurrection and ascension, the ecclesiastics applied the name to their great Christian festival, held to commemorate the blessed resurrection. So Easter has become to us not only an expression of physical joy in natural beauty, but is enriched with a spiritual meaning and value absolutely immeasurable.

But oh, the churches! The piled-up splendor, the glory of color, the ocean of perfume, the solemn thunder of organ, the high-piercing sweetness of young voices crying, "Holy! Holy! Holy!" The still white flame of lilies, the blushing azaleas' fleece of blossoms, the living trumpets of the crowding golden daffodils, the rustling like a wind when the great throng kneels, and the sea-like murmur of human voices repeating that most perfect, most touching prayer known, "Our Father—" A mysterious exaltation thrills all hearts, and as some voice mounts above the organ's roll, pure, clear, higher and even higher,

almost the listeners expect to see above them "the Spirit like a dove," as at Jordan. Oh, Easter, even if you fall in March, under the gray sky, the bellowing winds are the trumpeters of glorious tidings, and the whole earth tinkles with the silvery music of myriad streams, and rills and threads of running water, the very first thing spring frees from wintry death—ever triumphant and joyous spirit are you!

In reviewing my rosary of Easters, I came upon one so oddly different from the rest, so grotesque, so pathetic, yet so tremendously satisfying, that I venture to share its memory with you to whom I am speaking. A little girl, quite a little girl, since she awaited anxiously her eighth birthday, was by way of being intensely and most sincerely religious. She was not a happy little girl, being very poor and the adviser of her mother in matters that should have been Greek to her for years to come. So it happened that all her joy came from her worshipping love of the gentle Jesus, who was always tender to little children. The Sunday-school habit was so strong upon her that through summer's heat and winter's cold she attended faithfully a Methodist school in the morning and a far-off Presbyterian school in the afternoon, with a full service and sermon in between; and to show how deeply her feelings were engaged, she always read of the Crucifixion on her small knees, in all the starchy misery of stiff nantalets, and ended a mere sobbing, gasping, limp bunch of "frazzled" nerves.

Now this little girl, who had known cities all her life long, and had never seen the country, was suddenly transplanted to the true backwoods, exper-

iening the rough comfort of a clay-chinked log house, where cooking was done at the open fire; where the spinning-wheel whirled at one end of the room, and a loom bulked big out on the rough porch. Where each day was a long procession of wondrous discoveries, though the joy of them was stabbed often by the pain of contemptuous ridicule from a band of cousins, barefooted, loose-maned, who jeered at her ignorance of farm and forest.

But fancy what the blow was to the religious little maid when she learned there was no church to go to. Her old, old, grandmother explained, while she dried the child's tears, how far away was the very nearest church; how only now and then a devoted man of God, riding circuit across prairie, through woods and up and down streams, came to this place, and according to the weather, held service at the log-cabin school-house or at some nearer farmhouse; where he would pray and preach, and do up all the marryings, and maybe go to some grave and make a prayer over the one who had been laid there in silence without religious funeral service.

From that time on the stricken little maid used to study her verses as usual, and content herself by reciting them to her mother. Then stealing out behind the big barn, sing a hymn, say a prayer, sing another hymn, and with bowed head dismiss herself, and go back to the house again.

Ere long the band of wild cousins discovered the city child had a gift for telling stories—stories of elves, of fairies, of battles, stories of Moses, and little Samuel, and of Jacob. Then as they gathered about her to listen with wide

eyes and quickened breathing, she felt her power and proceeded further to work her imagination, and made plays out of nearly every story told.

Well, things went well with Carrie until the approach of that churchless Easter Sunday. A sort of fever came upon the child. She fell asleep with tear-fringed lashes, she watched the rising sun with a great lump climbing high in her throat. She talked and talked of the glory and wonder of Easter and the shame and sorrow of doing nothing, nothing at all in memory of our Saviour's joyful rising from the grave. And the boys began to look gloomy, and say, "Gol darn, it is too bad!" And they even asked about going to that far-off village church. But Dad said, "It would take the whole day goin' and comin', and the horses wouldn't be fit for plowin' next mornin'."

Hearing that, Carrie fairly broke down and cried. Then with a pointed stick she drew on the dry road a ground plan of a church, showing where the pulpit stood, and the communion rail, and the three aisles, and made a round ring where the baptismal font went. And Aleck broke in with the suggestion:

"Why can't we have a church our own selves?"

"Oh, oh!" Millie exclaimed. "How awful! We'd be punished for playing church. It would be wicked!"

But Carrie was flushed and a-quiver with excitement.

"We won't play!" she panted. "We will have a real church. (Don't you remember—oh, don't you, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, then am I in the midst of them?') We won't play; we will truly gather in His

## Easter

### EASTER MORN.

"Seek ye the Lord?" the angel said—  
The Lord ye thought as with the dead;—  
He here was laid,  
But he has made  
The tomb a glory-place instead!

"He is not here; thrice-victor he;  
His bonds are burst, and he is free;  
The Lord he lives,  
And comfort gives  
To those who wait in Galilee!"

Seek we the Lord and we shall find  
A guardian blest, a Master kind,  
Whose words, as balm,  
Will soothe and calm  
The weary heart and anxious mind!

### AN EASTER HYMN.

BY THE RT. REV. J. L. SPALDING, D.D.

HAIL Easter Morn, hail new-born Life,  
Forth rising from the grave!  
The Lord hath conquered in the strife,  
Who died from death to save.

Let the heavens weep for joy, and earth  
In fragrant flowers bloom,  
While we acclaim the glorious birth  
Of life from out the tomb.

Let children's happy voices ring  
In thankfulness and praise;  
Let virgins' whitest blossoms bring  
And dew-besprinkled sprays.

Halleluia, halleluia still,  
Till echo speak the song,  
And every heart with gladness thrill,  
And every soul be strong.

Where now, O Grave, thy victory?  
Where now Death's cruel sway?  
The Spell is broken, we are free,  
And bright is all our way.

To Thee sweet Jesus, thanks be given;  
To Thee our all we owe—  
The joy of earth and hope of heaven,  
And faith which conquers woe.

—Ave Maria.

## Poetry

### AN EASTER PRAYER.

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE.

O Thou who art the conqueror of death,  
Thou who hast broken thro' the gates of  
night,  
Roll from my sepulchre of grief the stone,  
And lead me to the light!

O Thou who art the risen Lord to-day,  
The victor over darkness, grief and sin,  
Undo the seals of sorrow from my tomb,  
And let the daylight in!

O Thou, the risen Christ, bid me arise  
And leave the death-like robes that I have  
worn.

Roll back the stone, that I may see, dear  
Lord,  
The perfect Easter morn!

### THE EASTER LILY.—By Minna Irving.

It is only an Easter lily, brittle and blackened now,  
But once as white as a snowdrift, and pure as an  
angel's brow.  
It is kept on a crimson cushion, with a yellow letter or two,  
A button bearing an eagle, and a scrap of army blue.  
She was a Southern maiden, slender and sweet and shy,  
He was a youth from New Hampshire with a clear  
and fearless eye.  
Their love was newly plighted when the drums began to play,  
And he left her hastening Northward, to muster against  
the gray.

After the war was over, still in his blue and gold,  
The captain rode to his sweetheart, but found her changed  
and cold.

"Here is your ring of rubies, take it," she said, "and go!  
I am Virginia's daughter, you are Virginia's foe!"  
Slowly the years rolled onward, lonely and full of care,  
Stealing away her roses, silvering o'er her hair.  
Sometimes she read his letters while all the household slept,  
Oft in the dreary midnight she called his name and wept.  
When from the chains of Winter the blossoms found release,  
She mailed him an Easter lily, a fragrant token of peace;

Culled from the chapel altar, in tissue and cotton sent,  
Fresh and fair to her lover, far in the North it went.  
Under her cottage window the tulip broke in flame;  
When from his hills of granite in eager haste he came;  
And ere the daffodil golden, darling of April, died,  
Lo! to his stately mansion he bore his Southern bride.  
There is a cabinet carved of scented woods, inlaid  
With mother-of-pearl and silver, and ivory, gold and jade,  
Are treasured a shriveled lily, a yellow letter or two,  
A button bearing an eagle and a scrap of army blue.