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Poetry.

AN EASTER SONG.

She sang me a song of triumph, a
hymn of the Easter time,
That swept o'er the chords of feeling
with the charm of its words and
thyme.

The theme was of love that conquered,
that won in the war with death.
Of hope in a life immortal surviving
the fleeting breath.

Like a grand, triumphal pean, the
psalm of a love supreme,
My soul was filled with its rapture—I
lived in a strange, sweet dream.

And a calm came over my spirit, a
peace without doubt or fear;
I felt on the wave of music, uprafted
to a purer sphere.

Bright vistas opened before me,
demesnes that the foot no'er trod;
I longed for a bliss which only the
soul finds in rest with God.

The wonderful anthem ended, its last
notes dying away
As the south wind breathed its promise
of verdure and flowers for May.

The jubilant chimes of Easter rang out
with a glad refrain.
I felt that for man, as nature, the
springtime would come again.

I thought of the risen Saviour, I
thought of His empty tomb,
And over the graves of ages I saw the
amaranth bloom.

Select Family Reading

Michael's Easter

BY MARIAN P. KENNEDY

"DEAR me! there is St. Philip's bell ringing, and I am not nearly ready for choir practicing!"

Mrs. Bland rose slowly and wearily from the low sewing-chair into which she had thrown herself when the twilight fell, utterly worn out after a long day's work.

As she moved to and fro—making ready for her duty, it is true, but feeling that great repugnance to the task which comes to a naturally energetic woman only when her body and mind are overworked—a sudden wave of penitence swept over her, and her eyes first softened with tears, then grew bright with other and better thoughts. For she had remembered Michael, the "tenor" of St. Philip's Chapel choir, and how, through rain and storm, heat and cold, he plodded his two miles every Friday and Sunday night for the simple joy of lifting up his voice with all his heart and soul in the chants and hymns of his beloved church.

"Can I begrudge the poor souls the little I am able to do for them?"

She felt reproached and self-condemned.

As she hurried through the misty darkness, alone, but fearless, she saw in the distance the open door, with light streaming through, and now and then a black form appearing, and then swallowed up in the radiance from within. It seemed to the tired woman as if God's light was shining out through this "open door," and somehow it rested her, and she felt that He cared that she was weary, and then it did not seem hard any longer.

She went on and into the light, and the pretty chapel seemed full of kindly faces, and though they were "black," they were also "comely."

Mrs. Bland had undertaken to train a choir when the work was first started in Monks Corner; and if she was rather proud of her success now, who could blame her? It had been a labor of love to her, undertaken in memory of her old mammy and the happy childish days, when all the little darkies on the plantation came to the "house" on Sunday afternoons to sing hymns with the "young ladies."

Everybody who has ever been South has been struck by the wild, pathetic ring of the negroes' voices. There is something indescribably sorrowful in the tone; they sing with the heart as well as the lips. Untrained, they often sing with the deepest, purest pathos, and the very uncouthness of their speech adds to the effect.

Michael's voice was entirely untutored, and his pronunciation simply astounding; but, for all that, he sang with such abandon, and his notes were so wild and sweet, that people came from far and near to hear him sing. Without being at all presumptuous, he yet took a position in the choir, by common consent, as leader, for he sang by note. All the rest of them sang by ear only; but oh, how quickly they learned the air! It was a real pleasure to their organist to teach them a new tune.

"To-night we must begin on our Easter hymns, Cassy," she said to the leading soprano, a small dark woman in a black crepe veil, who was very quiet and refined in her manner, and was one of the "pillars" of the chapel. It was Cassy who took care of the beautiful communion service (the gift of some good Northern women) and "did up" the communion linen, and it was to Cassy that the good rector of the "big church" (who ministered to this small flock, as well as to his large one, while these waited for one of their own race,) turned when things went wrong about chapel. She never failed him or anybody else. Her husband and two children were, as a matter of course, brought by her to the bishop, and were confirmed, and so this family was staunchly Episcopalian, and, if is to be feared, rather looked down on those neighbors who cared so little for the right as to remain outside the fold.

So Cassy smiled and showed all her white teeth, and was ready for anything. Michael was fairly radiant when told he might choose the hymns for the night's practice.

He turned the leaves of his hymnal with serious consideration. Michael was acknowledged by all members of the choir to have "a very pretty taste" in tunes, for he almost invariably preferred something a little difficult, and triumphed in a very childlike way when he was able to sing it at once, when the others had to have it played over for them once or twice.

He did not seem to care much for new things that night, however, but made his choice on an old, well-known favorite.

"Miss Mary, would you please 'em, play dis one. 'Weary of earth, and laden with sin.' I jes simply adores love dat hymn, an' dat tune; it make me feel like dere ain' nothin' in life to bother 'bout!"

So the clear voices rang out together, and the organ pealed, and the beautiful words came to her who sang the hymn with them as they had never seemed to come before, so full of meaning and of all comfort and blessing. It seemed as if she could sing on forever!

"'It is the voice of Jesus that I hear,'" sang Michael, and his voice soared far above the rest, and the echo seemed to carry it on, up into the vaulted roof, and out into the mist and darkness of the night.

"'Mine the life gained—'"

As the player caught a glimpse of the rapt expression on the man's face, a sudden chill seemed to strike her. "How music affects this race!" she said to herself. But the look haunted her. They sang for hours. Easter chants and triumphant Resurrection hymns; but through it all Michael's face, as he stood singing that first hymn, was present to his teacher. She could not forget it. When at last they had sung as much as they liked, and all was arranged for the coming Easter music, they said a friendly "good-night" to "Miss Mary," and departed to their homes happy and contented. Michael, who had to walk his two miles into the country, took the books from Mrs. Bland, and trudged at a respectable distance behind her until her own door was reached, when, with a "servant-mistis," he too vanished into the night.

Several weeks went by, and there were no more choir meetings at St. Philip's, for a fever had broken out amongst the negroes, and in almost every hut there was illness. There was great suffering, for it had been a hard winter, and they were very improvident, but at last things seemed to mend, and the week before Easter Mrs. Bland sent word to Cassy that there would be a meeting of the choir on the following Thursday — Holy Thursday night. On that morning Cassy presented herself, looking demure and self-contained as usual, though all her family had been down with the fever, and were not even then entirely well.

"Miss Mary," she said, "'tain, no use to have practice to-night, 'cos Michael is low as he kin be; an' somehow I can't get used to singin' thout Michael. Seems like my voice would jes dis out in my throat." Her voice trembled and broke.

"Michael ill?" And Mrs. Bland jumped up and seized her bonnet.

"Dat's it, Miss Mary—dat's it. He say he wan' see 'Miss Mary'; he jes call for 'Miss Mary' all de time. If you will 'low me, I'll jes walk out wid you, an' show you de way to Michael's house. You ben dar?"

"Never in the house, but often I have driven by the door, and he always was standing by the forge, working hard, poor fellow, at his blacksmithing, and he never failed to see me, and bow and scrape and look happy as I passed."

"Michael fa'ly 'dores de ground you walk on, Miss Mary. He says of'en, if all white folks was like you, dis yere would be a more easy-like wor' to live in," replied Cassy, mournfully.

They set forth and took the country road, going on their way silently.

On a clean, white bed Michael lay, his wife wiping the death dew from his face. A faint but happy smile lighted up the poor black face as he saw who entered. She could not speak, but only took his hand, hard with honest work, but weak now, and never, again to be strong in this world.

"Miss Mary, how good! My mistis!"

The wife and Cassy turned away.

"Miss Mary, sing—weary 'tis de voice—!"

And "Miss Mary" sang—sang as she never had before, and as the sweet melody and beautiful words fell on his fast closing ear, Michael's face was "as the face of an angel."

"'So vile I am, how dare I hope to stand
In the pure glory of that holy land?'"

"Dat's so! Lord, how dare I! His de blood that can for all atone! Dear Lord, atone for Michael!"

"'Mine the life won—'"

"Miss Mary" stopped singing, for poor Michael had passed beyond the sound of human voices, into "the pure glory of that holy land."

DOG DID THE WRONG TRICK.

The Irishman wanted to sell the dog but the prospective buyer was suspicious and finally decided not to buy. The man told him why he was so anxious to sell. "You see," he said, "I bought the dog and trained him myself. I got him so he'd bark all the time if a person stepped inside the gate, and I thought I was safe from burglars. Then my wife wanted me to train him to carry bundles, and I did it. If I put a packet in his mouth, the dog would keep it there till some one took it away. Well, one night I awoke and heard some one in the next room. I got up and grabbed my gun. They were there—three of the scoundrels and the dog."

"Didn't he bark?" interrupted the man.

"Sorry a bark; he was too busy."

"Busy? What doing?"

"Carrying a lantern for the burglars."

If you must be frank, be frank with yourself.

AN EASTER BLESSING.

Written for the FREE PRESS.

THE choir in the village church had just finished practising an Easter Anthem, when Kathleen Halliday suddenly exclaimed: "I believe we always have the barest and coldest looking church at Easter in all Canada. A few lilies are generally brought, and possibly we may have a bouquet to adorn the pulpit. And that's the extent of decorating for Easter. Now, what I want to know is this, why can't we surprise the world for once?"

"Well said, Kathleen, but where will we get the flowers?" exclaimed Louise Moore.

"Oh! Kathleen has been growing some for this very special occasion," ventured Harry Norton.

"Wrong for once," said Kathleen. "We will visit Madam Nature's own garden.

"Easter is late this year, and already there are some beautiful flowers to be had—hollow lilies; violets, arbutus, and plenty of moss.

"Well now, suppose we spend Saturday forenoon in the woods and do our decorating in the afternoon."

"Agreed" exclaimed all.

"Then we will meet here no later than nine o'clock."

* * *

"Well, Kathleen, did you get all you expected in the woods this morning? Mollie has been keeping dinner waiting some time, and you must be hungry as well as tired," said Mr. Halliday, as Kathleen entered the dining room where her father sat waiting for her.

"Oh, papa, I am not a bit tired, only I'm half starved. The woods are beautiful this year. We brought back ferns, moss, lilies, violets, and such lovely trailing vines. But even though we have such a lovely variety of green, I really don't believe that one of us can use it. I mean decorate the church here the way they do in the city where they have not half the flowers that we have. Oh! dear, I wish you were not so busy to-day, papa, I would be asking an overlasting favor!"

"What now, Kathleen?" said her father.

For a moment she was silent. She remembered only too well that it was over three years since her father had entered a place of worship. Not since the dear mother had been laid to rest. What a happy home it had been! Father was always the first to offer help for anything in connection with the church.

Mrs. Halliday's illness had been so short that it seemed much harder for them to realize their loss. But when all was over, it was noticed by all that Mr. Halliday was a changed man. He was bitter and cold to all, save his only child, who was then a bright, golden-haired girl of fifteen.

Mr. Halliday and Kathleen seemed to realize that they were living in the present, not the past, for Mr. Halliday looked at his daughter and smiling said to her: "And suppose I am not too busy?"

"Well, you see, papa, I would invite you to come and give us a few of your artistic ideas about decorating. You are a born artist in that line, papa. My, what a pity it is that your daughter doesn't take after you."

"Ha! Ha! so you managed to visit Castle Blarney as well this morning. No wonder you are tired. Well, hurry up and I will lend you an hour or two."

"God will hearken! God will save!" sang Kathleen from the fullness of her heart, as she ran up to her room.

Soon they were at the church, and Mr. Halliday, who had not been in that sacred edifice for years, was as interested as any of the gay group around him.

They banked the windows with moss in which violets were to be imbedded next day. Beautiful sprays of ferns and white lilies completely covered the pulpit. The altar was banked with ferns and lilies. Even the tops of the windows were festooned with fern leaves and trailing arbitus.

They were finished just as the rays of the setting sun gleamed through the stained glass windows on the beauty that proclaimed the glad tidings of Easter.

"Well! well! This is a surprise, the most pleasant of my life. This is perfect." Mr. Halliday turned and beheld the minister.

"Yes, Mr. Hill, it is beautiful, and the work here this afternoon has brought peace to my soul that passeth understanding. I seem once more to be with the angel that was taken from me over three years ago."

While the choir were rehearsing "Consider the Lilies," a slight noise caused both men to turn. They beheld a man, evidently a tramp, sink into one of the seats near the door.

"What do you want, my friend?" asked the minister, approaching him.

"Rest, only rest. This looks like heaven. I am so tired, for I have walked until I can walk no longer. I heard the music and I came in. Oh! does heaven look like this? Why, Mr. Halliday, is it you? Don't you know me? I could not die until I had seen you and asked your forgiveness for the way I treated you."

"Oh, I forgave you long ago," said Mr. Halliday. "You have suffered more than I."

It was his old time partner, Henry Wilson, who had absconded, and almost bankrupted Mr. Halliday. Now, after years of wandering, he had returned to his old home, apparently dying, and without a cent to help himself. Mr. Halliday took him home with him and all that loving care could do was done to restore him to health.

On Easter morning the little church could scarcely hold the unusually large congregation.

Perhaps no one in the church was as happy as the two men who had met so strangely in the church the day before.

Through the help of Mr. Halliday, Henry Wilson was able to secure a position as book-keeper in a near-by city. Nothing pleased him so well as to be able to pass the kindness done him by Mr. Halliday on to some one else who was in trouble.

* * *

At Easter time Mr. Wilson always returns to his old home for Easter. And if possible he assists the young people in their decorations. He says that it was at Easter time that he found life worth living.

CLARA SEGSOR, Georgetown.

"THANK YOU."

Several winters ago a woman was coming out from some public building when the heavy door swung back and made egress somewhat difficult. A little street urchin sprang to the receding door and held open the door, she said, "Thank you," and passed on.

"Cracky! d'yo hear that?" said the boy to a companion standing near by him.

"No; what?"

"Why, that lady in sealskin said, 'Thank yo,' to the likes o' me."

Amused at the conversation, which she could not help overhearing, the lady turned round and said to the boy: "It always pays to be polite, my boy; remember that."

Years passed away, and last December, when doing her Christmas shopping, this same lady received an exceptional courtesy from a clerk in Montreal, which caused her to remark to a friend who was with her:

"What a great comfort to be civilly treated once in awhile—though I don't know that I blame the store clerks for being rude during the holiday trade."

The young man's quick ears caught the words, and he said:

"Pardon me, madam, but you gave me my first lesson in politeness a few years ago."

The lady looked at him in amazement while he related the little forgotten incident, and told her that that simple "Thank you" awakened his first ambition to be something in the world. He went the next morning and applied for a situation as office boy in the establishment where he was now an honored and trusted clerk.

Only two words, dropped into the treasury of a street conversation, but they yielded returns of a certain kind more satisfactory than investments, stocks, and bonds.—The Congregationalist.

QUERIES.

Ask your friends these questions, and make them answer each with a word ending in "city."

1—What is the city of learning? University.

2—What is the city of enmity? Animosity.

3—What is the city of shrewdness? Sagacity.

4—What is the city of truth? Veracity.

5—What is the city of happiness? Felicity.

6—What is the city of doubt? Perplexity.

7—What is the city of greed? Voracity.

8—What is the city of firmness? Tenacity.

9—What is the city of ostentation? Pomposity.

10—What is the city of springs? Elasticity.

11—What is the city of inclination? Propensity.

12—What is the city of notoriety? Publicity.

13—What is the city of plainness? Simplicity.

14—What is the city of fight? Pugnacity.

A CONSISTENT TEMPERANCE REFORMER.

The late Archbishop Temple was an ardent, temperance reformer. He grasped the true significance of the temperance movement in a way that gave him an unbounded confidence in its ultimate triumph and an unflagging zeal in the prosecution of the work.

His thought and practice were so perfectly harmonious as to commend them to every right thinking man. His own views in this respect are clearly set forth in his own words: "I have been for years a teetotaler, because, I have long ago learned the difference between 'Come along,' and 'Go along.' I have long ago learned that if you want to lead men you must put yourself at their head, and that it is no use to point out the path and say, 'I am going a road that is good for me, but you go the road that is good for you.' If you really desire to lead them, you must lead them in person and not simply in precept."

MORAL COURAGE.

To do wrong, or what is the same thing, to refrain from doing right, when the time for action arrives, because we are afraid of what other people may say or think, is the worst form of slavery. To break such bonds we need a deeper consecration to truth and duty. We may admit all the arguments against such bondage and yet fail to escape it; but if we are loyal and faithful to the good and the right—if in our inmost heart we love and honor them above all things—we shall find continually growing within us that moral courage which wins for us our best freedom.

DEPORTMENT.

The new steward was on its first trip, with a lot of landlubbers on board.

"Isn't she behaving beautifully, captain, in this heavy sea?" exclaimed an enthusiastic marine reporter.

"Yes, sir," said the gruff captain, "a great deal better, sir, than the passengers are."

ON EASTER MORNING.

Beautiful children, whose voices sweet
Echo the carol the bells repeat
All in the Easter morning,
Did ye know that before the sun so red
Had clambered up from his downy bed
Loveliest carols were sung and said
Early on Easter morning?

Out where the willows are bending
low,
Out where the mists drift to and fro,
All in the Easter morning,
Little brown birds in quiet nest,
Twittering low 'neath mother's breast,
Say, "Spring is coming, let's sing our
best,
Early on Easter morning."

Dainty forelots, in woolly fold,
Safely hidden from wind and cold,
All in the Easter morning,
Lifting their blankets, peep to see
What kind of a place the world may be
And wake so gladsome merrily
Early on Easter morning.

The clear little brook sings low and
sweet,
Touching the pebbles with dainty feet,
All in the Easter morning.
"Spring is coming; I make the way
Green, where the flowers shall be some
day;
Singing, I herald the sun's first ray
Early on Easter morning."

Beautiful ones, ere the sun was red
Loveliest carols were sung and said
All in the Easter morning.
The light mist shroudeth the sleepy
town,
But the birds and the ferns and the
brooklet brown,
Sing in the gray, while the stars look
down,
Early on Easter morning.

VIEWS OF SOME GREAT MEN.

No one supposes that law can make men temperate, but law can shut up these bars and dram shops, which facilitate and feed intemperance, which double our taxes, treble the peril to property and life, and make the masses tools in the hands of designing men to undermine and cripple law.—Wendell Philips.

If anybody will take charge of all Boston's poverty and crime which results from drunkenness, the South Congregational Church, of which I have the honor to be the minister, will alone take charge of all the rest of the poverty which needs relief in the city of Boston.—Edward Everett Hale, D. D.

Drunkenness is not only the cause of crime, it is crime; and the encouragement to drunkenness, for the sake of profit on the sale of drink, is certainly one of the most criminal methods of assassination for money ever adopted by the bravoes of any age or country.—John Ruskin.

Gladstone in a speech in the House of Commons in May, 1881, referring to the liquor traffic, said: "This traffic has wrought more harm than the three great historic scourges—war, famine and pestilence, combined."

I impeach the liquor traffic of high crimes and misdemeanors. It is mere mockery to ask us to put down drunkenness by moral and religious means alone.—Cardinal Manning.

If we should sweep intemperance out of the country there would be hardly poverty enough left to give healthy exercise to our charitable impulses.—Phillips Brooks.

THE MOTHER AND THE GROWING BOY.

"A boy's life goes forward by leaps and bounds after he passes the nursery stage," writes Margaret E. Sangster in Woman's Home Companion for March. "At least it seems so to his mother. There is the day when his father remonstrates about those babyish curls that are so beautiful, and that the mother twines around her fingers with such care and pride. The boy has begun to hate them, and he goes joyously to the barber's to have them cut off. As the shears separate each soft ringlet, the mother feels as if something precious was severed from her very heart. She gathers them up and lays them away, and as her little lad walks beside her with sturdier step than before she realizes that the coming dawn of his manhood is quickening on the horizon.

"There is the day when she sees her boy, a gallant little figure, with his hands in his pockets, looking an inch taller than yesterday, because he is dressed less like a little girl and more like the boy across the street whom he has secretly envied. Those pockets mark an era in boyish development. Are they not distinctly a badge of sex? Surely, considering that a man has fourteen pockets and a woman none at all, the day when the boy first realizes that he has pockets, and that they are to hold whatever he pleases, is a great day for him. The boy has his own happy day, too, when he first puts on a real pair of shoes, shoes in which he may run and jump and kick a ball."

ABSENT-MINDED.

The judge was at dinner in the new household, according to the Philadelphia Ledger, when the young housekeeper asked:

"Did you ever try any of my biscuits, judge?"

"No," replied the judge, "I never did, but I dare say they deserve it."

BABY'S DOCTOR.

"With a box of Baby's Own Tablets on hand I feel just as safe as if I had a doctor in the house." This is the experience of Mrs. John Young, Auburn, Ont. Mrs Young adds:—"I have used the Tablets for teething and other troubles of childhood and have never known them to fail." Hundreds of other mothers are just as enthusiastic in their praise. Colic, indigestion, diarrhoea, worms, constipation and other little ills are speedily cured by this medicine. It is absolutely safe—always does good—cannot possibly do harm, and you have the guarantee of a government analyst that the Tablets contain no opiate or poisonous soothing stuff. Sold by medicine dealers or by mail at 25 cents a box from the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.