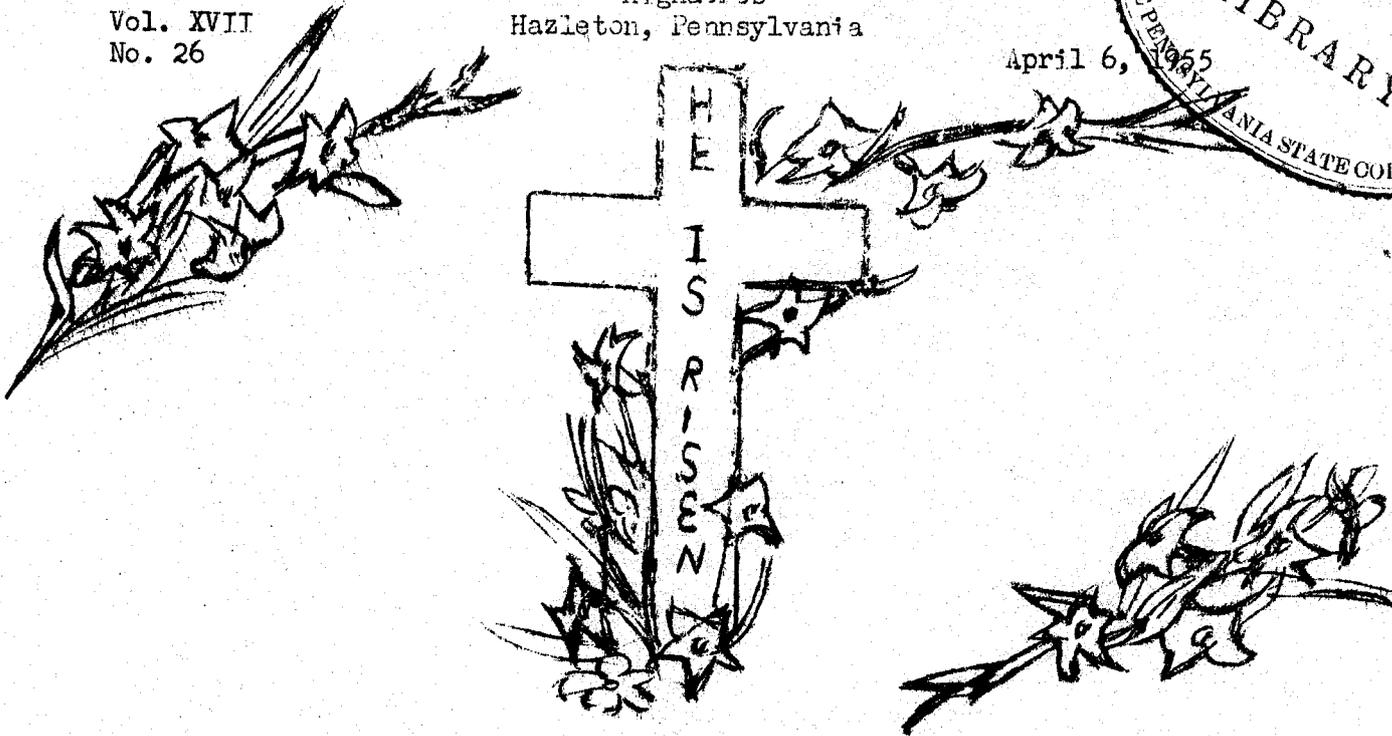
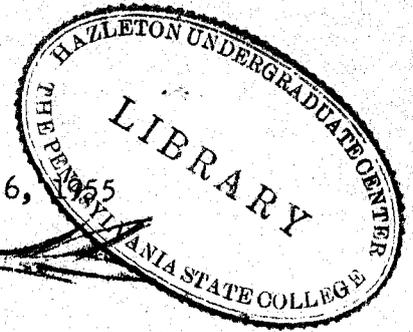


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IT'S EASTER
By Shirley Ray

It's springtime! All around us we sense that wonderful something peculiar to spring, the feeling that the whole world is bursting with new life. Trees and other plants that have appeared dead all winter, are showing signs of the full bloom of life that will come later in the season. Many animals that have spent the winter in the death-like sleep of hibernation are awakening. Birds and insects are again flying about. The world is indeed bursting with the promise of new life, and with this new life comes new hope.

It is this feeling of renewed life and hope that is the true spirit of Easter. On the First Easter, Jesus Christ rose from the dead, thereby giving men the promise of life after death, just as spring gives to nature the promise of life after the death of winter.

Many people today do not experience this spirit of Easter, this wonderful feeling of new life and hope. To them the figure of the Risen Christ is overshadowed by the figure of a gift-giving rabbit. By them the beauty of reawakened nature is overlooked for the artificial beauty of a new "Easter bonnet." These people are hurrying toward nowhere with their senses closed to the voices of nature shouting, "It's Spring," and their hearts even more tightly closed to the voice of God shouting, "It's Easter."

Let's not be one of this rushing crowd. Let's stop and let this wonderful Easter spirit creep over us. Let's take time to realize that it is springtime and it is Easter.

EASTER'S HERE

Easter's here; He is risen,
Praises being sung,
Christ lives; He is risen,
Church bells being rung,
Choirs singing; He is risen,
In a harmonious way,
Churches filled; people listen
To celebrate this day.

Easter bonnets; He is risen,
Blues and pinks and whites,
Bunnies, baskets, eggs aglisten
Decorated bright,
Flowers blooming; He is risen,
Colors bright with hue,
Families visit; hearts glisten,
Easter's here anew.