



Christ is Risen.

'TIS EASTER MORN. LOUD THE ANTHEM SWELLS AND IS BORNE ON THE WINDS AWAY. 'TIS EASTER MORN. AND THE EARTH PROCLAIMS THAT CHRIST IS RISEN TODAY.

EASTER ECHOES.



OW Lent is past, we gladly pay Our tribute unto Easter day. The smiling mother, on whose brow The added years rest lightly now, Where Time, that hoary monster grand, Reluctantly has laid his hand, Now views with just and noble pride Her heartstone at this Easter tide, Likewise the family's head now feels,

As list'ning to the Easter peals He thinks of Eaters gone before, As if he were a boy once more, And in the sunlight of the day Forgets his hair is streaked with gray. The maiden aunt thinks with a sigh Of bonnets in the days gone by, And, with a touch of old time zest, Today puts on her very best. The bachelor (whose outward crust is, after all, but human dust, And brushed away by woman's eyes) To-day the tooth of Time defies, And tugged out in the best of style He greets his kindred with a smile.



The youth, a stranger to dull care, With rapture views each maiden fair. He loves to look upon the face Where beauty claims a resting place, And gazes with a keen delight Upon her Easter plumage bright. With necktie new he walks along Beside her in the Easter throng. He counts it joy to take a part Where beauty shares the odds with art, And gives no thought to future ills When he shall have to foot her bills. TOM MASSON.

EASTER EVE IN A COFFIN.

AN ADVENTURE IN THE COSSACK COUNTRY. BY DAVID KEIL.



IN EVERY Russian village, from the White sea to the Black, Easter day is the festival of the whole year. Christmas is celebrated with a "kolyadovanie" (singing of carols) and a liberal burning of candles and setting forth of good cheer. At midnight on New Year's eve the country lasses trip forth to ask the name of the first male passer by whom they meet, as an augury of that of their own future husband. But Easter, and Easter alone, is to Russia what Christmas is to England, or the "Jour de l'An" to France—a season of universal good will and feasting and merry making, when even strangers greet each other with a kiss on both cheeks and reply to the salutation "Khrisotos voskres" (Christ is risen) with the traditional countersign, "Vo istiny voskres" (He is risen indeed). Somewhat in this style my thoughts ran as I lay stretched on the hay of my tarantass (traveling wagon) in the courtyard of a little Russian post house of

the outskirts of a tiny Cossack town on the Upper Don, toward sunset on Easter eve, awaiting the fresh horses which the burly, bearded postmaster had promised me with a fluent confidence that made me feel sure he was lying. And so it proved. Time passed, but the horses came not; and I was just about to spring up and give the big Cossack a sample of my fluency in Russian scolding when I was stopped short by hearing a low, deep voice say beside me, hardly above a whisper, yet terribly distinct: "I shall have him to-night!" The speaker's tone was so full of deadly menace that the howl of a hungry wolf or the hiss of a snake could hardly have been more ominous of evil. Raising myself cautiously, I peered over the edge of the wagon, and saw a young man and a girl standing together at the yard gate—the girl in the picturesque costume of a Cossack maiden, the man in the uniform of a Russian non-commissioned officer.

The young woman had her back to me, and it was only by the fine outlines of her figure that I could guess her to be beautiful. But the man's face was plainly visible, and even I started as I saw it. Handsome as it undoubtedly was, it looked absolutely terrible in its grim inflexibility of purpose. It was the face of a born soldier, to whom duty was everything—one who, if ordered to kill his own father or brother in battle, would have done it without a moment's hesitation.

The talk went on, and I gathered from it that the young sergeant was on the track of a Nihilist emissary sent to murder the czar, who was expected to pass through the town that night with an armed escort. "I followed him to the church, Mashka" (Mary), said he, glancing up at the tall, green tower of painted wood, which, with its gilded cupola and metal plated roof, glittered brightly in the last rays of the setting sun; "but he slipped round a corner, and when I darted round after him I could see no more of him than of my own ears. He must have a confederate among these long robed rogues, who let him into the church by some secret way, for, as our proverb says,

"They who wear wide sleeves In their heart are thieves. "But no matter—he can't escape now, for six of my men are on the watch for him outside, and the reward for his apprehension, along with what I've saved already, will just make up the sum that your father demands for your wedding portion, and then I can get my discharge from the army, for my term of service will be up next month, and then—"

The last "and then" was pointed with an emphatic kiss. "It does seem hard, though," said the girl, with a touch of womanly compassion in her voice, "that a man must die to make us happy. We shall feel as if we were eating our wedding feast out of a coffin."

"A man!" cried her lover fiercely; "a traitor and assassin, you mean, who has plotted against the life of the emperor." "True," answered his betrothed, changing her tone again, "nothing is too bad for a man who could plot against Father Alexander Alexandrovitch" (the czar), "and always will be." "Always!" echoed the young man emphatically. "And now good night, dooshenka" (my little soul), "for I must go and see that this fellow doesn't slip away from us." Here was a romance ready made to my hand, and I at once decided to remain in the town that night and see this strange drama to the end—a decision which evidently relieved the worthy postmaster, who was at his wits' end for a fresh lie to account for the non-appearance of my horses. "Perhaps the noble pan" (gentleman) "would be pleased to step in and take

'bread and salt' with us," he hinted. "It's a poor place, but—"

"Never mind, brother," said I; "food and shelter are always worth having, and I know that a Cossack welcome is bound to be a warm one." In truth, there was no fault to be found with my welcome, though the postmaster's hut was certainly no palace. The walls were of logs, cemented with clay and dried leaves, and jointed together like the frame of a schoolboy's slate, not a nail being used throughout. The floor was merely trodden earth, larded with crushed beetles and furrowed by the excavations of inquiring poultry. The



A YOUNG MAN AND A GIRL.

blackened rafters stood out like the ribs of a whale enlivened by the gambols of numerous spider Blondins on tight ropes of their own plaiting, and every now and then one of the troops lost his hold and fell with a loud splash into one of our tumblers of tea and lemon juice.

One entire corner of the room was occupied by a huge tiled stove and another by an enormous bed, the patchwork quilt of which looked like a colored map of the United States. In the third corner hung the portrait of my host's patron saint, with a tiny lamp burning before it, and a pious roach making a laborious pilgrimage around its staring gilt frame.

But there was plenty of good cheer and merriment in this little hovel, queer as it looked. The corpulent brass samovar looked down upon a brown river loaf as big as a footstool and an enormous bowl of buckwheat porridge, significantly called "postnaya kasha" (fasting porridge), while a perfect mountain of sugared "Easter cakes"—which our host's sturdy, sunbrowned, red kerchiefed wife had spent the whole day in baking—rose around the dainty of the season, a pyramidal mass of thick pasty dough, spotted with a kind of smallpox of currants and raisins, which is to a Russian Easter what the traditional plum pudding is to an English Christmas.

Just as all was ready for our meal in came the postmaster's pretty daughter in all the splendor of her holiday clothes—embroidered blue jacket and crimson skirt, striped stockings, and a string of colored beads round her neck. Her late appearance was fully explained by the huge basket of Easter eggs, gay with all the hues of the rainbow, which she carried in her hand.

Behind Miss Praskovia came another girl about her own age, who was presented to me as her foster sister, and who seemed to be treated with great respect by the whole family, being (as I afterward learned) the only daughter of a prosperous corn dealer in the town, who was quite a capitalist in the eyes of these simple folks. Her face impressed me only by its extreme beauty, but the moment I heard her voice I recognized the girl whose talk with her lover I had overheard half an hour before.

But amid all the merriment of our gay party Maria Oisipovna (Mary, daughter of Joseph) was strangely sad and silent, and her sadness was fully explained when she at length said positively:

"Ah! if only my poor brother were here among us, how happy we should be! Perhaps he's not dead after all; it may have been only a report. And if he ever did come back, surely my father couldn't be so cruel as to drive him out again!"

The honest postmaster answered only with a shrug of his broad shoulders (being evidently skeptical of any kind deed on the part of her father, Oisip Masloff, who had the name of being the most hard fisted and hard hearted old fellow in the whole district), and hinted to us that we must not sit too long over our supper, as we would have to be at the church in good time for the opening of the night service.

An hour later we were in the church, which was filled to overflowing, even the romantic old graybeards and tottering grandams of the community being visible amid the crowd by scores, probably for the first time since the previous Easter. The whole scene was certainly a strange contrast to my last Easter service in Russia, which had been celebrated not in an obscure provincial church, but in the great Isaac cathedral at St. Petersburg. In a moment I recalled the whole ceremonial—the massed thousands of assembled worshippers amid the vast granite columns of the splendid cathedral; the plaintive hymn dying away in a cadence of mournful sweetness among the mighty arches overhead; the gorgeous robes and long silky hair of the priests in the center, grouped around the coffin that typified the death and burial of our Lord; the tone of wondering dismay in which the chief priest exclaimed, "He is not here!" as he turned away and left the church with his comrades, as if to seek the sacred body elsewhere—the sudden and triumphant return of the procession through the opposite gate, with heads uplifted and banners displayed and a joyous shout of "Christ is risen," and then the sea of light that surged up through the shadowy throng as thousands of tapers were lighted at once, while the choir pealed forth the grand resurrection anthem, and on every side was heard the greeting which was echoing at that instant throughout the length and breadth of Russia, "Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed!"

But here there were no pomp and splendor, no bronzed gates or marble cornices or pillars of polished granite. All was rude and simple; plain timber, plain stone, and the only ornament worth noting was a massive silver crucifix above the altar, purchased with the offerings of the pious Cossacks of 1812 out of the spoils won by them from the retreating armies of Napoleon.

Just at that moment, however, I made a discovery which put everything else out of my head at once. In the foremost rank of the crowd around the platform on which lay the symbolical coffin stood directly opposite to the spot where I was placed a man who seemed anxious to avoid observation, for the lower part of his face was hidden by the collar of his long gray coat, and the upper part by the cap which he carefully held before it; but a sudden movement of the throng exposed his face for one instant, and it was that of Mashka's soldier lover, young Sergt. Dmitri Rudenko!

The look of fierce and hungry expectation in this iron man's stern gray eyes made me shudder, for I saw by that his victim was still concealed in the church, and that he was ready to pounce upon him as soon as the fit moment arrived; and the sudden starting up of this deadly pernicacity, this sleepless ambush of death amid all the peace and brightness and joy of the nation's great day of gladness, had an indescribably ghastly effect.

Meanwhile the ceremony proceeded and all went on as usual till the high priest and his acolytes mounted the platform, and the former, raising the unfastened lid of the coffin and letting it fall again, uttered in his deep voice the wonted formula: "He is not here!"

"He is here!" shouted a voice of thunder, as Dmitri Rudenko, springing with one bound onto the platform, flung open the coffin again and dragged from it a small, slight, pale faced young man in the dress of a peasant. "See, brothers, the villain who would have murdered our father the czar!"

Instantly all was confusion. A sea of furious faces and tossing arms eddied around the platform, and the air rang with a deafening clamor of conflicting voices, through which pierced suddenly a shriek of mortal agony, as Mary Masloff, bursting like a maniac through the heaving throng, threw her arms round the prisoner's neck and cried wildly: "Brother, brother! I thought you dead! Is this how we meet again?"

For one moment the young sergeant stood as if turned to stone by this awful revelation, which showed him that he had won his betrothed at the cost of her own brother's life. Then his face hardened suddenly like congealed metal, and a wave of his hand summoned a dozen soldiers from the throng, who formed a ring around Ostap Masloff and his sister and led them to the church door.

The cold, keen night air seemed to revive the fainting girl, and clutching her

lover's arm with both hands she said in a fierce whisper:

"I know that your men will do whatever you tell them. Let my brother go!"

"Let a prisoner escape? Never!" "If you do not you shall never see me again!"

The young soldier's handsome face quivered for a moment with the agony of a mortal struggle, and then the storm passed and he answered with terrible calmness:

"So be it. I shall do my duty, even though by doing it I should lose you forever!"

"What is all this?" asked a deep voice from behind, and all three recognized with a start of amazement in the big, hard featured, middle aged man who had spoken the czar himself, Alexander III of Russia! and behind him appeared the long gray coats and shining helmets of his guards—without whom, haunted as he was by dread of assassination, he never stirred a step.

The emperor repeated the question, and Rudenko told the story in a few simple words. But, brief as he was, Alexander heard enough to understand the greatness of the sacrifice which this young soldier had made for his duty's sake, and his harsh, somber features brightened into a glow of manly admiration.

"You have done well," said he emphatically, "and more than most men would have done in your place. And you," he added, turning to young Masloff, "what harm have I ever done you that you should wish to kill me?"

"I had sworn it," replied the Nihilist sullenly, "and I had to keep my oath."

"Foolish boy," said the czar in a tone of scornful pity, "do you pretend to strive for liberty, and yet fetter yourself with an oath that forces you into treachery and murder? But I will not destroy a man's life and a woman's happiness from any mean regard for my own safety. Go—I pardon you; you are free!"

The last time I visited Mirgorod, Dmitri Rudenko and his wife were the happiest couple in the town, and Mary's Nihilist brother (who lived with them) was as loyal a subject as any man in the czar's dominions.

His State of Mind.



Dashaway—When the contribution box was passed this morning I suddenly found that I had nothing but a five dollar bill. Of course as it was Easter, and I had been fasting for forty days, I felt obliged to drop it in.

Miss Summit—How noble of you! And now, how do you feel about it?

Dashaway—I feel as if I shall probably have to fast for forty days more.

Scrambled Eggs.

Every person must have some part of his clothing new on Easter day, or he will have no good fortune during the year. That has been settled from time immemorial. Thus an old Dorsetshire poet says:

Last Easter I put on my blue Frock coat, the first time, for new; My yellow buttons and a brass; That glittered in the sun like glass; Bekaise twer Easter Sunday.

In the Nature of a Surprise.



Mrs. Kingley—You know what lovely music they have at St. Ann's? Well, they have invited me to join the choir on Easter in place of the blonde alto. Mrs. Bingo—Indeed! I had no idea they were trying to reduce expenses.

An Easter Carol. She has bought an Easter bonnet— It is pretty as a sunset— With some flowers and some ribbons and a bit of lace upon it. And in order all may know it, She will go to church to show it. You may see her winking face in smiles this morning just below it.

When to church her way she's wended, If her hat appears most splendid, Then she'll quite adore the sermon, and be sorry when it's ended. But if not her pretty forehead Will with angry frowns be furrowed, And the sermon will be stupid, crude, abundant and horrid. —Selected.

Easter Lilies. Sweet dreams are in her lifted eyes, Sweet prayers her parted lips are praying; She takes no heed of lovers' sighs, Nor any yearnings earthward straying. She gives me no more thought than she Bestows on dead and gone Achilles; But I can bear that since I see She wears my bunch of Easter lilies. —Judge.

A Rare Avis. My Easter egg, with polka dots, I know the girl who made you. But P. T. Barnum would give lots To own the hen that laid you. —New York Sun.

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