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A SONG OF EASTER.

*Sing, children, sing!
And the lily comes awing!
Sing that life and joy are waking and that Death no more is king!
Sing the happy happy tumult of the slowly brightening spring.
Sing, little children, sing!*

*Sing, children, sing!
Winter wild has taken wing
Fill the air with the sweet tidings till the frosty echoes ring!
Along the caverns the icicles no longer glittering shine!
And the crocus in the garden lifts its bright face to the sun,
And in the meadows softly the brooks begin to run.
And the golden catkins swing
In the warm airs of the spring;
Sing, little children, sing!*

*Sing, children, sing!
The lilies white you bring
In the joyous Easter morning for hope are blossoming!
And as the earth her shroud of snow from off her breast doth fling,
So may we cast our fetters off in God's eternal spring.
So may we find release at last from sorrow and from pain,
So may we find our childhood's calm, delicious dawn again,
Sweet are your eyes, O little ones, that look with smiling grace,
Without a shade of doubt or fear into the Future's face.
Sing, sing in happy chorus, with joyful voices tall
That death is life, and God is good, and all things shall be well!
That bitter days shall cease
In warmth and light and peace—
That winter yields to spring—
Sing, little children, sing!
—Celia Thaxter in St. Nicholas.*

THEIR EASTER EVE.

HAT a face it was that looked up from behind the counter at John Bartholomew's on Union square! Great brown eyes, shadowed by long lashes and faint shadows of the face around them, a patrician nose, with the brow above in harmonious outline, and, to finish, a perfect contradiction in the strongest, most resolute mouth that nature ever set in the mold with features otherwise significant of gentle acquiescence. There was a perplexed expression on the face of the handsome girl, who, taking a bit of unengaged time for reading, had just finished a paragraph on the duties of every day life as help to ideal existence. She did not comprehend its philosophy. "Ah!" thought she, "it means that if Spinoza ground glasses for spectacles and Montezqueu worked in dusty garden beds to find greater mastery of thought, there is no reason why I may not develop right here among umbrellas!"

A smile of doubt passed over the fair countenance which had not the slightest trace of a handsome woman's consciousness. She was of that uncommon type which is beauty at its best—beauty which does not know it is being looked at. Her hair, brown and full of yellow glintings, was gathered high upon her head in a knot of unruly little curls, and as she turned the soft decline from the crown to the back of the neck revealed that portion of a woman's head which is so rarely handsome. "What can I show you?" asked Laura Everdale of the gentleman before her.

"Umbrellas, if you please," he said; "sangster, if you have it." "This was what he said, but not at all the thing he looked or thought, for with ever ready romance, Shakespeare's Beatrice, and the tinge of her pleasantry in "Much Ado About Nothing," which he had seen the night before, flashed across his mind.

Now there is not much poetry about an umbrella. Given its component parts, and there seems to be no more of it. What ingenuity could enhance the importance of the article until it would take its place in Morgan Starr's note book among

which headings comprised the kinds of work he engaged in as a struggling, pushing candidate for journalistic poverty? To for P's, which meant Topics for Poems, would scarcely suggest "An Ode to the Silken Sphere." To for S's, which meant Topics for Stories, would probably be barren of a novelette based on either finding, borrowing or purloining an umbrella, and surely Topics for Paragraphs would be forever blank if something original had to be said of an article so commonplace.

Still, romances have resulted from smaller things, and the young representative of The Daily Argosy had his note book with him at Bartholomew's that morning.

It was a rainy week in the latter part of September, and terror seemed to have fallen upon every kind of trade except that of wet weather accessories. Laura Everdale, however, had never known a brisker week in the many that she had passed behind the counter at Bartholomew's, and as she stood there on this particular morning, the brightest picture of all the eyes could rest on, who would have believed that she had ever lived in fashion's whirl, or had voluntarily taken a "situation" in the place where Morgan Starr had found her? Necessity for work came by the death of her father and the succeeding care of two motherless little sisters. They were mere infants when the exigency first arose, and under the advice of friends who flocked around her at the outset, she had successively opened a kindergarten school, filled a position as visiting governess and written love stories and poems—all fitted excellently well, it would be supposed, to supply an income to a lady brought up in an aristocratic quarter of New York and accustomed to what is so indefinitely called "the best society." Each and

trivial and satisfactory life may be followed almost anywhere where there are no fictitious wants and no exaggerated ideas of happiness and unhappiness. Plans for the children became plain and possible, for she had proved, experimentally, that, so far as utility is concerned, poetry gives way to bread.

A position at Bartholomew's was gained without difficulty. It was an English house, filled with personal articles of the most luxurious and costly kinds, and being conducted with great liberality, the Bartholomew stamp had become the seal of fashion. Hence it was a bit of good fortune at the outset, Laura thought, to be awarded the umbrella department.

The equinoctial had been severe in the fall whereof this chronicle is made, and umbrella sales had been particularly active. On the morning already mentioned the young attaché to The Daily Argosy had come hurrying into Bartholomew's from a sudden outbreak of the winds, and while properly courteous appeared a little over-critical in his choice of an umbrella. Laura opened one after another of the handsome opened, when, at last, becoming nervous, she hastily closed a patent fastening, and impaled one of her fingers upon a wire. With all her self-control and resolution the pain overcame her, and she fainted. Confusion followed; every one in the establishment flocked around her, while the proprietor and the would-be purchaser extricated the wire from the lacerated thumb. When the sufferer recovered sufficiently, a carriage was called, and the gray haired porter of the establishment escorted Laura home.

Several days passed by before she returned to her duties, and meantime Morgan Starr called daily at Bartholomew's to inquire after the invalid. As if the attention required excused, he never failed, at the peradventure of criticism, to remark to Mr. Bartholomew that "such a wound in such a sensitive place might be a serious matter." At which at last the merchant smiled and said within himself that it appeared to be a serious matter to Mr. Starr, just as it was.

In due time Laura returned to duty, and the philanthropic gratification evinced by Morgan Starr when he found her there one cheery morning was a credit to his kind. Within a day or two he called again to offer a particularly fine lotion, efficacious to a degree in other cases of thumbs impaled on wires, and after a dreary hiatus of a week, during which he drew heavily on his Topics for Poems, he sauntered in with a plaster advised by a famous Prussian surgeon, and just here there came an end to his visits, for Laura told the young journalist that he could not be allowed to make her conspicuous, and at the chance of seeming ungrateful for his kindness, she must request him not to call again.

"Is it necessary," said the gentleman, "that we now go back, and become utter strangers, because of conventionalities, for which I presume you care as little as I do?"

"It is not conventionalities that is in question," answered Laura; "it is propriety and the correct demands of self for self, and not society at all. With the latter I have nothing to do. My days are passed here, my nights with my family. I read and study, go occasionally to see a good play or hear fine music, and over and above all I am intensely interested in"—An interruption here occurred, and then another, and finally no opportunity came up for a renewal of the conversation. The door soon closed on the young journalist whose heart fairly beat the message of a war dance as he walked up town, wondering "whether any other fellow had as many disappointments as he, and whether there were ever any girls who turned out just as a fellow expected! And this was such an annoying matter! There were so many ways by which Laura Everdale and all her kith and kin could have proved him honorable and not unworthy their acquaintance."

For days something like melancholy oppressed him. Again he drew heavily on "Topics for Poems," and occasionally on "Topics for Stories," but all his work developed morbidly.

Christmas days not long afterward arrived, and the shops were beautiful to look upon. Daily as he passed to and fro along Broadway, looking into the gayly decorated windows, he thought of the beautiful girl who had so strangely insisted on his banishment.

"To forget a thing I find means almost always remembering it," said Morgan Starr one morning, "and just this once I'll saunter into Bartholomew's and see if Miss Everdale is there." Up and down the place he walked, but no glimpse of Laura rewarded him. Then he paused and looked at his umbrella. "She might come in," he said to himself. And then he thought possibly he might write something about historical umbrellas, Paul Fry's, Sairrey Gamp's, the one Dick Swivelier wanted, but which the Marchioness had, so to speak, put up, not over her head in the usual way, but around the corner at the pawnbroker's. Then he leaned upon the counter and thought of Menelaus spreading his greenish guard aloft as he tore himself, in a drench of tears, away from beautiful Helen.

"What an idiot I am!" said he, as his elbow crashed through a square of glass; the show case upon which he had leaned, while everything in heaven above and earth beneath faded out in his reverie concerning Laura.

The crash returned him to the vulgar present, and brought Mr. Bartholomew to the spot. A bit of broken glass had grazed Morgan's wrist, and while the proprietor bound it with a handkerchief, he put on an air of indifference that was all the more conspicuous because it was so artificial. He could not resist saying to Mr. Bartholomew that this little incident reminded him of another that occurred in that very store, and which, but for this mishap, he probably would not have remembered. Did Mr. Bartholomew recollect the accident by which a young girl's thumb was impaled upon an umbrella?

"Well, yes; I do remember it," said Mr. Bartholomew. "Now that you speak of it, I do recall it. I forget the young woman's name, but I well remember her. She has gone out of trade, as we say—left here some time ago, greatly to my regret."

Morgan turned away abruptly. He had nothing more to say to Mr. Bartholomew, for while it was easy to express something he did not feel, it was quite another thing to feign indifference where he was so greatly interested. And now it was almost impossible for him to leave the store without making further inquiries respecting Laura. Many a time as he had passed the door, the feeling that she was within and that he was serving her by not entering, gave him not only self

approval, but a mainly sentiment of loyalty. If he could not see her, he could honor her at a distance, and wait. But now, to find her gone, utterly disappeared, and held him up before himself as one contemplates another man. He almost regretted having agreed so willingly to Laura's determination to end their innocent acquaintance. He even wondered if she was a coquette, and had receded, expecting him to follow.

Morgan left the store, but as he passed out he met the gray haired porter and recognized him as the man who had attended Laura home at the time of the accident. The porter also remembered the young journalist, and pausing for a moment, Morgan's anxiety overcame his dignity. Making reference to Miss Everdale's injury and commending Thomas for his attention at the time, he said, in dissimulation of his hand manner, "Of course you know nothing of Miss Everdale now, Thomas?"

"Of course I do!" said the old Englishman. "She is singing in a fine old church on some avenue uptown, I think. Did you not know that she often took part with Camp and Heeny?"

"Camp and Heeny," exclaimed Morgan, "and pray tell me who are they?"

"Why, Mr. Starr," said Thomas, "you must know. I once went to see Miss Everdale to ask if I could help her, and she gave me a ticket to hear Camp and Heeny sing in the opera house."

"Sing in the New York Opera house, and I never even hear of them! You must be mistaken, Thomas!"

"Not I," maintained the man; "that Camp and Heeny sings murderers' parts in the choicest style, sir, and I have heard him!"

Suddenly the mist vanished. Laura, with an Italianized cognomen, probably, was singing in concerts with Campanini, and also in some New York church, but where? Morgan's first impulse was to employ Thomas to find her, but knowing that what she felt of pride and dignity such a course would offend her, he at once abandoned the idea. Days passed before the unconscious something which drove him on in the pursuit of happiness developed any plan for finding the one woman who held his life within her hands. Every church on every avenue now had the young journalist for an occasional attendant, and as Easter drew near and choir rehearsals were in order, all of his evenings were devoted to dropping in wherever there appeared to be the slight hope of finding Laura. At last it was within a day of Easter, and Morgan Starr's courage had almost touched the point of negation. Business called him to the western side of the city late in the afternoon of Easter Eve, and as he sauntered back across the town, he turned into a dingy, unfamiliar neighborhood, and in the peculiar atmosphere of a foggy twilight heard a melodious church bell toll far off.

"What an exquisite tone!" he exclaimed. "I wonder if people in these crumbling old houses appreciate it—there's no such melody in any bell up town!"

A few more steps brought him to the front of old St. Clement's. Furred by the marks of time and brown-stained, as it were, by an elevated railway structure, the venerable edifice seemed pushing itself forward to the recognition of passers by. Something of its persistent dignity and patience in holding its way through so many changes crept into Morgan's heart. Like the pyramids, it held an atmosphere of uncomprehended strength, and the anxious lover felt its power.

"If it were worth while," said he, "I would go in, but surely she would not be here. I must wait and bide my time in faith."

"For should I wait, some time the light of day will come and sit beside me at my door."

He raised his hat in reverent feeling, and was about to turn away, when a soft prelude from the organ detained him, and in another moment a clear soprano voice began Luther's well known Easter hymn of 1824. Morgan knew it well. His heart bounded as its strains brought back the associations of his boyhood, and it required but a moment more for him to enter the old church, walk past way down the aisle and look up at Laura Everdale—for there in old St. Clement's "the light of day" had come to him in the twilight shades of Easter Eve. Trembling with emotion, he seated himself beneath the organ gallery and listened to the voice of the woman who had grown into his heart and life through silent, patient waiting and acted but unspoken love.

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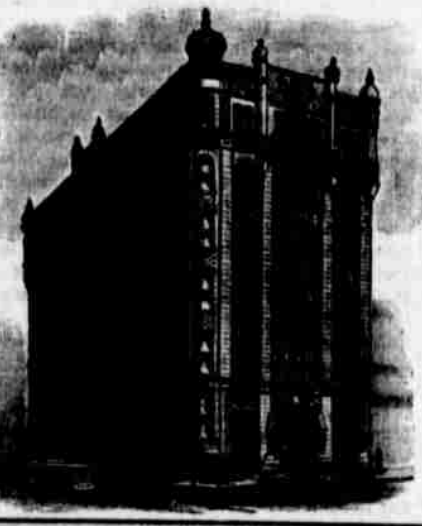


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