



By MARGARET E. LANGSTER

EASTER day comes to us clothed upon with glory. Of all days in the year, it is the most regal. Father Tabb in an exquisite little poem said that the bud that first unfolded at Christmas reached its splendid bloom at Easter. From Christmas to Easter the weeks are processional. After the holidays social gayety is in full swing until arrested by the thoughtful and meditative aspect of Lent. In the shadowy gloom of Good Friday Lent reaches its culmination, and after that pause, when even the stir of business ceases and the world looks back to its Redeemer, we reach the summit and crown of Christendom on Easter Sunday. Fifty, Easter comes in the spring. Nature, too, has been processional. During the frost and ice and snow, the wild gales and low hanging clouds, nature, seeming to be asleep, was in reality very busy. The bare trees were getting ready to burst into leaf, the brown grasses were to put on vivid green, and everywhere the flowers and the blossoms, the bees and the birds were coming, coming day by day, to keep high festival once more.

The pretty girl who likes on Easter Sunday to dress herself in spring apparel from the hat on her head to the shoes on her feet, and the dainty gloves on her hands, is in sympathetic accord with nature. Easter is a movable feast, and when the calendar brings it to us on a day of sleet and snow, we find it hard to believe altogether in the fitness of things.

To be at its royal best, Easter should be an April day. The bright sunbeams, dashing showers and changeable moods of April symbolize the eternal youth of the world. Easter Sunday in this year of grace will wear the same joyous look that it has worn ever since the resurrection. So the maidens who go forth from home in raiment befitting the spring will wear the same attractive charm that has been girlhood's own in every century. Pagan and Christian, under every sun, in every period, in every clime, girlhood in its flower is the sweetest thing beneath the sky.

I am always sorry when the time comes for girl to lay aside their soft furs, heightening as they do the bloom of the face and giving an air to the toilet more enchanting than that conferred by the most delicate lace. When an Easter costume can combine an effect of flowers and furs, it is simply perfect. In our large cities the churches are always thronged to the doors on Easter day, among the worshippers being those who have kept from childhood a feeling of reverence, thankfulness and humility that sends them to church on that Sunday, if on no other. The organ peals in solemn chords, the hymns are full of triumph, the choirs sing with a note of jubilant exultation. We bring the flowers to church, and the lilies and roses, azaleas and hyacinths are very much at home there. Altar and chancel are beautiful with palms and rich with garlands and growing plants. Flowers symbolize the thought of resurrection, the thought that there is no death, but only, even in this world of loss and change, the life everlasting. The daisies were here last summer; they will be here again covering a million fields with their cloth of gold a few weeks hence, and the lilies never die. They may seem to pass away, but their proud succession has no break.

As for us who begin our lives in the cradle, and go on through glad and busy years, from youth to age, our lives are processional, and every Easter marks them with its white stone. Often as Easter returns we remember those who were once at our side and are visible no longer. They have left us for awhile, but they are living beyond our sight, and their invisible presence may be our comfort and support and our armor against sorrow.

They never quite leave us, our friends who have passed. Through the shadows of death to the sunlight above. A thousand sweet memories are holding them fast.

To the places they blest with their presence and love.

The work that they left and the books that they read, speak mutely, though still with an eloquence rare; And the songs that they sang, the dear words that they said, Yet linger and sigh on the desolate air.

And oft when alone, and as oft in the throng, Or when evil allure us or sin draweth nigh, A whisper comes gently, "Nay, do not the wrong."

And we feel that our weakness is pitted on high.

We tell at our tasks in the burden and heat
Of life's passionate noon; they are folded in peace,
It is well; we rejoice that their heaven is sweet,
And one day for us all the bitter will cease.

The cemeteries have many visitors on Easter afternoon. The quiet sleepers in God's Acre are not forgotten; they have never quite left us. Only the mortal part lies beneath the turf. The soul of ethereal essence cannot perish with the body. It comforts our hearts to carry our gifts of flowers and leave them on the mounds under which our dead repose.

A friend tells a touching story of a visit she paid to the grave of a departed friend last Easter Sunday. She had with her a superb bunch of roses, a tribute to the memory of the dead. On the car was a plain day laborer. He also carried flowers. He had a large tin pail overflowing with beautiful lilies. Touching his hat, he addressed the lady, "I think we are bound for the same place," he said, "and we have a similar errand. Rich people like you may carry such roses as yours to adorn the graves of their dead. A friend in the far south sent me these lilies, and I am taking them to the grave of my wife. I am very lonely without her, but it is a comfort to me to give her these lilies. She loved them so dearly." The two mourners in their different stations were drawn together in sympathy by a common grief and a common reverence as they went on their way, each bearing a burden of fragrance and bloom.

While we carry flowers on Easter to the church and the cemetery, we should not omit to carry them or send them to the hospital, the sickroom, the chamber of the shut-in sufferer, the Old Ladies' Home and the homes of the very poor. No one can walk through a crowded quarter in the poorest part of any town bearing flowers without being besieged by the children of the streets. They hunger and thirst for flowers, as sometimes they hunger for bread. I knew an instance in which for many weeks a woman who might have been called the angel of the tenements tried in vain to secure an entrance into a home where poverty and crime had been linked together. The door was always shut in her face. The sad-faced mother did not want compassion and scorned its offer. One day, it must have been in the spring and near the blessed Easter tide, the kind visitor bethought her of a method that might be winning. She went into the house as usual, and as she tapped at the door, which was opened as usual by only the merest crack, she held in front of her a superb rose, a rose

But, after all, that which poor humanity dreads most, shrinks from with greatest qualm at heart, is the separation from those held most dear, whose lives are our lives, whose removal is the stroke sounding the death knell of joyousness and content. And it is to those whose whole future has been darkened by dire affliction that Easter is most precious, because

THREE MARYS AT THE TOMB.

It is full of teaching and hope and promise not only for the life that now is, but also to a marked degree for the one that is to come. Often and often the only gleam of comfort a stricken heart can feel is the hope of reunion in a brighter world to come. It buoys one up when the deep waters of grief and bereavement threaten to engulf the soul.

Many mourners find a forlorn satisfaction in standing by the spot where their beloved ones have been laid. If they could only realize that in reality it is empty! No love, no remembrance, nothing that constitutes life is there. Life, love, memory and vitality revel in a land

The Glory of Easter Day

In the land of the Crescent and Star,
As the Easter day draws nigh,
I ponder the tale of the Holy Cross,
The tale that redeems my soul from loss;

And from lips of Mary afar
I hear an echoing sight:

"They have taken away my Lord,
And I know not where he is laid!"

All, Mary, your plaint is mine!

Too often we come thru the gloom
In the dawn of the Easter morning,
Its beautiful messages scorching,
To weep at an empty tomb.

He is risen, he is not here,

Go out on the highways to meet him;

Go bring the disciples to greet him;

Go scatter the glad Easter cheer.

Truly are those to be pitied who fail of realizing the real message of Easter cheer. And there is a sad, significant lesson in the way that Easter is understood and regarded before sorrow and bereavement have touched and shadowed the life, and then the way it is welcomed and harbored after affliction has altered one's entire outlook on life.

To the young it is a day of rejoicing. With its lilies, azaleas and roses, its carols of hope and triumph, its breath of spring and promise of renewal, it seems an echo of their own youth and joyousness, a glad reminder that the winter is over and past, and the voice of turtle-doves is heard in the land.

This is as it should be. We are not of those who think that stern and sorrowful truth should be impressed upon the young. Time, the great informer, will soon enough acquaint them with life's vicissitudes and losses, and for those who long escape the scorching breath of sorrow we are glad and thankful. They know that grief exists, that trials are known, that afflictions come, but usually hope and buoyancy whisper, "Not for us; no, not for us." And so the strength and cheer of youth furnish strength and endurance for the years to come.

How soon in the wide school of experience the most of us find life out! How impressions alter and views change as "events like billows roll," and whether we will or not the exacting hand of time shapes and matures and settles our convictions and beliefs. Blessed and fortunate are those who, through the guidance of Christian parents and the teachings of the Scriptures, have attained to manhood and to womanhood armored to a degree against the thrusts and wounds of time.

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Whose fields are ever vernal,
Where nothing beautiful can ever fade,
But bloom for aye, eternal."

It would seem that the most significant, comforting and inspiring lessons of Easter were for those who mourn. It has to do with the sepulchre and the sleep of the dead. Yet only in their past tense. Its true meaning is resurgam—I shall rise again; it has to do chiefly with life, renewal, springing from torpor and death into vigor, activity, endurance, all that goes to make up the great word, Life!

That definition is not to be applied only to those who have passed out of this present life. Souls there are which are dead to all their best interests; buried, as it were, in infamy and sin. Their lives darkened by separation from all that constitutes a true and worthy life. To such comes the clarion cry; "Awake, thou that

sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." These words were not spoken to the physically dead, but to the dead in trespasses and sins.

A resurrection from one's old self, and from an existence at variance with truth and righteousness, might well be begun at Easter tide. It would, indeed, be the beginning of eternal life. The purity of the lilies, with their waxen petals, symbolize the white and spotless bloom of the soul that, freed from all mortal trammels, has arisen to celestial spheres. In like manner a soiled and broken life may become cleansed and pure by the casting away of the garment of sin, and seeking at the hands of God a garment new, and clean, and white, the beautiful garment of righteousness.

Ever from the land of the Crescent and Star

"As the Easter day draws nigh,

We ponder the tale of the Holy Cross,

The tale that redeems our souls from

loss—"

and most thankfully and with sacred joy do we welcome this most inspiring and inspiring day.

What should we do for comfort, if when we stand by the cypress trees



EASTER MORNING.

we could not look beyond the mournful shadows and see the glimmer of a breaking Easter day? What hope would there be for crushed and poor earthbound souls if for them there could be no spiritual resurrection, no rising into a new life, now and here, through a renewing by Christ?

To every mourner we would say,

"Have faith in a third-day morning."

believe the true lesson of Easter day, and you shall be comforted.—The Christian Work and Evangelist.

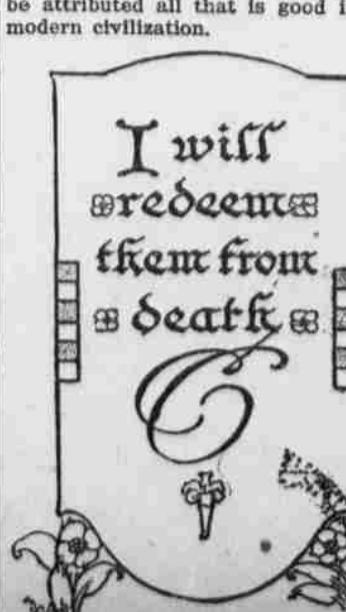
LOVE AND SERVICE

ALL Christendom at this season proclaims the resurrection of Jesus Christ and rejoices in the promise of immortality.

No other figure of history has left such an indelible impress upon hearts and minds of men. His was a life of service, of love, of devotion to mankind, and even in the hearts of those to whom the resurrection is not accepted belief, there is reverence and admiration for the life and works of the Great Teacher. The leaven of his life has spread from the little band of disciples he gathered about him until today nearly one-third of the entire people of the world are devoted and acknowledged followers of the Nazarene, and to the intelligent followers of other creeds he is a teacher and leader of men, comparable to Brahma, Buddha, Zarcoaster and Confucius.

It is fitting that the commemoration of his resurrection should be contemporaneous, with us at least, with the rebirth of nature. Even as he rolled the stone away and put aside the habiliments of death, so at this season the timid violet, the Jonquil, the crocus, the spear of grass push aside the ceremonies of darkness and death, and look up with smiling faces to the sunshine of life. On every hilltop and in every valley the story of the resurrection is being re-enacted day by day.

The greatest lesson in the life of Jesus Christ was that of service, and more years after year is the idea of service entering into the hearts and minds of men. The world is growing better. Millions of men and women are striving today, individually or collectively, to alleviate suffering, to promote health and happiness, and in a myriad ways to make better the condition of their fellowmen. To him who brought light from darkness, life from death, immortality from oblivion, may be attributed all that is good in our modern civilization.



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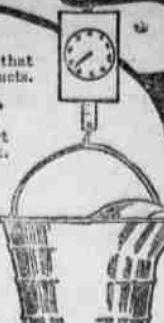
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