

Two Easter Lilies

A Short Easter Story by R. N. STEPHENS.

Bunlight was in the sky, upon the streets, over all things. The sound of church bells rose above the noise of voices and of foot-falls on the sidewalk.

The tall man, who looked prematurely gray for thirty years, walked alone. Few passerby noticed his face. Of these few some wondered that such melancholy was abroad upon this morning of mornings, this most radiant of Easter days.

A little, fair girl came down the steps of a graystone house and walked off briskly. She wore a close gown of gray and a hat adorned with small, artificial spring flowers. Eighteen years of life, a fresh, handsome face, great gray eyes, a prayer book and a parasol in one of her small gloved hands, what a fitting picture for the day.

And, to complete it, in the other hand a white lily, perhaps thoughtlessly plucked from its stem. The solitary man was walking several feet behind her. He happened to look up from where his came at each step met the pavement. He saw the lily over the girl's shoulder.

The man sighed. "That flower and that girl bring them back to me still more vividly," he mused; "that other Easter day, that other Easter lily—and her!"

The girl in front turned to cross the street. The man recognized her and raised his hat in response to her bow. She hesitated, dropped her eyes, stopped and waited for an approaching cab to pass. When the man came up she faced him with a smile. He was vaguely conscious of a heightened color in her cheeks and of a delicate fragrance enveloping her.

"Good morning, Monsieur Melancholy," she said in greeting. "You see I haven't forgotten my Shakespeares."

"Like the sweet girl graduate that you are," he replied carelessly, as he started forward by her side. "But why do you bring your Shakespearean knowledge to bear on me in that way? Am I melancholy?"

"Do! And on such a morning! It's wicked to be sad in sunshine like this. 'And in such company it's impossible. That is to say, it would be if you didn't remind me, you and that flower in your hat—but pardon me, what am I saying?'"

"The girl glanced up at her companion in some surprise. Then she became thoughtful. Mechanically she looked at the lily in her hand. Presently she spoke in a low tone.

"As you were saying, what are you saying? Or, rather, what were you going to say? I remind you, I and my flower—of what?"

"He spoke without seeing her, side look, as they passed among the crowds of churchgoers."

"Of another woman and another flower like that, on another day like this. You bring back a story that began on such a day when such a woman lightly gave such a flower to—the hero of the story."

"You speak of course." This was spoken with a shyness that might have aroused his curiosity had he not been in a reflective mood.

"Yes," he answered. "And the story was a—love story?"

"Naturally." "How interesting! And it ended in—in what?"

"In a grave in Spring Grove, eight months afterward," he replied softly.

"Oh," she said, gently. They walked on in silence for a time. Then he added:

"She died of pneumonia a month before the time fixed for our marriage. That was six years ago. It seems yesterday."

"But the story is finished."

"Oh, yes," he said, with a slightly bitter smile. "That story is. And now you know why I was not all smiles when you met me, notwithstanding the morning."

"They had come to the church. He stopped on the outskirts of the converging crowd at the foot of the wide, stone steps before the great entrance."

"And you are not going in?" she asked, with some astonishment, as she also stopped.

"He smiled. 'No; I didn't intend to, I'm not a churchgoer. I'm out of practice.'"

"Then experience a novelty. I can't invite you to our pew, for Aunt Agnes and my cousins have already left only room enough for me. But you might enjoy standing in the gallery. Don't you like Easter music?"

"Yes, perhaps I may drop in by and by."

He stood still, waiting for her to leave him and enter the church. But she did not move. He must have been strangely unobservant not to have noted all the tenderness that suddenly burst all repressive bonds, instinctive and conscious and glowed eloquently in her eyes, not to have penetrated to the deliberate design hidden under the surface of her next speech.

"And, that story being finished, has it been many—sequels, with the same hero?"

"None," he answered. "None in six years."

"It began with a lily?"

"A lily that still stands in a Grecian vase beside my mirror."

"Somewhat faded?"

"Yes, poor flower."

"But the old story being finished," she said, speaking with increasing haste and very low, "and the hero still young, what's to prevent beginning another story—with another lily?"

She held out the flower in her hand. The man, surprised at her manner and her ac-

tion, and not immediately awake to their significance, did not move or speak.

The girl, appalled by his hesitation, hastily drew back the proffered lily. Her face became crimson and she turned and hurried confusedly from him, passing with the throng up the steps and into St. Paul's church.

In the vast arched interior her senses rustled sublimely after the sunshine, the hum of discreet conversation, the soft foot-falls of worshippers going to their seats, the rustle of women's gowns, the odor of flowers, the colored rays that fell obliquely from the stained glass windows.

The man remained standing outside bewildered. After a few seconds the girl's meaning dawned upon him. Thereupon he began to twirl his mustache rapidly, in accordance with his custom when in deep thought. Some one touched him on the shoulder.

"Hello, old man! Going in?"

"Yes, yes, certainly!" he said quickly, and ran up the steps without turning to look at the speaker. He pushed his way up the stairs and forward to a place on the front row of seats in the gallery, a feat difficult because of the Easter crowd, but to him easy by reason of his abstraction, which made him indifferent to the elbows, shoulders, attire and toes of others.

Already the deep notes of the organ were quivering on the air. A summary scanning of the congregation failed to discriminate the girl of the lily from the hundreds of women whose bright headgear gave the congregation the aspect of an indoor flower garden. His eyes rested upon the chancel, held by the general effect of the grouped white Resurrection lilies, callas, acacias, palms and yellow anasias. A cross of lilies surmounted the floral pyramid. To him this morning, all the world was Easter lilies.

The clear voices of the choristers rose from beneath him, in harmony with the organ, as the white-robed boys moved up the aisle. But the splendid anthem, "He is Risen," seemed to him as coming "from afar." He was meditating.

So was he in love with him—this lily-like girl! Her offer of the flower might have passed for a jest, but her almost angry withdrawal of it had told the truth, as in a flash. Why had he not already seen? Clinging to the old love had kept him blind. He reviewed their acquaintance, from the first meeting at the house of her aunt, four months before. Her shy look, her alternate moods of cordiality and coolness, her studied avoidance of him, her sudden appearance before him during his calls at the house, all, with much else, should have warned him. He remembered that night at the theater when chance had placed him beside her. It was at Pike's, and the play was "As You Like It." He had not before asked himself why that night had remained so sweet in his memory. She, too, had not forgotten it. Her greeting this morning, the title of "Monsieur Melancholy" applied by Orlando to Jacques, was a souvenir of that evening.

"Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast."

The anthem, with him, fell upon heedless ears. Yes, this girl, at the sight of whom he had taken some pleasure, whom he had always viewed as a child just from school, was a beautiful woman to have fallen in love with him.

There was but one thing to do. He must go away, that she might forget him, for his love was with the dead.

More glad Easter music rose to his ears. The church seemed to thrill with the Ten Commandments. He remained insensible to the notes of the organ and the great composite voice of the choir. Since he must betake himself from the possibility of meeting her again, where should he go? Meditating upon this, he sat idly all alike to the Collect, the Epistle, the Gospel, the sermon. But all the while, half involuntarily, he was searching the congregation below with his eyes for a glimpse of a certain maid bearing a lily.

It would be a sacrifice for him to leave town now. It occurred to him that life had been pleasant to him of late amid his present surroundings in the city. For the first time in five years, existence had recently begun to have some piquancy for him. He had not sought the cause. Assuredly, he was showing rare consideration for this girl in deciding to leave the city in order that she might be spared the pain of a hopeless love. There were few others, if any, for whom he would so readily disturb the routine of his life.

He would like, however, to see her face once more before putting it forever into the past. It was such a charming face. Now that he came to think of it, was there ever a more charming face—but one? Why could he not single her out in the gently swaying surface of flower-trimmed bonnets stretched out before his gaze? Why had he not ascertained the location of her aunt's pew?

He found her at last, far to the front and the left. He knew her by the lily in her hand. She sat perfectly still, in a ray of light from a high window. She seemed wrapt in contemplation.

How pleasant it would be to sit beside her!

And when at last the Gloria in Excelsis was swelling up to the vaulted roof, he had begun to ask himself whether it were necessary to leave town, after all.

He found himself unwontedly eager to reach the front of the crowd as it made its way to the doors after the service. He pushed his way down the stairs, out from

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Compound is the one preparation indorsed by the ablest physicians for spring re-energizing and recuperating. In severe cases of persistent headaches, nervous prostration, neuralgia, rheumatism, dyspepsia, kidney and liver troubles, and female irregularities, Paine's Celery Compound has a record of wondrous and lasting cures in every city of this great land.

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place of subdued light and flowers and fragrance, into the sunlight.

How long the time seemed as he waited while the multitude poured out and separated into hundreds of groups upon the sidewalk! He watched the lines of faces as they appeared at the head of the steps, coming from the comparative shade within. At last! She still held her lily. She cast a quick glance around as she stood on the topmost step. Then she descended, followed by her aunt and two cousins. His heart beat rapidly as he elbowed his way through the throng that he might appear at her side as if brought there by chance.

He raised his hat to her aunt and cousins. She herself dropped her eyes and bowed rather stiffly when she saw him.

He adroitly managed to keep by her side as the group moved up the sidewalk. The aunt and the cousins fell behind.

Yet he could find little to say upon the homeward walk. She was inclined to be flippant and inattentive in her share of the conversation.

When they reached her house she allowed her aunt and cousins to precede her up the steps. Then she tarried for a second.

"Goodby," she said, standing upon the second step.

"Goodby," he answered; "but first I should like—"

"Well!"

"May I have the lily and begin the new story?"

She looked into his eyes a moment; then hastily thrust the lily into his outstretched hand and tripped up the steps. Within the doorway she turned and kissed her hand to him.

In the evening, when the church bells again were ringing and the hum of people walking came up from the street below, he stood before the door, the lily in his hand, and contemplated a long-lead lily, a mere mummy of a lily in the Grecian vase beside it. Presently he took the shriveled flower from the vase and placed it in the furthest corner of a dressing case drawer. And thus an old love was changed into a memory, and he uttered a sigh.

But a moment later he hummed a tune as he put in the vase, in the place of the old dead flower, an Easter lily that was still white and fresh.

MANY MOROS DIE IN BATTLE

Short but Desperate Conflict with American Troops in Mindanao.

THREE AMERICANS ARE WOUNDED

Result of Fight Will Probably Be to Wipe Out All Opposition to American Occupation of the Island.

MANILA, April 10.—Captains Pershing's force captured Baco, island of Mindanao, Wednesday, killed 100 Moros and wounded many others. Three Americans were wounded.

Pershing's force consisted of Shaw's battalion of the Twenty-first infantry, Kilpatrick's troop of the Fifteenth cavalry and McMain's battery.

Pershing was surveying the west shore lands when the Baco Moros opposed his advance and provoked the fight. Pershing's force surrounded and attacked their stronghold, first shelling them, and, rushing his troops forward, charged gallantly.

After crossing a deep moat and entering the fort the Americans engaged the Moros, bayonets against bayonets. A hundred of the defenders were killed, including the datto of Panadunggan, and many were wounded. Only three Americans were wounded. After the capture of the fort it was destroyed.

The Baco Moros and the majority of the people of that district had been hostile to the Americans and encouraged attacks on American camps. They rejected the overtures of friendship. It is expected that the defeat of the Baco Moros will result in the Moros acknowledging American sovereignty.

Pershing's column is going to Harau, which is also hostile.

REPEAT MAIL POUCH ROBBERY

Thieves Steal Two More Sacks from Springfield Junction Between Trains.

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., April 11.—Early this morning word was received at the postoffice that two more letter pouches had been stolen from Springfield junction, just south of the city, at the junction of the Chicago & Alton and Wabash railroads.

This is the second theft of this character at the junction within three weeks, two pouches having been stolen on March 13 and rifled of their contents, and the post-office authorities have not been unable to obtain a clue to the thieves. As in the former case, the pouches were thrown from the eastbound Wabash train at 10 tonight, to be placed on the Chicago & Alton train, which goes north at 12:15. When the Alton train arrived it was found that two of the pouches were missing.

Towerman Mitchell Driscoll, who, on the occasion of the first robbery, left the pouches out on the platform between trains, instead of locking them up in the office, is being kept under guard tonight, but the robbers broke the bars and windows and effected an entrance. Driscoll, who was in the tower fifty feet above, did not hear them.

FLOOD COSTS BIG FORTUNE

Nearly Two Hundred Thousand Dollars is Spent on Repairs to Broken Hymella Levee.

NEW ORLEANS, April 10.—A force of 250 men in Hymella crevasse today sacking the wings of the cribbing and attempting to make secure the broken ends, but no further attempt was made to close the break.

If the wings last there is no fear that the crevasse in the levee will enlarge. It is variously estimated that between \$100,000 and \$200,000 has been sunk in the work at Hymella. The Texas & Pacific will be forced to use the Southern Pacific rails for the through traffic until the water recedes.

Arrangements are again being made for back levees to keep the water from the west bank of the river at Algiers and Grenada.

The river here today dropped to 19.5, a fall of two-tenths, or four-tenths lower than the maximum of this year. The decline is thought to be in part due to the reopening of Hymella.

WILL DO WITHOUT BRIDLES

Miners, Unable to Settle Vexed Harassment Question, Compromise on 'Abolition.'

JOHNSTOWN, Pa., April 10.—The 1,200 miners employed by the Beech Creek Coal & Coke company at Patton, who went on strike recently, will return to work tomorrow.

The question as to whether a bridle constitutes a portion of the harness remains unsettled. The executive board of district No. 2, United Mine Workers, in session at Clearfield, were unable to decide the question and finally recommended that the rules be amended to provide that a bridle was satisfactory to the company and in the future the company will harness and un-harness the mules, but bridles will be dispensed with.

The men anticipate some trouble in handling the animals without bridles, but say they will attempt it rather than go back on their contention that it is a part of the harness.

ROBBERS WRECK BANK VAULT

Blow Up Institution Near Sedalia, Missouri, but Leave Without Securing Booty.

SEDALIA, Mo., April 10.—Robbers wrecked the vault of the bank of Smithton, eight miles east of here, with dynamite early today, but were frightened away before they secured any booty.

Citizens were attracted to the scene of the explosion and a running pistol fight with the robbers took place. The robbers fled but it is believed one of them was wounded by a shot fired by Judge James Ringen.

PAOLA, Kan., April 10.—Robbers wrecked the safe at the Missouri, Kansas & Texas railway depot here early today, but no money was secured.

POLICE SEEK CROWE'S PAL

Hunt Two Bold St. Joseph Holdup Men Through Entire Day.

ST. JOSEPH, April 11.—One of the most thrilling man hunts which ever took place in this vicinity began early yesterday morning when the police got on to the track of Jim Murray and a young man named McCormack, who are alleged to be responsible for some of the bold holdups of the last few weeks.

The hunt continued through the greater part of the night. Murray is also wanted on a charge of shooting Alfred Jackson and Sidney Stewart last Monday. It is known that Pat Crowe, who is an old time pal of Murray's, is one of the party who has offered to the city his entire aid in collecting, providing an art museum is erected at the Green street entrance to Fair-

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TRAFFIC IN DEAD SOLDIERS

United States Officials Accused of Exporting Fees for Shipping Cuban Victims Home.

TOLEDO, O., April 10.—Congressman J. H. Southard has started an investigation which may bring to light a scandal among United States officials at Havana. The allegation is that exorbitant charges are being made for the disinterment and shipment of dead soldiers from Cuba, which, according to Mr. Southard, should be done free of cost.

Homer Pugh, who enlisted in the navy last August, died at Havana on April 2. His mother here was notified on April 7. Two days later she received a cable stating that the body would be exhumed, embalmed and shipped to New York for \$225. The mother brought the matter to the attention of Congressman Southard, who has started an investigation.

Takes Spite Out on Wife. Henry Wegworth went late to the primaries Friday afternoon and cast his ballot. Then he lingered late for the returns. With his lateness was acquired a considerable rage, which increased as he wended his way homeward. When he arrived there the result of the primaries was not according to his hopes, so he vented his wrath on his wife, whom he and the turntable of his life claims upon her and the turntable of his life claims upon her and the turntable of his life claims upon her.

Shaffer Has Little Opposition. J. Shaffer of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers will probably be elected mayor of this city, the most formidable candidate of this city, the most formidable candidate of this city, the most formidable candidate of this city.

Revolution in Telegraphy. Instrument invented by an Englishman Works Without a Battery. One of the most extraordinary inventions of the age is a type-printing telegraph record in operation in London. This is a telegraph instrument and the only one of its kind ever invented that works absolutely without the aid of batteries. It enables any one with the aid of a small instruction card to become a skilled telegraph operator within the space of five minutes. The war offices in Berlin and Vienna have adopted it. Its value is considerable for commercial purposes and its importance has been recognized by the postmaster general of England, who has taken it up.

Personal Paragraphs. D. A. Campbell, formerly clerk of the Nebraska supreme court and now living in Colorado, is in the city on business.

Curious Condensations. The Teachers' college of New York will hereafter train teachers to teach health.

Want Grand Army Reunion. Omaha Members of the Order Are Working to Secure the Gathering. Recent orders issued from Grand Army of the Republic headquarters at Lincoln announce a considerable number of posts delinquent for per capita tax and that many of them have not yet sent in their lists of delegates for the Department encampment to be held at Fremont next month. The order also invites bids for the next state Grand Army of the Republic reunion. Some of the Grand Army posts of Omaha are making a movement toward getting the state reunion located at Omaha, and a committee from the Omaha posts will meet with a committee of the Commercial club at 1 p. m. Tuesday, April 14, to consider the matter.

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