A "Balloonatic" Party

BY EMILY ROSE BURT

Just as the struggle with windy March melts into April foolishness, you may appropriately think of a "balloonatic" party. Cut out little brown paper balloons, with the invitations, inscribed on a small white basket-shaped card, below:

In our balloon, in our balloon,
We'll sail away up to the moon,—
Balloonatics we'll say we are,—
And stop at every windy star!

Decorate the rooms with toy balloons of all colors, to bob and bow cheerfully on long sticks and strings from every chair back and window pole. Everybody should be greeted at the door with a request to wear a balloonatic grin during the evening.

Soon after folks have arrived, announce a balloonatic "meet," and invite all adventurers to be ready at the naval balloon station for the start. This is the signal for everybody to gather at a certain spot and receive one of the gay balloons unattached to strings or sticks.

The next announcement is the altitude test. All who enter it must stand in a row and strive to make their individual balloons reach the ceiling by dint of puffs and deep breaths. The most successful are set down by the judges for future awards.

A speed test takes the contestants down the length of the room, chasing their balloons with their lungs. Fans can be provided for this if you prefer.

An endurance test to see how long the balloons can be kept in the air is a third exciting contest.

A balloon battle, in which greens and yellows attempt to bang and "bust" reds and blues, is a thoroughly ice-breaking occupation if the crowd needs livening up.

The promised trip to the moon may be carried out in the same way as "Stage Coach." Each player is assigned some portion of a balloon's anatomy or the name of a star or planet. A clever person must be selected to tell the story of the balloonatics trips to the moon, in which the various trials and tribulations that real balloonists have been known to undergo may come in for exploitation. Each time the word assigned to any player is mentioned, he must rise and blow his balloon into the air, catch it again, and sit down. On mention of the arrival at the moon ensues the interchange of seats.

As if the company may not have acted sufficiently like lunatics, the next amusement may be a "luny" one. The company should be divided into two sides, and the members are to vie with each other in doing individually or collectively something utterly absurd.

One side may act a scene from "Main Street"; the other side may put on a mock minstrel show, or some vaudeville parodies.

When it is refreshment time, the balloonists are asked to come down out of the clouds to earth and food. Hot coffee is reviving in such a case, and of course there should be sandwiches, which, to be entirely consistent, may have filling of air currents and moon memories (currant jelly and cream cheese.

The stars may be represented by cookies or little cakes, or by big, luscious layer cakes, dusky as the night with dark chocolate frosting, but lighted by small star candles.

Big baskets filled with cracked hickory and butter-nuts may have real little balloons tethered to them as they are passed. Little paper parasols or wind-blown umbrellas will make delightful favors.

After supper, play the old-fashioned game of "Elements." The players sit in a circle, and one begins by tossing a rolled-up handkerchief to someone else, crying, "Air." As soon as the player who catches the handkerchief has mentioned some creature of the air—gull, eagle, aeroplane, swallow, or whatever it may be—he or she tosses it to another player and calls, "Earth!" The recipient must name some inhabitant of the earth—mole, bear, girl, hog, etc. When "Fire!" is called the player must keep silent until tossing it on again.

The prizes for the balloonatic races should also be awarded after supper. If you care to introduce dancing, put on your liveliest records, and let the balloonatics end the evening in their own way.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

EASTER DAY

The Walk of Emmaus, St. Luke 24: 13-21. Golden Text—Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen.—St Luke 24: 5, 6.

Lesson Foreword—The two who walked out to Emmaus were suffering from an eclipse of faith. It is true that before they left Jerusalem the women had brought strange stories from the tomb of Jesus, but these stories the two could not credit. They required stronger evidence than that of the women to convince them that Jesus was still alive. Jesus' appearance to them is characteristic of his post-resurrection appearances. He came upon them suddenly and vanished just as suddenly. By such appearances Jesus convinced the disciples that, though unseen, he was still near at hand and could still hold fellowship with them. The barrier between the seen and the unseen is only the thinnest shell, which he can break through at any time.

I. The Stranger, 13-16.

V. 13. Two of them; two of the Christian community in Jerusalem, not two of the disciples. One of them was Cleopas (v. 18), and, according to some, the other was Simon, while others think that it was Luke himself. Went that same day. Their Master having been taken from them, the disciples were scattering to their own homes. Among others, the two disciples who lived at Emmaus went back to that town. Emmaus; a most difficult place to identify, but near enough to Jerusalem (60 furlongs or 7½ miles) for the two to have their evening meal there and to return to Jerusalem the same evening and find the disciples still assembled.

V. 14. These things. The crucifixion, and perhaps the reported resurrection of Jesus were the topic of their conversation.

V. 15. Jesus . . drew near. While they were absorbed in thought and conversation, Jesus came upon them unnoticed from behind.

V. 16. Various conjectures have been offered for their failure to recognize Jesus—that they were emotionally unstrung, that his appearance had been disfigured by the sufferings on the cross, or that he appeared in a transformed body. The evangelist evidently believed that this was the work of God himself upon their eyes.

II. The Conversation, 17-27.

V. 18. To Cleopas it was incredible than an inhabitant of Jerusalem or a pilgrim to the passover there, should be unacquainted with the stirring events of the crucifixion. It was the talk of the day in Jerusalem.

V. 19. A prophet. This much at least was certain concerning Jesus, that he was a prophet His teachings and his works attested that the spirit of God was in him in a unique way.

V. 20. The chief priests. According to a concession of the Romans, the Jewish Sanhedrin had to right to declare according to their own religious laws upon whom the death sentence should be passed, but the Romans reserved the right to carry out the sentence. Thus the chief priests were ultimately responsible for the death of Jesus.

V. 21. We trusted, etc. Not only had the two recognized Jesus as a prophet, but they had had hopes that he would prove the Messiah who would deliver Israel from the yoke of foreign oppression. Up to this time no Jew had thought that the Messiah would have to suffer death to achieve his end, and so the death of Jesus shattered their hopes. The third day. They had dim recollections of Jesus' prediction that on the third day he would rise again (v. 7), but it was now the third day and he had not yet appeared to them.

V. 22. Their hopes, however, were stirred by the favorable report of the women. Although they did not regard this report as merely idle gossip, they were not in a position to establish it as entirely trustworthy.

V. 25. Fools, and slow of heart, etc. The two had shown a gross lack of understanding in their reading of the prophets. For, according to Jesus, the prophets had pointed forward to just such a Messiah as himself. It is worthy of note that here Jesus regards his death and resurrection as the fulfilment of prophecy.

V. 26. Ought not Christ to . . suffered? The Jews had looked for a triumphant, and not a suffering Messiah. They had never supposed, for instance, that Isa., ch. 53 referred to Messiah, whereas Jesus identified himself with the suffering servant of that passage. "According to the decree respecting the Messiah as expressed in prophecy, precisely the things which the two had allowed to destroy their hopes were a confirmation of them." (Plummer).

V. 27. Moses and the . . prophets. The three divisions of the Old Testament were known to the Jews as the Law (the books of Moses), the prophets and the writings. Thus Jesus gave them a running commentary on all the references in the Old Testament to the Messiah.

III. The Disclosure, 28-31.

V. 28. The stranger gave the impression that, had they not invited him to their home, he would have journeyed on.

V. 30. Although he was the guest, Jesus assumed the role of host and this unusual procedure helped the two to recognize him. Took bread, etc. In Palestine bread is torn apart by the hand, and sometimes the host tears it off himself and then offers it to the guests. It has been commonly thought that Jesus had a way, peculiar to himself, of breaking and blessing the bread. If so, this too would help the two to recognize him.

Application.

Many valuable lessons may be drawn from this Easter narrative.

1. Our unawareness of the Great Companion's nearness to us. Many think that Christ is mediated to us by a priest or sacrament or church. But he is near to us as our breathing. We have but to hear his voice, and our hearts will burn within us. It is a constant surprise to us, this nearness of the Great Companion, and his readiness to join in our wayside conversation, and revive our sinking faith.

2. The resurrection appearances meant the beginning of a new life for the early Christians. When they became convinced that Jesus was living, their faith in him reasserted itself with overwhelming force. Now they understood that the way of the cross was the unexpected pathway that God had selected for the fulfilment of his plan. These early Christians were filled with ecstatic joy, and soon they set out to capture the world for Christ, the victorious, risen Christ, who would complete his messianic task—so they felt sure—by a speedy return to earth. It was a sunrise of a new epoch, both for these Christians and for the world.

3. We can still walk with Christ. Henry Drummond gives the confession of a man of outstanding intellectual strength, in the high noon of his success. He said, "I want to speak tonight only a little, but that little I desire to speak of the sacred name of Christ, who is my life, my inspiration, my hope, and my surety. In looking back upon my experience, that part of my life which stands out and which I remember most vividly, is just that part that has had some conscious association with Christ." After all is not this the best sort of religion—just walking with Christ and sharing his high friendship?

4. The lesson reveals Jesus as conquering death and all its terrors. Paul phrased it thus—"Jesus Christ . . hath abolished death." T. R. Glover has a splendid passage to show how Christ conquered the pagan world. He "out-lived" him; he "out-died" him; and he "out-thought" him.

How did the early Christian "outdie" the pagan? That is our concern just now. Why did he face martyrdom with dauntless courage? Glover is speaking of Tertullian, a famous scholar and saint. "I stay here," he said. What does it cost a man to do that? People asked what was the magic of it. The magic of it was just this,—on the other side of the fire was the same friend; "if he wants me to be burnt alive, I am here." Jesus Christ was the secret of it.

Easter Lillies.

Majestic, stately, lovely as a dream,
The Easter lilies bow their heads in prayer
Before the shrine and offer incense there;
Like flowers of pearl the shining blossoms seem;
Each golden calyx seems to catch a gleam
Of light from Him, the Altogether Fair;
Each lily breathes a message on the air,
The words of Christ form for each one the theme.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life;
He who believes in Me, though he were dead,
Yet shall he live; and he who lives in Me,
Shall never die. And lo! have I not said
'I am the Way, the Truth that frees from strife'?
Behold death swallowed up in victory!"

—Elizabeth Scollard.

Spring.

The Spring is here, rejoice, O heart
Bowed down with grief and care;
Lift up your head and look above,
The skies are blue and fair.

Spring spread her mantle o'er the earth,
And banished Winter's snows;
The birds are singing loud with mirth,
And gone are Winter's woes.

From their long sleep the flowers awake
To greet the new born Spring,
And from the air fresh fragrance take
And live, and laugh, and sing.

So take fresh courage, look above,
O heart bowed down with care,
For all is fair, and all is love,
And Spring is everywhere.

He who serves his country well has no need of ancestors.—Voltaire.

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Now the noisy winds are still;
April's coming up the hill!
All the spring is in her train,
Led by shining ranks of rain,
First the blue and then the shower,
Bursting bud and smiling flower,
Brooks set free with tinkling ring,
Birds, too full of song to sing;
Dry old leaves astir with pride,
Where the timid violets hide,
All things ready with a will,
April's coming up the hill!

He who saves another's character is a greater benefactor than he who saves his life.—Horace Mann.

What do we live for, if it is not to make life less difficult to each other. —Goethe.

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