

The Lilies of the Chancel

An Easter Story

By Elizabeth Vore

A stretch of azure sky, changing to the opal tints of evening; a smiling expanse of sea, with a long line of curling breakers lashing the sandy beach—that is what Rosa might have seen as she stood by the calla lily hedge, with the faint breeze stirring the magnolia blossoms.

Yet it is doubtful if she saw anything. Her eyes held a dreamy far-away look, and the waving green branches outlined like lacework against the evening sky, the wind-ruffled stretch of sea and the scent of the wilderness of bloom were lost upon her.

In her arms was a profusion of lilies, spray upon spray, almost more than her slender arms could carry, for the morrow was Easter day. Tall and stately as a lily herself, Rosa stood, lost in meditation, her face scarcely less fair and pure than the waxen blossoms, and as colorless, save for the scarlet mouth with its haughty curves. A pure, proud face was hers, and cold as the white mist that, like a dim squadron, was stealthily marching in from the sea.

On the still, languorous air, suddenly a clear, sweet note rang out—the chiming of the old mission bells. The sacred music reached Rosa's ears, arousing her from her reverie. Disengaging one slender hand she made the sign of the cross; her lips moved silently.

There was a sound near at hand of slow, halting footsteps. A man, young, but of haggard countenance, was approaching under the shadow of the acacias.

But Rosa only heard the vesper chimes.

Nearer the man drew until he stood humbly before her, his head bowed, his shabby hat in his trembling hand.

He raised his eyes, full of dumb wistfulness to her face. The passionate love and despair of a tortured soul was in them. He stood motionless, as on awaiting his sentence.

Sweet and high the chiming of the bells arose and fell. Something like a sob escaped the man's lips; his thin, brown fingers worked convulsively.



"IN HER ARMS WAS A PROFUSION OF LILIES."

As if from a dream, Rosa started and turned her sombre eyes upon him. A swift crimson flooded her face and suddenly receded, leaving it as white as the lilies upon her heaving bosom.

"Diego,"

The name fell involuntarily from her unwilling lips.

"It is I, Rosa mia," faltered the man, huskily.

She raised her head proudly and stepped back a pace; her beautiful mouth hardened.

He lifted his hand with a swift motion of pain and arrested the unspoken words upon her lips.

"Nay, spare me, I beseech thee, carita; it is not to trouble thee that I am here. Only the desire to see thee face to face and ask thy forgiveness before I go away forever hath lent me courage. I cannot live near thee and know that I have lost thee. Tell me, adorado, by the love thy distant eyes bear me, that thou wilt forgive me, unworthy though I am."

"Thou," she cried in cold scorn. "Thou hast dared to come to me after all thy dishonor and crime. Know I not—is it not known to all the town—that only thy uncle's name and money saved thee from just punishment in prison? And once I plighted my troth—I once believed that I loved such a one as thou."

The man bowed his head on his hands and groaned aloud.

"Dios," he muttered, "it is more than I can bear. I know that I have been adjudged guilty of theft, yet, it was for

the outcast, the despised, the heart-broken?

Suddenly his eyes caught the white gleam of waxen blossoms upon his breast; a great awe entered his face.

"Jesus Maria," he murmured. "The lilies of the chancel."

"Nay, but thine own, Diego mio," sobbed Rosa, brokenly. Her arms were about him, her tears were upon his face. "Thine own, adorado," she whispered tremulously; "all thine—the lilies of Diego. I have robbed the altar for thy dear sake."

"This is the day of resurrection," said the Padre, solemnly.

"Madre de Christo," the people muttered. "It is a miracle."

And it was—a miracle of love.

EASTER AT THE WHITE HOUSE.

Time Honored Practice of Letting the Children of Washington Roll Eggs on President's Grounds.

Easter Monday in Washington is an event in the lives of the children which is ahead of any other day in the year excepting Christmas and Fourth of July.

Why? Because Easter Monday means egg-rolling. For many years the little ones of Washington have congregated by the hundreds and thousands to roll eggs Easter Monday in the beautiful grounds surrounding the home of the President of the nation. There is no sign to keep off the grass and there are no restrictions. The children own the place. The green grass of the White House lawn is covered with children, children innumerable, rolling eggs on the grassy slopes.

If the day is pleasant it is a sight to be remembered. The children have been looking forward to the festival for days and weeks and great has been their anticipation. But genuine is the sorrow and many the tears among the little ones if Easter Sunday should be cold and rainy with promise of a bad Monday. Yet no weather has ever been so bad as to keep everyone away from the White House grounds on egg-rolling day. There are many hardy little spirits who will not be daunted by snow or cold or rain when it comes to rolling eggs.

If the day is pleasant and the air balmy and the turf warm and green, what a time the children have. Such games as they invent to play with their eggs—games of infinite variation containing infinite amusement. Their grounds look more like a juvenile ball than anything else—an egg fair and the biddy hens around Washington must needs have been very diligent for many days before. If the day is fair, too, the glorious Marine Band, the finest band in the country, plays sweet music, and the children dance and gambol to its strains. Truly it is children's day in Washington.

Wonderfully Colored Eggs.

By 9 o'clock in the morning the grounds are actually taken possession of by the youngsters. Little kids with wicker baskets and var-colored eggs, wonderful eggs of green and blue and red and purple and gold and then eggs of lovely combination, and with beautiful figures, such as would make a wise hen cock her head on one side and wonder greatly what happened to her plain white eggs.

All sorts and conditions of children and their way to the President's grounds to enjoy Easter Monday. Some of the children are beautifully dressed in silks and laces and have French nurses to watch over them and carry their eggs for them, while other little ones are dressed in very shabby garments with elbows out and toes peeping from their little shoes. They perhaps have only three or four plainly colored eggs boiled in a piece of purple or red calico. No French nurses accompany them, carrying eggs with gilt pictures, but they can roll their eggs and themselves on the green grass and soil their frocks and trousers to their heart's content, and they will enjoy the holiday perhaps more than their more fortunate companions. Usually the mothers of these little men and women come with them, tired-faced women often, looking as though it had been a long day since they had enjoyed such a time. Here and there are little groups of mothers and older sisters, talking together pleasantly, but keeping watchful eyes to see that the little ones do not get lost in the crowd or stray too far away.

Not Afraid of the Policeman.

It is a good natured crowd. The big policemen standing around possess no terror for the little ones on egg-rolling day. They know that all that big policemen are for on Easter, is to keep grown up people from interfering with the little ones who are rolling eggs. And when the little people get lost now and then, the big policemen are there to take them in charge and tell them not to cry until their mothers and sisters find them again. Then there are great rivalries among the children. Some of them are regular little gamblers. One little fellow gets hold of a very hard egg and he goes around picking eggs with his acquaintances or acquaintances he finds, and wins their eggs from them until finally he strikes some other little fellow who has a harder egg than his, and then he loses a lot of eggs.

And some of the little rascals gamble on what is a "sure thing," with a china egg, sized and painted to resemble a genuine egg, or with a hen's egg run full of plaster of paris they will go around, and of course win all the eggs they contest for, until some sharp little fellow finds out the game they are playing. As the day advances and the children get hungry, the peanut man and the popcorn man and the candy man at the gates do a thriving business, while at noon, many are the little groups under the trees, sitting around on blankets and burlaps and eating lunches, for they are making a regular picnic of it and staying all day.

The Children of Presidents.

President Harrison's two grand children witnessed, with great enjoyment, the egg-rolling from the porch of the White House facing toward the Washington monument and looking past and across the Potomac to Arlington, the former home of General Lee, but where now are spread the silent tents of a vast host of the Union army who have passed across to the great beyond.

President Cleveland's two little girls, Ruth and Esther, were real little democrats. They took their own eggs and

went out among the crowd of happy children, and they rolled eggs with the other children, as common clay as their associates, not the children of the President of the United States, but the children of an American citizen. Perhaps a little extra watch was kept over them, but they didn't know it and they thought that Easter Monday was the happiest day in their little lives.

The Roosevelt children are past the age of egg-rolling; but they enjoy with the President and Mrs. Roosevelt, watching the gay throng of youngsters who romp over the White House grounds on Easter Monday.

There was a time however, when the children of Washington did not roll eggs on the President's grounds. Not that they did not roll eggs though. Oh no! They have always rolled eggs on Easter Monday. But they used to roll them in the Capitol grounds, down the steep terrace which was on the west front of the Capitol. Then there came a time when the Capitol grounds were changed, and a big flight of steps built where the terrace used to be, and some dyspeptic in Congress objected to the children romping on the smooth grass of the big stair and rolling their eggs.

General Hayes was President then, and he heard of it, and how disappointed the children were because they had no place to roll their eggs that year, and the kindly man said: "Why let them roll their eggs on the White House grounds and enjoy themselves." And thus it has been ever since, from year to year.

POMPEII, THE VALIANT.

Story of the Hero of a Hundred Bad Runaways.

Pompeii, of the New York mounted police squad, and one of the most intelligent members of the force, was retired from active service the other day. When the stroke of the auctioneer's hammer put the big bay out of service, he was saved from the ragman's cart and night hawk cab by the devotion of his fifteen-year friend and comrade, Mounted Policeman Redmond P. Kersey, of the West 152d street police station.

Pompeii had spent nearly twenty years in the service and knew the rules of the department better than many a roundsman. He was the show horse of the force. Catching runaways was his business, but mathematics was his diversion. He could add, subtract, divide and multiply, and for years had been a source of delight to the school children along Seventh Avenue, where he was on duty between 110th and 152d streets.

The children would gather around Pompeii in the afternoons and talk to him.

Good at Mental Arithmetic.

When a sum in arithmetic was given him Pompeii would listen attentively to the figures, ponder over them for a moment, and then announce the answer by striking the ground with his left forefoot. If the answer was the half of something Pompeii indicated it by bending his foreleg at the knee and holding it for a moment. His friends insist that he could tell time by looking at a watch and announce the hour and half hour in the same way as he did his sums.

Playing with the children was by no means the best part of Pompeii's service. The records show that he and his master have stopped more than a hundred runaways in the last fifteen years. In several instances lives were saved. Policemen Kersey and Pompeii have been almost inseparable ever since the latter joined the force. Again and again the comrades were parted for a short time when Kersey was transferred from one precinct to another, but each time the policeman managed to have his favorite sent after him.

Hurt While Stopping Runaway.

A short time before the arrival of Prince Henry in New York, Pompeii was badly hurt while stopping a runaway at Seventh Avenue and 125th street. Two days later, while acting as a guide for the Prince some dirt got in the wound and blood poisoning set in. Kersey managed to get placed on reserve duty and gave all his time to nursing Pompeii back to health. The police veterinary condemned the horse as unfit for duty, but Kersey managed to evade the decision for a few days. Then Pompeii made a spectacular run along the avenue and stopped a bad runaway in such style that nothing more was said about retirement.

The fatal day was only put off, however, and last month the big bay was sold at auction at the stables of the West 152d street station. Kersey was on hand with \$400, all the ready money he could scrape together, determined not to be separated from his old friend.

Hurt While Stopping Runaway.

Kersey himself bears some scars gained in the fierce rushes he has made with Pompeii. Five years ago his right leg was broken in two places, and two years ago his neck was wrenched and his skull nearly smashed in. Both injuries were received while with Pompeii's aid he was stopping dangerous runaways.

Only one man had the heart to bid against Kersey so he ransomed his old friend for \$50, about twice what he was worth said the veterinary.

Then Kersey started on a vacation. When last heard from he was spending it on a bit of a farm he has at Rye, N. Y., and with him went Pompeii, happy in his last transfer.

The average annual consumption of popcorn in the United States is three hundred carloads.

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