

Democratic Watchman

Bellefonte, Pa., March 31, 1893

THE BIRTH OF THE OPAL.

The sunbeam loved the moonbeam
And followed her low and high,
And the moonbeam fled and hid her head
She was so shy, so shy.

The sunbeam loved with passion,
Ah! he was a lover bold,
And his heart was true with mad desire
For the moonbeam's pale and cold.

But she fled like a dream before him,
Her hair was a shining sheen,
And she was so shy and so coy,
That fate would annihilate
The space that lay between.

Just as the day lay parting,
The arms of the twilight dim,
The sunbeam sought the one he sought,
And drew her close to him.

'Out of this warm arms started,
And stirred by love's first shock,
She sprang afraid, like a trembling maid,
And hid in the niche of a rock.

And the sunbeam followed and found her,
And led her to love's own feast,
And they were wed on that rocky bed,
And the dying day was their priest.

And lo! that beautiful opal,
That rare and wondrous gem,
With the moon and the sun blended into one
Is the child that was born to them.

His Laddie's Easter Awakening.

BY EMINENT STRATTON REES.

For a long time the little white-

washed cottage of the Collins family

had been what Major Felix Winslow

was pleased to call "an eyesore" to his

aristocratic eye. It was, on no account,

and under no circumstances, to be

mentioned in the same breath with

the elegant bay-windowed, verandaed,

and cupolaed structure which the Win-

snows called home. There should

have been an interval of an hour (or,

at the very least, three quarters of an

hour) between the two subjects, ac-

cording to the idea of the Major; but,

in truth, profane people, without the

least idea of ceremony or of the fitness

of things, just jumbled them up in the

same sentence. Actually did that very

thing! Men of sense, too! "I don't

see why the Major doesn't buy out old

Collins and extend his lawn," Judge

Clayton remarked to a companion one

day, as he wended his way down street

to the Court House. "I wonder he

doesn't tear the old shanty down, and

run his grounds over to the corner."

Just as if the Major had not repeat-

edly urged Adam Collins to sell, had

not fumed and fretted at Adam Collins

until he was weary with much urging,

fuming, and fretting.

He had offered a good price for the

"shanty," but as it was all Adam had,

an inheritance from his father, too, he

had declined. Besides, it would take

a good deal of money to build, and no

other place, so the mother and children

declared, would ever be so home-like.

Then, building-lots were scarce. He

was not bound to sell; was under no

obligations whatever to his more for-

tunate neighbor, and so the little cot-

tage, which, despite the innumerable

spring coatings of whitewash adminis-

tered by Jed, in his best and most ar-

tistic manner, showed unmistakable

signs of decay, remained intact, and

sheltered a happy and contented lit-

tle flock as any in the town.

Adam went on his way, gave no at-

tention to other people's affairs, paid

his allotted amount of taxes in spring

and fall installments, drove his team

week-days, and wore his best blue coat

on Sunday. Besides these duties, he

took the children out for a walk—out

in the country for a bit of green like

his boyhood's farm—when Sunday

school was over in the afternoon, so

that the mother could take a short nap,

and have a few undisturbed moments

for reading. In the meantime the Ma-

ajor hurled some very ill-sounding words

at the shanty across the way, and at

the shanty's owner, and never failed to

apologize for its being when he showed

his friends over his beautiful home.

The only member of the Winslow

family who held any communication

with the cottage, after they found

that Mr. Collins was settled in his

"confounded obstinacy,"—to use

the Major's mildest words—was Earl,

the son and heir of his devoted parents;

Earl, who was to accomplish wonders

in the world, to attain to any and all

heights of fame that could be scaled;

Earl, who was to acquire the wisdom

of the ancients, to inherit the wisest

scholarship of the age, could bring that

result to pass. Money, expense, time,

patience, labor, and anything else nec-

essary, were to be lavishly devoted to

attain all the ambitious ends his father

had in view. In reality, Earl scouted

at the idea of governesses or tutors,

blinded his sweet blue eyes to the

heights of fame awaiting him, and took

more clear to him, and he dwelt for a

time in the lovely realms of childish

imagination. Would that this season

of delicious trustfulness were not so

soon and so rudely swept away by the

sterner realities of life. Would that

we could keep these laddies sweet and

pure, undisturbed in the land of en-

chantment for a longer time, that the

strife for fame, the getting of gold, and

the cruel days when they have little or

no pleasure in that which leads so

near the gate of the beautiful city where

all is love!

If questions arose, and they general-

ly did, that Earl and Ben could not set-

tle for themselves, they carried them

to busy Mrs. Collins. If Earl made

positive assertion that a Remington

rifle could kill a rabbit or a muskrat

quicker than a breech-loader, or that a

flock of white-robed angels sung in his

church choir every Easter morning

(which assertion more practical Benja-

min denied, because, as he argued, "if

they were angels, they'd have wings,

there wouldn't be room for a whole

flock")—all these points of difference

were related, with many confusing ex-

planations, to the busy housewife. And

she gave them the best motherly ad-

vice she could, which served to satisfy

the disputants, although her knowledge

in regard to rifles and bicycles was not

—with all due deference to Mrs. Col-

lins—always trustworthy. With the

free advice went a ginger cookie, and

then, bidding them to run and play and

be good lads, the little court would

close its session.

Some time before Easter, Earl had

begged from the gardener two lilies

warranted to bloom at Easter tide, and

one of them he had given to Ben. Ben

loved flowers dearly, but his mother

hesitated about accepting the choice

plant. Perhaps it might bring down

the intensified wrath of the Major.

"Did your mother say you might

bring it, Earl?" she asked. "She

didn't say I couldn't," said the child.

"Why, Mrs. Collins, we've got bushels

more. Mike couldn't take care of

them all. I'll tell you what we're go-

ing to do. I've got one, too, and if

mine blooms first—I left mine in the

corner of the greenhouse, and told

Mike I'd take care of it myself, and

he wouldn't have to tend to it, and he

said 'all right,'—you know how funny

Mike talks. And, oh! Mrs. Col-

lins, you ought to see the big lily Mike's

got for Mamma, for Easter morning!"

He overlapped his arms till they

formed a great "O," the size of the

flower that was to surprise the mother;

whereupon the children opened their

eyes and gazed in admiration at the boy

who was the happy possessor of such a

wonder in a flower world.

"I've got a lily, too," the boy con-

tinued, "and if mine blooms first, I'm

going to give it to Ben, and if Ben's

blooms first, he is to give it to me.

We'll see who can beat. Funny way,

ain't it, Mrs. Collins?" It certainly

did not lack novelty. "Then we'll try

another flower for the Fourth of July.

That's another good day in the alma-

nac, M'ke says."

As Earl assured Ben's mother, that

afternoon, that his mother wanted Ben

to have the lily, for she would not have

denied him, had he asked for half of

the gorgeous greenhouse, it was taken

carefully, and with all due ceremony,

to the sunniest window, and there

watched with great anxiety. Not the

least embarrassed by the critical obser-

vation that hovered above it, morning,

noon, and night, it grew right on, and

in course of time, budded as any well-

disciplined lily should.

Before this, however, Mrs. Collins,

in her simple way, had told the child

the story of the resurrection morn.

The merry little faces were quite sober

as she finished, and their questions,

though eager, were asked in soft tones.

Suddenly, a thought struck Earl. Ideas

did not come so quickly beneath Ben's

bristly black hair, nor yet to Tilda's

brain.

The child had been sitting in Mint's

wooden rocker, a privilege granted only

occasionally, his dimpled chin resting

in his hands his curls falling carelessly

over his broad lace collar, and against

the dark blue of his coat. He raised

his head, and looked across at Ben.

That young man was lost in thought

and pondering over the wondrous story.

His mother had often told them of it

before, yet it was always new. Ben

managed to forget some part of it every

time.

The voice of Major Winslow's son

aroused him: "Ben what do you say;

let's give the first one that blooms to

Him, Easter? Will you?"

"Y-e-s," the answer came, rather re-

luctantly, and the black head nodded

slowly. Not a glad, cheerful re-

sponse, for the flower was very precious

to Ben. He thought a moment longer.

Earl was asking him to give this lovely

white lily, when it blossomed to the

dear Lord, the same dear Lord who

loved children. His mother had often

told them how He had laid His hands

on the little children, and blessed them.

Yes, and his face brightened up, he

would give it, of course. Besides, Earl

had said that they would try another

flower for the Fourth of July. Yes,

he would give it to Him.

The next Sunday the Major took his

boy on his knee. He had returned

late the night before from a trip South

in the interest of his plantations.

"Now, my dear, I want a full account

of the whole week's proceedings. What

have you done, seen, and heard? Have

the Major kissed the captured face,

and rested his hand on the sunny

curls that nestled against his breast?

The week had not been full of inci-

dent, nothing startling had happened

that Earl could recall. That was

nothing but what had taken place at

the Collins cottage. Mint had graciously

allowed him to sit in her red

rocker for five minutes by the clock,

Tilda had shown him two puzzles on

the slate, Jed had permitted him to

wield the whitewash brush once on the

end of the house, and Mrs. Collins had

fashioned him a fat gingerbread boy

that had two dried cranberries for eyes,

which he saved for the last bite.

Though there had never been a posi-

tive command against the visits to the

cottage, yet the child instinctively felt

that his father did not approve, and

once he heard him say a terrific word

that he hid himself twenty minutes in

the back closet in his mother's room.

So he sat silent a moment after his

father asked for the week's doings.

"I'll tell you a story, papa," and the

head was lifted from its resting place.

"All right, my boy, let's have the

story first."

Then the boy told of the resurrec-

tion morn, all in his own sweet words,

and of the blessed Lord who rose that

day, and of the two angels who talked

so colorfully to the poor women who

went to roll the great stone away from

the grave and found nobody there, and

how they cried and cried till they

found him again.

"And I think, Papa," said the boy

of the Major's knee, "that the angel's

that come down and sing for us Easter

morning look just like those other an-

gels, don't you?"

Major Winslow had never expended

much thought on the possible resem-

blance, and his knowledge of heavenly

beings, as a class, was exceedingly lim-

ited. He was well versed in all that

pertained to legal lore, with its myr-

iad of windings and complications, but

the capacity of a nutshell