

## HOUSEHOLD.

### Easter at the Leslies

(Alice Wellington Rollins.)

The Leslie children had an Easter party. In the first place, it was not a party at all. This was the way it came about. Aunt Agnes had been telling them the pretty Easter custom in Germany of hiding eggs in the bushes and under the hedges, and letting the children hunt for them. It was so pretty and would be such fun! But Easter came so early this year that mamma would never think of letting them run about the garden all the afternoon, even if there had been any garden to run about in, which there wasn't. Oh, dear! But Lillian suddenly exclaimed:

'Why couldn't we hide the eggs in the house, mamma?'

Certainly. Why couldn't they? So, just a week before Easter, there fluttered out from the Leslie mansion, on the wings of the postman, forty little butterflies, addressed to forty little friends of the Leslie children. For the butterfly is one of the prettiest Easter emblems, and mamma had arranged her cards of invitation in the shape of one; and Aunt Agnes had painted them with beautiful colors and written on the inside of one of their wings, 'Mrs. Stephen W. Leslie requests the pleasure of your company on the afternoon of Saturday, March 27th, to hunt for Easter eggs.' Mamma heard the children quarrel as to whose party it really was; and, as there wasn't room on a butterfly's wing to write, Miss Lillian, Master Frederic, Master Willie, and baby Nora requests, etc., she decided to give the party herself. And when each of the children received a formal invitation from her, they thought it even funnier than for them to give the party.

Saturday was such a busy day! They had not expected any 'fun' before afternoon; but when they went downstairs, in the morning, the breakfast-table was full of surprises. A tall, white calla lily graced the centre of the table; and in front of papa a pretty new dish, with a hen and chickens on the cover, held the real eggs for breakfast, while lovely colored ones were at every plate. Lillian's was a real little blue robin's egg, with a rhyme in mamma's handwriting:

'Only an egg-shell, easily broken;  
Only a light word, easily spoken;  
But the egg-shell may hold a beautiful bird,  
And the loveliest thought may be said  
in a word.  
I'm sure that my little girl's eyes will  
be bright  
To read me this legend of Easter aright.'

Grandpapa had been heard to remark several times during the preparations that Easter eggs were 'silly things,' because he didn't have any when he was a boy; and so he found a beautiful bouquet at his plate, with another little rhyme:

'Grandpa don't see the sense of these colored eggs of ours,  
So we hope he'll like the scents of these colored Eastern flowers.'

But the most mysterious thing was the soup tureen in front of mamma. Soup for breakfast! Who ever heard of it? But when the cover was lifted, out jumped the children's little tame hare, that was usually kept in the back yard, and was now very eager to escape from its close quarters. The hare, as you know, is always associated with Easter in Germany; and this little fellow had dangling from his ears and fastened around his neck the loveliest mosaic ear-rings and breastpin. Grandpapa said it was the first time he had ever heard of ear-rings and breastpins being worn on the hair, and he really thought they would look much better in mamma's ears and at her throat. Mamma was only too happy to appropriate them; and, although by that time the real

eggs were quite cold, no one seemed to mind it.

After breakfast the children were sent out to play while mamma and Aunt Agnes hid the eggs. There were two hundred of them, and scarcely two were alike. The children had been allowed to help decorate, and every one was expected to have been boiled hard, very hard. Some were colored with the bright purple and blue and crimson dyes 'warranted to succeed'; and some had been left white, to be decorated with little gold and silver stars, or bands of colored paper, or tiny scrap-book pictures. Some, too, Aunt Agnes had painted very prettily; and mamma had added to the store some very precious ones made of chocolate, or pink sugar, or delicious nougat. They were hidden all over the house—in vases, behind pictures, under rugs, in bureau-drawers, behind curtains, dropped into coal-hods, and nestled into sofa corners, till mamma was afraid she should not remember herself where they all were.

When the guests were all assembled in the parlor, they were told the laws of the game. They could go all over the house, and look into any closet or drawer that was not locked (one of the mammas being stationed in each room, to see that Mrs. Leslie's bric-a-brac did not come to grief); but whenever anyone found an egg, he must bring it down to the parlor before looking for another. Each child had a separate nook in which to deposit all the eggs he found. The little American children did not quite understand, and felt very stiff and bewildered; but the little Germans understood perfectly, and laughed and nodded at each other in their impatience to begin. At the very first signal, little Fritz Ackermann threw himself flat on the floor, and with a shout of triumph drew out the first egg from behind the pedals of the piano. Now they all understood, and such scampering and shouting the Leslie house had never before known. The older people had to join in the search before they were all found; and then, after they had enjoyed the excitement of seeing who had discovered the most or the prettiest, all the eggs were thrown into one large basket again and divided evenly, that each child might be sure at least of one pretty and one funny one. Then mamma asked gravely if they had thought to look in the dining-room. Of course, they had not; for those were the doors that some of them, in their experiments, had found locked. But now they opened suddenly, and on the large dining-table were forty little plates, and in each plate was a wonderful little nest, and in each nest was a beautiful white egg. But they soon discovered, with the aid of a spoon, that the nests were of spun sugar and the eggs of ice-cream; while the eggs in the silver cake-baskets proved to be frosted sponge-cake. On the sideboard was a very large egg made entirely of flowers; but as the children finished their ice-cream and began to get ready to go home, Mrs. Leslie showed them that the great egg was made entirely of little buttonhole bouquets. There was one for each of them, so that each could carry away one of those lovely, fragrant symbols of the renewed life that Easter celebrates.

#### THANKS FOR 'MESSENGERS' RECEIVED.

We have to thank the kind friends who so promptly responded to our request for a copy of the 'Northern Messenger' for Feb. 27, 1903. More copies have been received than we required, and if any in their desire to aid us have broken their own file for 1903, we will be glad to return the number on receipt of a request by post-card.

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