

Easter.

Oh, Easter, queen of all the days
That wear the Church's crown,
Upon our troubled human ways
Thy calm, fair face looks down.

Thou cam'st this morning through the fields,
And spoke some magic word,
And all the plain which harvest yields
With passing life was stirred.

The messenger of death stooped low
To kiss thy conquering feet;
Life, trembling, seemed at last to know
Her victory complete.

Thou hast the urn whose spices blend
To sweeten all the year,
Oh Easter, queen, new courage send
To us who worship here.

Oh, Easter, queen of all the days
That wear the Church's crown,
To form thy fairest aureole rays,
Heaven sends its sunlight down.

Glory to God in the Highest.

CHAPTER I.

The old mill and mill-house stood in a glamour of glory, for it was summer-time, a cloudless day, with that clear transparency in the air which casts a vivid, almost tropical brightness, on all around. Every leaf and spray seemed rife with beauty and joy; the deep mill-river gurgled and sang, as it flowed on its way in a very sheen of sunlight; the meadow, stretching away to the right, as one stood at the house door, lay basking, a changeable glory of green and gold; for the scythe had swept over it, a few showery days ago, and now the fresh grass was springing, like hope that will not be quenched nor cut off in the human breast. Away down the river, tall trees spread their arms over the shining waters. To the left were corn-fields in the distance, but near the many-gabled mill-house stretched the sunny, well-kept garden, shut in by a box hedge. There were steps leading down from the house by a side door into the garden, and white steps were at the front entrance, a heavy, black door, studded with nails, within a porch cool and shady in the sultry afternoon.

Along by the side of the mill, and overhanging the stream, was a wooden platform; the mill door opened on to the platform, but the sacks of flour were pitched out of a loft window at the side of the mill. They were busy lowering them now; old Jacob, Hal, and Mr. Owen, the master, while the carter steadied them as they came down, and placed them in the wagon. A busy hive of industry was that old mill, clip-clapping day in and day out; many summer times, such as the present, had passed over it like a witching dream, followed by autumn, winter, and sweet spring-tide, with its promise and its hope.

But to return. Leaning against the wooden railing, placed along the edge of the platform by the river as a sort of stay to the unwary, stood a young girl of thirteen, in the full blaze of the afternoon sunlight and heat, no hat on her head to protect her therefrom, gazing dreamily down into the cool, sparkling water. A slim, slight, unformed girl, with a wealth of dusky brown hair, many warm sunny tints here and there in its ripples, as the sunshine touched it. Her face was one of no great beauty, save that which the fresh, sweet thoughts of girlhood lent it; it was pale, and just a little too thin, perhaps; with a low gentle forehead, and grey eyes with nothing in themselves to attract attention, save when, like the face itself, they glowed and kindled with girlish thoughts, aspirations and longings. A sweet, bright, wistful face it was now, bending over the stream, for the girl was dreaming of the future, as is the wont of youth and hope. She scarce knew of what, but it was all of the future. Now a boat came gliding down stream, a gentleman and a lady as its occupants, a sort of living phantom flitting across her dream. They smiled up at her as they shot past—that dreamy-faced child with dusky hair. She saw them, and her cheeks flushed, as she gave them smile for smile, till they were in the distance.

"Who are they, Jacob?" she asked of the old grinder, as he stepped out at the mill door.

"Who be they?" repeated the old man, shading his eyes with his hand and looking up the river. "The young parson chap as is staying up at Highburn Hall, who is going out as a missionary to foreign parts, and his wife, as is to be," said he, bringing back his gaze to the upturned face of his young questioner.

"Oh!" returned the girl, awe in her voice, and she stood by the railing to watch for the return of the boat.

"A plucky job that, Miss Milly, to leave kith and kin for the love of the Great Master, I'm thinking," quoth Jacob, rubbing his heated forehead with his jacket sleeve white with flour.

"'Tis a glorious work, Jacob," was the earnest reply. Then Jacob went into the mill again, the mill clip-clapped on, as if grinding corn was glorious work as well, and the summer afternoon smiled approval.

Milly had never seen a real, living missionary before, one who, indeed and in truth, was about to take his life in his hand, as it were, and give it as an offering to the Lord; to be lengthened out into years of toil and hardship, or to be sacrificed to a foreign climate, or some poor benighted assassin's knife. She had heard and read of mission work and missionaries; now here was one whom her eyes had seen, whose smile had met hers; and that gentle girl by his side was to share his toils, his hardships, perhaps die a like death with him. Her vivid imagination carried her on into the glorious hereafter; tears rushed to her eyes at the thought of the exceeding great reward, the welcome of the great King. She bowed her head on the rail, and sobbed with craving desire and overwrought feelings. If such a life might be hers, instead of the dull, prosaic life at the mill, where nothing great or grand would be hers to do or suffer! The dip of oars roused her; they were coming back, the gentleman rowing, the lady steering, both chatting and laughing as if no such great solemn future lay before them. She was shyly drying her eyes, for they would be past the mill in a minute or two, when a lad emerged from the mill, a fair, freckled-faced lad, with light hair, always lustreless, but now white and dusty with flour, as were his jacket and trousers. He might have been twelve or thereabout, a tall, well-made lad, but very homely of feature; even his eyes, of a very light grey, were uninteresting-looking, saving for their honesty—yes, they were honest-looking eyes.

"Well, what's the matter?—crying, Milly?" said he, coming to the girl's side.

"Yes, I was thinking what a dull, humdrum life ours is," she returned with the easy familiarity which told she was his sister.

"But, Milly, not more so than other people's lives," was the lad's reply, in a tone which implied that this was not the first time the subject had been broached between them.

"That's what you always say, Hal," rejoined his sister, impatiently.

"And very wise of me, too, considering we're likely to live on here in the humdrum life, as you call it," said the boy, smiling.

"Oh! Hal, don't say so; I feel I could do such great and noble things if only I had the chance, instead of living on here, only—only—"

"Doing one's duty," spoke the boy drily.

"I think one's duty is always set in places where it is least pleasant, where one never likes to be," was the girl's retort, gancing away up the river at the dancing sunbeams, and the boat vanishing into distance.

"Ah! yes. I have it—"

"Two boats rocked on the river, in the shadow of leaf and tree;

One was in love with the sea-shore, and one was in love with the sea.

The one that loved the harbour the winds of fate outbore,

But held the other, longing, for ever against the shore."

(To be Continued.)

—Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.

Life.

Life was Christ's favourite word. Life was what He was always praising and promising. Life was the test by which He tried all the powers that He met with. If they nourished and increased life, they were good; if they injured and decreased it, they were bad. Life was His own claim and credential. That He gave man life was the ground of His demand for men's allegiance; that He saved them from death was the burden of His self-assertion. He was divine; He was eternal; all vitality was at its perfection in Him, infinite, imperishable. We should have to be something like Him, catch something of His feeling about the beauty and gloriousness of life, before we could feel the horror which He constantly sums up into that word, death, as the mere negative of life. But this we can do, we can feel how one great difference between Jesus and most of the other teachers who have bidden men abstain from sin is that while they decried sin because it brought pain, or because it hurt other people, or because it destroyed order, or because it was unlovely, Christ is supreme in his idea, which runs through every word He speaks—that sin is dreadful because it is death, because it is so much cut out of the world's and the man's vitality, because it is destruction of the very essence of manhood, because to do wrong as a man is, in so far, to cease to live as a man. That is Christ's idea. That is what He is always insisting upon when He calls goodness life and wickedness death. That was the reason why, from the height of His divinity and thrilling with the consciousness of immortality, He hated wickedness and loved goodness as no other being ever has, and why He was willing to die in what we call death, if thereby He could save men from that wickedness which was the death He really dreaded for them.—*Rt. Rev. Phillips Brooks, D. D.*

Hints to House-keepers.

BROWN BREAD.—Two cupfuls of entire wheat flour, one cupful of cornmeal, two-thirds cupful of molasses, one large cupful of sweet milk, one cupful of sour milk, salt, one teaspoonful of soda. Steam three hours and bake one hour.

A general rule for baking fish where it is stuffed is this: Soften bread in cold water, drain, mash fine, mix with drawn butter, one or two raw eggs, according to size of fish, pepper, salt and any herb seasoning liked. Fill and sew up the fish. Place on a rack in the pan, with a cupful of water, a piece of butter half as large as an egg, and baste occasionally. Bake for forty minutes or till done, which the size of the fish must determine. Or, the fish may be laid in the pan, in which is just enough water or stock to cover the bottom, butter spread over it and be covered with a piece of buttered paper. It should be basted two or three times while baking. Take off the paper before serving. Serve the pan gravy in a boat with a few drops of lemon juice added; or any gravy that is preferred may be used.

Cold baked or boiled fish may appear a second time creamed, escalloped, pickled or in salad, and give satisfaction. If care is taken that the cream sauce or the salad dressing be just right, the second appearance may be pronounced the best. The fish should be carefully boned, the skin and the fat removed, and the flesh flaked or picked into small pieces.

"Cooked celery" is a dish that is not very much known, but it is, nevertheless, very tempting when properly prepared. One way to fix it is to cut nice tender celery into fine bits, say a cupful of the celery to a pint of milk. Put the celery to cook in just enough water to cover it and let it simmer almost dry, then, when tender, put the milk over it, having made it hot first, and stir in a tablespoonful of butter, into which has been worked smoothly a teaspoonful of flour. Stir all the time till the flour is cooked. Salt and serve hot.—*Washington Star.*

FIG PUDDING.—Chop half a pound of figs and mix with a cupful of grated bread crumbs, a tea-cupful of sugar, two tablespoonfuls of melted butter, four beaten eggs, and five ounces of candied oranges and lemon peel; turn into a greased mould; steam two hours and a half. Serve with pudding sauce.