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THE FIRST EASTER.

A SONG OF EASTER.

BY CELIA THAXTER.

Sing, children sing!
 And the lily censers swing;
 Sing that life and joy are waking and that
 Death no more is king,
 Sing the happy, happy tumult of the
 slowly brightening spring;
 Sing, little children, sing!

Sing, sing, in happy chorus, with joyful
 voices tell
 That death is life, and God is good, and all
 things shall be well;
 That bitter days shall cease
 In warmth and light and peace—
 That winter yields to spring,—
 Sing, little children, sing!

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Sunbeam.

TORONTO, APRIL 4, 1903.

EASTER.

In old German mythology Ostera, whose name came from the Saxon word, "oster"—to rise, was the goddess of the rising sun, or returning light of spring. The Anglo-Saxon name for this same goddess was Eostur or Eastre. In the Eostur month, our April, bonfires were kindled on the nearest mountains, and offerings of the first flowers of the season were made to the goddess of the spring. To the early Christians, who from their close connection with the Jewish church naturally continued to observe Jewish festivals, the Passover feast celebrated at the Easter season became the festival consecrated to the remembrance of our risen Lord.

It would be impossible in limited space to give any idea of the various customs

which have been handed down from time immemorial as belonging to Easter. Most of them are of pagan origin, but have been retained in the Christian observance of the day with a change of signification to accord with the idea of the resurrection. Thus the ancient meaning of many Easter customs is lost. The habit of distributing eggs at Easter, one of the most characteristic, widely known, and oldest, belongs to this class. The coming forth of the chicken from the egg to life is regarded as typical of the resurrection. In Germany it is believed by the little children that the coloured eggs of Easter are laid by hares. For weeks before Easter it is customary for the country children to prepare nests in the hedges for the hares, and it is only the good children who are rewarded by finding their nests full of bright-coloured eggs.

The flowers used to decorate the churches at Easter are emblems of the resurrection, having risen in the spring from the earth in which they have been buried.

It is an old superstition that on Easter some new article of dress must be worn. If not, one must expect nothing but bad luck for the ensuing year.

"At Easter let your clothes be new,
 Or else be sure you will it rue,"

is the advice given in "Poor Robin's Almanac."

Of late years the sending of cards and tiny books appropriately decorated as Easter gifts is more popular with us than any other way of remembering our friends at Eastertide.—*Selected.*

A BEAUTIFUL SURPRISE.

Here's a little box on the library table for you, Edward," said Mother Waddell; "it came in the mail."

Edward opened the little box with eager fingers, stripped off the tissue paper and the soft cotton batting, and found—a dirty thing that looked like a spoiled onion!

"It is just a mean trick!" said the little boy, angrily. "Somebody was trying to fool me." He went to the window, and, raising the sash, threw the dirty lump as far as he could. There was a large flower-bed under the window, and presently a gardener came along with a spade and a rake. He did not notice this dingy thing which Edward had thrown out, but turned the earth up and patted it down; and behold! the round thing that came out of the box was hidden under the earth.

When midsummer came, Mother Waddell found a tall green stalk in her flower-bed that she did not know.

"Simmons," she said to the gardener, "did you plant this?"

"Sure, no, mum," answered Simmons, whose quick eye saw what was about to

happen to that stalk. "Where would I be having anything so fine as a gold-banded lily?"

And, sure enough, a few more weeks of sunshine and dew and breeze, and three glorious white lilies, striped with yellow gold, hung proudly on that green stalk. At first nobody could guess where this fine creature had come from; but suddenly Mother Waddell remembered what Edward had told her of the box that came to him in the mail, and how he had thrown the "horrid dirty onion" out of the window.

"Your ugly, soiled bulb that you called an onion, my little boy," said Mother Waddell, "was like these bodies that we hide in the earth when we die; and now every time you look at this exquisite lily I want you to remember that it is only a dim picture of the beauty and glory and sweetness that God is going to give us when we are raised by His great power and made like our Lord Jesus Christ."—*The Child's Hour.*

EASTER TIME.

BY LAURA E. RICHARDS.

The little flowers came through the ground,
 At Easter time, at Easter time;
 They raised their heads and looked around,
 At happy Easter time,
 And every pretty bud did say,
 "Good people, bless this holy day!
 For Christ is risen, the angels say,
 This happy Easter time."

The pure white lily raised its cup,
 At Easter time, at Easter time;
 The crocus to the sky looked up,
 At happy Easter time.
 "We hear the song of heaven!" they say;
 "Its glory shines on us to-day;
 Oh! may it shine on us alway
 At holy Easter time!"

'Twas long and long and long ago,
 That Easter time, that Easter time;
 But still the pure white lilies blow
 At happy Easter time.
 And still each little flower doth say,
 "Good Christians, bless this holy day!
 For Christ has risen, the angels say,
 At blessed Easter time!"

A man, looking up from sawing his wood, saw his little son turning two boys out of the yard. "What are you about, George?" asked the father. "I am turning two swearers out of the yard," said George. "I said that I wouldn't play with swearers, and I won't." That is the right time and place to say "I won't." We wish that every boy would take the stand: No play with swearers. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

THE LORD OF LIFE IS RISEN.

The Lord of Life is risen!
Sing, Easter heralds, sing!
He bursts his rocky prison;
Wide let the triumph ring!
Tell how the graves are quaking,
The saints their fetters breaking;
Sing, heralds, Jesus lives!

In death no longer lying,
He rose, the Prince, to-day!
Life of the dead and dying,
He triumphed o'er decay,
The Lord of life is risen;
In ruins lies death's prison,
Its keeper bound in chains.

We hear, in thy blest greeting,
Salvation's work is done;
We worship thee, repeating,
Life for the dead is won.
O Head of all believing!
O Joy of all the grieving!
Unite us, Lord, to thee.

Here at thy tomb, O Jesus,
How sweet the morning's breath!
We hear in all the breezes,
"Where is thy sting, O death?"
Dark hell flies in commotion,
While, far o'er earth and ocean,
Loud hallelujahs ring!

Oh, publish this salvation,
Ye heralds, through the earth!
To every buried nation
Proclaim the day of birth!
Till, rising from their slumbers,
The countless heathen numbers
Shall hail the risen light.

Hail, hail, our Jesus risen!
Sing, ransomed brethren, sing!
Through death's dark, gloomy prison
Let Easter chorals ring!
Haste, haste, ye captive legions!
Come forth from sin's dark regions!
In Jesus' kingdom live.

LESSON NOTES.

SECOND QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF ACTS.

LESSON II. [April 12.]

THE RESURRECTION.

1 Cor. 15. 20, 21, 50-58. Mem. vs. 55-58.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.—1 Cor. 15. 20.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON.

Was Paul a disciple when Jesus rose from the dead? What was he? When did he become a believer? Where? Who told him about Jesus? What kind of a spirit did he have? To whom did he after-

ward tell these things? What did Christ's resurrection mean to him? A rising of the soul out of sin to a holy life. What more did it mean? That after death our spiritual bodies should rise into the life of heaven. To whom did Paul talk and write about these things? To the persecuted Christians. What did it do for them? It gave them hope and courage. What does it do for us? The same thing.

DAILY STEPS.

Mon. Read about Paul's conversion. Acts 9. 1-20.

Tues. Find who brought him to the Apostles. Acts 9. 27.

Wed. Read what Paul says of it. 1 Cor. 15. 1-10.

Thur. Read the lesson verses. 1 Cor. 15. 20, 21, 50-58.

Fri. Learn the Golden Text.

Sat. Read the story of the resurrection. Matt. 28.

Sun. Read a beautiful Easter hymn. No. 230 in Hymnal.

THREE LITTLE LESSONS.

We have learned—

1. That out of sin we may rise to holiness.
2. That out of death we may rise to life.
3. That Christ is our life.

LESSON III. [April 19.]

THE LAW OF LOVE (TEMPERANCE LESSON).

Rom. 13. 7-14. Memorize verses 9, 10.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.—Rom. 13. 10.

QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON.

Where was Paul when he wrote to the Romans? At Corinth. Had he visited Rome? No. Did he afterward go to Rome? Yes, twice. What was done on his last visit? He was beheaded. By whom does he send a letter to the Roman church? By Phebe. What was she? A deaconess of the church. What had she done? She had helped many Christians. What does Paul wish the Roman Christians to be? What does he tell them about paying debts? How can we pay the debt of love? By loving our neighbour as ourself. Why is love the fulfilling of the law? What was one of the faults of the Roman people? A love of pleasure. Would love tempt a friend to drink wine or eat at idol feasts? No.

DAILY STEPS.

Mon. Read of Paul's promise to visit the Romans. Rom. 15. 22-29.

Tues. Read how Paul entered Rome. Acts 28. 11-16.

Wed. Read the lesson verses. Rom. 13. 7-14.

Thur. Read another chapter on love. 1 Cor. 13.

Fri. Learn the Golden Text.

Sat. Find what Christ said about fulfilling the law. Matt. 22. 37-40.

Sun. Read the story of the neighbour. Luke 10. 30-37.

THREE LITTLE LESSONS.

We have learned—

1. That we cannot keep the law of ourselves.
2. That love is the fulfilling of the law.
3. That the Lord will give us love freely.

POOR DOLLY.

I wonder if there ever was a doll so badly cared for as I. Let me tell you about just one day, and then tell me what you think. The very first thing this morning Flossy lost me out of the window. She was teaching me to dance on the window sill; but she danced me over the edge, so down I fell into the middle of a rosebush. How the thorns did tear my pretty pink dress! And there I should have stayed till this minute if Bridget had not carried me in. After that Flossy left me lying in all sorts of queer places: once in the cookie jar, once behind the flour barrel, and twice down in the cellar. Each time Flossy's mamma or Bridget found me, and brought me back. But now I am afraid that they will not find me at all. She has dropped me behind the sofa, and here I have been lying for two hours. To be sure I have plenty of company; Flossy's ball is here, and some of her checkers, and her big hat that she has been hunting for ever since last Monday. I suppose that we shall have to lie here altogether till next sweeping day. Did you ever see such a little girl as Flossy? and did you ever hear of such a poor, forlorn dolly as I?—*Youth's Companion*.

"GOD CAN'T WAIT."

A bright four-year-old boy was feeling tired as the day drew to a close, and came to his mother that he might say his evening prayer before going to bed.

"Wait a little while, Ernie," said his mother; "I am busy writing a letter. When that is done, you may say your prayers, my dear."

The little fellow waited a minute or two, and then, coming back to his mother, said: "Mamma, don't you think prayers are more precious than writing letters? God can't wait."

Ernie's mother laid aside her letter at the gentle rebuke, and the evening prayer took its right place—first.

When a man begins by confessing other people's faults, he usually winds up by acknowledging his own goodness.



"HE IS NOT HERE; HE IS RISEN."

BOBBY'S LILY.

"Oh, dear, how queer things turn out sometimes!

"You see, I had an Easter lily, and Jenny had an Easter lily, and they were both full of buds. Only Jenny's buds were most open, and mine were only

green. And I didn't want Jenny to have flowers before I did. I always want to get ahead of Jenny 'cause—well, I don't know why, but I do.

"I asked mamma what made flowers open, and she said 'Sunshine and warm rain.' So I set my lily on the window-

sill in the sun, but I couldn't think where to find any warm rain.

"Then I heard heard the tea-kettle singing away on the stove, and I thought what a nice, warm rain it would make to pour the water out of the spout on my lily, and so I could have flowers when Jenny didn't.

"But what do you s'pose? Just as soon as it felt the water from the tea-kettle spout, that lazy old lily began to curl up, and wilt, and wither, till it was all dead leaves, and buds, and all!

"I didn't cry much, 'cause I'm seven years old; but I tell you I felt bad! And Jenny said: 'Don't cry! You can have all my flowers. I'd rather you would than keep 'em myself—honestly.'

"But that didn't make me feel a bit better, 'cause, you know, then I felt 'shamed!'—*Youth's Companion*.

CHILDREN'S EASTER.

BY LUCY LARCOM.

Breaks the joyful Eastern 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.

Rousing them from dreary hou.
Under snowdrifts chilly,
In His hand He brings the flowers,
Brings the rose and lily.
Every little buried bud
Into life He raises:
Every wild flower of the wood
Chants the dear Lord's praises.

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!

GOING NOWHERE.

It was Johnny, the seven-year-old, who tired of the merry-go-round. The previous summer it had fascinated him, and he could not ride on it too often. This season a single trip satisfied him, and he declined another. "No, thank you, grandfather," he said in his quaintly polite way. "You see, we ride and ride, but we stay under that old tent all the time. I guess that when anybody gets to be seven years old they're too big to care about going and going that doesn't get anywhere."

"Now may the boy hold fast to his wisdom!" commented the grandfather, relating the incident.—*Wellspring*.