

children's faces put on piety as a garment and were staidly solemn. The small minister's face was rapt. Suddenly a high, sweet voice interrupted.

"I'll sing the carols," it cried.

"No, I'll sing 'em!"

"My mother taught me how. I guess I'm the one that's going to sing 'em on Easter!"

"I guess you aren't, Lethia Cain! I guess my mother's been teaching me. My mother says I'm going to sing 'em—so there!"

"My mother says I'm going to, so there, Gerry Drinkwater!"

On either side of the grassy aisle the small rivals glared at each other. A murmur of supporting wrath rose behind each. The little minister looked worried—the paternal mantle weighed heavily.

"Hush!" he cried, earnestly, "we'll have congregational singing instead. Sit right down—I'm goin' to preach."

For a little there was only the sound of his earnest voice in the orchard, with the soft spring wind for its only accompaniment. He preached with deep fervour. Two tiny spots of colour blossomed out in his cheeks, as he went on.

"'Peace on earth,'—that means everybody's to be friends with everybody else," he said. "Everybody's to be peaceful an' loving an' kind, same's the Lord Jesus was. Do you s'pose He'd have sat on the same side of the broad aisle every single Sunday that ever was? No, my friends, I'll tell you what the Lord would have done. He'd have sat on your side up to the sermon, Lethia, and then He'd have gone 'cross, tiptoe an' soft, in His beautiful white robe, an' sat on Gerry's side, clear through to the benediction—just to make 'peace on earth.' Can't you most see Him sitting there—"

The minister's little brown face shone with a solemn light.

"Can't you see how peaceful He'd have looked, an' how lovin' kind? An', then, my father'd have asked Him to say the benediction, an' He'd have spread out his hands over us an' said, softly, 'Peace on earth, good-will to men,' an' that would have meant for us to love each other an' sit together an' sing out o' the same hymn-book."

It was quiet under the apple-trees. All the little brown faces were solemn. It was as if the white-robed Guest were among them, stepping across the dividing line, "tiptoe an' soft"—as if His hands were spread out over them in benediction.

"Peace on earth, good-will to men."

The small brown faces gazed at each other solemnly. The minister went on with staunch courage, his hands unconsciously extended.

"It would have meant to sing your Easter carols out o' the same hymn-book. Why don't you do it to-day, just as if He was here?"

He waited confidently and not in vain.

Two little figures, one on either side of the broad aisle, stood up and began to sing. Gradually they drifted nearer until they stood side by side. Their high, childish voices blended sweetly.

Friday passed and Saturday. Julius Taft worked on his Easter sermon with a heavy heart. The war-clouds seemed gathering ominously. Rumours of war crept in to him in his quiet study.

"I really don't know how it's coming out, little woman," he sighed. "I have done everything I can—I've been to see them both, those women. Both of them have their plans made unchangeably, and, if they collide, then—the crash."

"Yes, then the crash," sighed the minister's gentle wife.

"I tried to persuade them both—you don't know how hard I worked, dear! But all the while I knew I was wasting my time, and would better come home to my sermon. Now I am going to wait; but, remember, something will happen to-morrow, Rebekah—two things."

"Two, Julius?"

"Yes; the minister's resignation and the crash."

He laughed, but his pale face smote her, and she crept on to his knee and laid her own pale face against his. Somewhere in the house they could hear children's happy voices. It helped them.

"They are dear children, Julius," the mother whispered.

"God bless them!" he said.

"Yes—oh, yes, God bless them! And he will, Julius. I think our boy has a 'call!' I think he will preach, Julius."

"Then the Lord help him," the minister cried, earnestly.

Easter morning dawned as clear and beautiful as we love to think that other Easter dawned, when Mary came first to the tomb. The air was full of resurrection—the world's resurrection from the tomb of winter. Birds everywhere lilted and sang their Easter carols.

But the little carollers at Saxon were