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By Frances Hodgson Burnett.



of the springtime, and yet its life is almost entirely lived in the winter. In October and November the people who disappeared in May, as

ONE sees so many cities in so many different countries, but one never sees another city that is really like it.

A curious spell rests upon it. It is the city

if by magic, begin to return as if the same magic had called them back again. Houses begin to open, showing bright draperies and flowers in their windows, and servants about their doors; the streets begin to fill, the shops to wear brighter aspects; the hotels have a stirring air; carriages stand before doorways and bowl about the streets, the people in them seeming to know each other and exchanging welcoming greetings as they pass and repass. They nearly all do know each other. They went to each other's dinner-parties and balls and afternoon teas the past season, before the magic dispersed them,

and they will go to them again now that it has once more called them together. But it is not of this aspect of the city that I am going to speak.

Every one knows that on a certain hill which looks down upon the city there is a majestic white marble building upon whose stately dome a Goddess of Liberty stands poised, and that on the first Monday of each December the magic calls together within its walls a certain number of men chosen by the voice of their country as fitted to hold in their hands the fates and fortunes of a great nation. Every one knows that when the flags fly from the Capitol Congress is in session; that when the dome glows out upon the darkness the work of the nation is being done by night; that while this work is being done, life in Washington is at its flood-tide, and that when it is finished for the year, the tide turns and is at ebb until it begins again.

There is upon Pennsylvania Avenue, among a number of buildings all more or less noble in proportion and architecture, a large, rather dignified, though unelaborate house standing in its own spacious grounds. Its dignity perhaps consists in its well-sized, unmeretricious air. It is not a palace, and it seems not to feel it necessary to be one; it is not a castle, and one is rather pleased that it has not attempted a castellated air; it is the White House, and the man who lives in it is by the decision of the people the ruler of sixty millions of thinking, working, planning human beings.

In the guide-books one can read how many feet high the dome of the Capitol is, how large the Treasury, the Army and Navy Departments, the Pension Office, the Agricultural Department, and the Post Office are; but I think perhaps some boy or girl who knew nothing of these things might best describe the charms of the City of Groves and Bowers.

It must seem charming to a small creature who knows only the bright side of all the things that happen in it and belong to it.

To get up in the morning, if one is only six or seven, in a pretty nursery whose windows look out on a broad, clean, smooth avenue, with picturesque houses, and bands of green on either side, must be very nice. Even in the winter the sky is nearly always blue and the sun

is so often shining that, though the double rows of trees are bare, they look pretty with their branches against the background of the sky, promising loveliness for the spring, and thick shade and room for birds when summer comes.

If there is snow, they look beautiful with the soft white fleece clothing them; and when the snow falls off melted, little brown sparrows come and balance upon the twigs and call to each other, and make remarks about the weather and reflections on the hardness of the times and the scarcity of crumbs.

There are so many trees — such rows and rows of them as far as one can see up the avenues and down them, and up and down the streets which cross them — and one's eye can always catch sight somewhere of a green circle or park, where there is a statue of some great man, about whom one can be told a story if one asks questions enough.

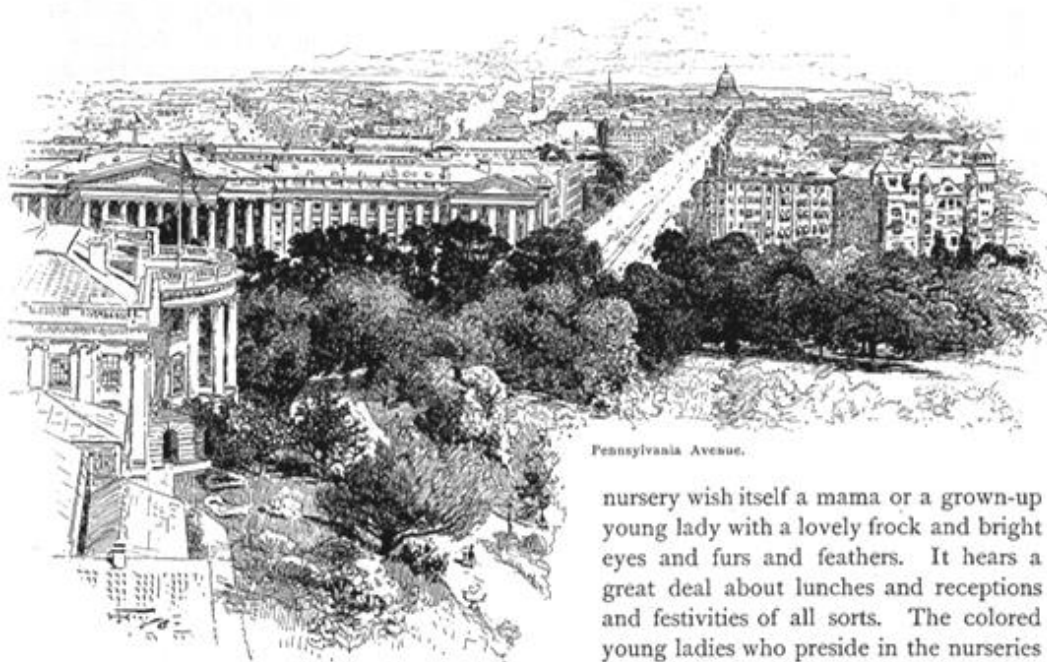
In the morning the streets are quiet, but in the afternoon the carriages begin to roll through them. They all seem to be going somewhere in particular, and they all have ladies in them. To the occupants of the nursery windows in certain quarters covering quite a large area, it must seem that Washington is full of ladies who are always going to parties. In the streets of other cities there are always signs of many other things being done. There are passing people and passing vehicles evidently not going to parties; there are wagons and vans loaded with merchandise of one sort or another; there are shabby or shabby-genteel people going about their anxious business, or roughly dressed working-people going to and from factories or warehouses or machine-shops. This city, which is really like no other, is unlike others in this respect — that there are no manufactories or huge works or shops. The only manufactories are the great white marble building on Capitol Hill, the Treasury, the Pension Office, the Army and Navy Departments, etc., and the work done in them does not necessitate the use of smoking chimneys and furnaces, and the employment of overalls.

The broad, steady stream of people going to their work through Pennsylvania Avenue at nine o'clock in the morning and returning from it at four in the afternoon, is a stream of hu-

manity well dressed, well bred, and respectable. It is leisurely and looks comfortable whether it is so or not. The crowds which surge through London thoroughfares on bank holidays are not nearly so well clad and agreeable to contemplate, even though they are not going to work, but are on festive plans intent. But they do not live in a city of groves and bowers, and they work and live much harder.

The only people one sees in rags or asking alms are occasional negroes; and they are very

another. Inside there are to be seen ladies in lovely hats and bonnets. There are mamas in brocades and velvets and furs, and there are pretty slim girls in silks and velvets and soft feathers. They are going to make calls, to attend musicales or receptions or special afternoon teas, where they will meet scores of other mamas and pretty girls, and will talk and drink chocolate and nibble cakes or listen to some music, and then return to the carriage and roll away to another party. It makes the



The White House.

The Treasury Building.

VIEW TOWARD THE CAPITOL FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT.

rare, and usually look rather as if their profession were a matter of preference. Of palpable, hopeless wretchedness one sees nothing.

There are no tall factory chimneys pouring forth smoke to tarnish the blue sky and the white clouds floating upon it. It is rarely very cold, and dull skies are so uncommon that one feels one's self almost injured in one's surprise at two or three gray days.

Through the nursery windows the childish eyes see only bright and amusing things. They must really be very well worth looking at from a nursery point of view—in fact, they must seem brilliant. The carriages roll by one after

Pennsylvania Avenue.

nursery wish itself a mama or a grown-up young lady with a lovely frock and bright eyes and furs and feathers. It hears a great deal about lunches and receptions and festivities of all sorts. The colored young ladies who preside in the nurseries frequently know a great deal of the doings of the party-going world. They are able

to describe the grandeurs of the Army and Navy Reception at the White House, and they can often give information as to the floral decorations at the reception of the Secretary of State.

It must be an exciting event for the nursery windows when an awning is erected next door. Then one sees many flowers carried in, palms and blooming things and numberless interesting packages and boxes. Carriages begin to drive up by the score, and when their doors are opened wonderful and beautiful personages descend, and the awning swallows them up. There are possible views of resplendent Chinese ministers and officials in embroidered satin

robes. "There 's the Secretary of War," says the nursemaid. "There 's the Russian Minister. That 's the beautiful young lady from out West that everybody 's talking about 'cos she 's so rich and handsome. There 's the senator that owns a silver-mine."

One might easily imagine it suggesting Cinderella's ball to the small watcher at the window. The constant driving up of the carriages, the accumulating rows of them gradually filling the street, the strains of music fitfully heard, might well suggest that after it was all over there might be found somewhere a small glass slipper, even though the festivity is not a ball or given at midnight.

So it is more than possible that, in the winter, Washington seems to young, untired eyes a sort of enchanted city with a habit of enjoying itself perpetually; but it is in the spring that it shows its rarest enchantment, and blooms out day by day into the City of Groves and Bowers.

The trees are all there in the winter, the grass is all there, the green of the parks and squares is there; but they are waiting for the days when there are fewer parties, when the carriages roll by less frequently, and there is less to be seen by the watchers who look from the windows.

Then—even in February—there come some wonderful days among the cold ones. They are like young daffodils scattered upon a garden covered with snow. Suddenly there is a strange, delicious softness in the air, the sunshine is clearer golden, one lifts one's face and looks, with tender hopefulness and forgetfulness of things of earth, into the bright, flower-like lovely blue. Perhaps yesterday was wet and cold, but to-day it seems to be impossible to believe that cold and rain were not done with weeks ago, or that they can ever come again. One begins to think that the bands of grass which border the pavements, and the trim banks and lawns before the houses, are of a livelier green. It is natural as one passes under the branches of the trees to look eagerly for little pale-colored things pushing out in tight buds. In March these days scatter themselves rather more thickly among the cold ones, and one has unduly sanguine moments when one would scarcely be surprised by any unheard-of

thing in the way of weather or growth. The tight little buds are pushing everywhere, and some of them are visibly plumper every day. In Lafayette Square, in Franklin Square, in Dupont Circle, and in fact in all the pretty parks and inclosures, one sees a certain bushy shrub which, instead of waiting for its leaves, has actually begun to clothe itself in yellow blossoms. Its slender, bending twigs are covered from root to tip. It is a lovely, lovable, eager thing, and seems almost to send out its flowers to call for the spring instead of waiting until the spring calls for them. One sniffs the fresh, cold air in damp days, because it has in it the scent of things growing; one draws it in with still greater eagerness in the soft, sunny ones, because there is in it the scent of these same growing things stirred and warm.

The birds who alight on the trees where the tight buds are showing touches of green, linger and twitter more. They talk about nests, and mention their tastes in the matter of situation. There is so much choice in the matter of situation that it must be almost confusing. If you are a Washington bird, you can have a nest on any avenue or street you like, and the parks provide accommodations which seem unlimited.

Perhaps they say to each other things like these:

"I must say I find Massachusetts Avenue most desirable," one bird might remark. "It is broad and quiet, and the society is good. The style of tree suits me. I prefer linden for the young. I consider the odor of the blossom good for infant digestion."

"But Sixteenth street has tulip-trees," another would observe; "and it does entertain them so to see the blossoms unfolding. The nest is really quite peaceful in blooming-time."

"Well; perhaps I am old-fashioned," a third might twitter. "I dare say I am; but give *me* a good shady maple. I have engaged a nice leafy branch in one on Connecticut Avenue."

"Of course I am only a bride," I am sure some other would chirp coyly; "and you may think me foolish and sentimental. I have just begged Robin to decide on one of those beautiful flowering trees in Lafayette Square. I think it would be so lovely to sit and twitter to each other among all the soft white blooms

on moonlight nights. They seem so bridal and suitable to honeymoons."

All through March the lovely days are coming and going, and each one is warmer than the last and does something new.

In the squares there are afternoons when baby-carriages accumulate, and small things of all sizes totter or run about. Smart colored nurses begin to sit on the benches and talk to each other and watch their charges. On the branches over their heads there are tender green leaves instead of tight buds, and they are opening and spreading every hour.

Early in April one looks up and down streets and avenues, through lines of delicate pale greenness. Little black or yellow boys begin to appear with bunches of arbutus tied tightly together, and offered for sale at ten cents each. On the mounds about the statues in the circles there are beds of crocuses, which later change by magic into tulips and hyacinths and adorable things that fill the air with perfume.

As the days go on, the greenness grows and grows, and it is so fresh and exquisite that one becomes intoxicated with the mere seeing and breathing so much of the life of spring, and can think of nothing else. People who go out to walk compare the leaves on the different thoroughfares, and return to talk about them.

"Are the lindens a little slow this year?" one says; "or are the tulip-trees always earlier? They are beginning to be quite full on Sixteenth street."

In the grass near the railing surrounding the grounds of the White House, purple and yellow crocuses seem to spring up wild. They look as if they belonged to the woods.

Soon the little colored boys have larger bunches of arbutus, and bunches of wild violets and pale blue starry things. They have gathered them in the woods about Rock Creek. The sun grows warmer, the rain that comes is delicious; there are more and more leaves on every side; in the parks there are hyacinths and crocuses and scarlet japonicas and new things making buds for blossoms on trees one does not expect flowers from. And then some morning — somehow it always seems quite suddenly — people, getting up, look out of their windows, and all the world is Spring, the very

Spring itself. From a second or third story one looks down upon a forest — not a city, but a forest. It would be easy to pretend that it was an enchanted forest which some fairy had caused to flourish in the midst of a city, or an enchanted city which had been made to arise within the labyrinths of a forest. Trees are everywhere, and whichever way one turns it is to look down vistas of them — broad, beautiful vistas whose straight lengths seem to close in fresh, luxuriant greenery. In the narrower streets the branches almost spread from side to side, and one walks under an archway of leaves.

It seems almost impossible to believe that one is in a town. The plan of the city gives so many vistas of green. A person standing in one of the circles sees in the center a statue with flower-beds brilliant at its base. From east to west this circle is crossed by one of the streets whose names are the letters of the alphabet, from north to south by one of those whose names are numbers; diagonally it is crossed by avenues bearing the names of States; and as each of these is bordered by one or two rows of trees,—from east to west, from north to south, and diagonally,—the eyes follow the course of groves of linden, maple, tulip, sycamore, or poplar.

Within short distances of each other are the bower-like squares which contain such blossoming as one seems to see nowhere else. It is not merely a matter of planted flowers or blooming shrubs. There are trees loaded with blossoms. They are not fruit-trees, but trees which bear burdens of flowers which seem, some of them, like specially sumptuous full-petaled apple or plum or peach blossom, or a splendid kind of English may.

The bowers are full of children by this time. Their nurses sit looking at them; their little carriages are drawn up at the sides of the walks. In some of these carriages, under swinging lace-covered parasols, tiny soft mites, not much older than the flowers, lie sleeping among downy white wraps and lace. They are part of the springtime. Small persons — very small ones in quaint hats and bonnets, and coats which seem much too long for them and give them a picturesque air of ancientry — toddle about and

tumble on the grass, and carefully pick up blossoms which have fallen from the trees, and — probably after sitting down with unsteady suddenness — proceed to examine them with a serious air of botanical studiousness usually losing itself in an earnest endeavor to cram them into a small, dewy red mouth.

They are very pretty as they run or tumble or totter about — these little springtime things. Sometimes one sees a small one standing under a tree and looking up, wonderingly and rather questioningly, into the world of snowy or pink-and-white bloom above. It is so little, and it sees a great sky of lovely flowers over its head. Through this flower sky there are glimpses of a sky of blue; fallen blossoms are at its feet; flowers are blooming all about it in the bower it plays in. It is taken home through groves of greenery; it looks out on a fair forest when it wakens. It thinks the world is made of fresh leaves and pinky-white blossoms, and as it looks up into the branches of bloom its snowy petal of a soul is full of the joy of living.

And to the one who is taken for drives on these bright and blooming days, this leafy, flowery world must seem a boundless one. After the avenues and parks are left behind, one bowls along country roads where there is more greenery still. Oh, the soft hills and dips of land covered with trees all busy attiring themselves in pale green veils and wreaths, because the Spring is passing softly by, whispering to each one of them!

"You are a maple," perhaps she whispers to one. "You must put out little red, velvet leaves — tiny ones, thick and soft, and wonderful. At first each one must be almost like a strange little flower."

And to another:

"You are a linden. You must make little blooming green tassels which delicately scent the air. As people pass under you they must say, 'How sweet the linden is!'"

And to the tangles of bare briars:

"You must begin to work industriously, because you have so much to do. First, you must put out fresh green leaves until you are a waving garland. And then you know you have to star yourself all over with white blossoms. And by the autumn you must be weighed over

with plump, juicy blackberries for the children to come and gather and laugh over, and stain their little mouths and hands and aprons with. You have no time to lose. You have a great deal to do."

And to the dogwood:

"Awake! awake! You are the beautiful wild white princess of the woods. Among all the beautiful things I give the world, you are one of the most beautiful. Cover yourself all over — to the end of every branch and twig of you — with large-petaled snow-white flowers. You must bloom until you stand out amongst the other trees like a splendid white spirit of spring, when the soft wind shakes you, and the sun shines through your boughs. All your work is done in the springtime. In the summer you have only to be green; in the autumn you must be a lovely red, it is true; but now you must be so beautiful that people will cry out with joy when they catch sight of you."

And so they do. The children of the City of Groves and Bowers come back from their walks and drives in the country with great white branches over their shoulders. Some of them walk, some drive out to the beautiful Rock Creek, where trees grow close up hill and down dale, and where blue violets and anemones and other white and pink and purple things clamber down the banks and slopes to the water's edge.

And then there is the Soldiers' Home, where there are woods again, and flowers, wild and tame, and ivy climbing over walls and bridges, and ground- and tree-squirrels scampering. And there are beautiful white buildings with all sorts of interesting things connected with them; and there are old soldiers who have been in battles, and who now sit warming themselves in the sun, or walk about slowly, or sit in arbors and smoke pipes and talk — perhaps telling each other thrilling stories about some of the very battles they were in.

"Is that an old soldier?" little boys have asked with breathless interest. "Was he once in battles? Has he been wounded with bullets and cannon-balls?"

And there is the big white hospital where the old soldiers are taken care of when they are ill — when the bullets and cannon-balls are

troublesome, or when they are invalidated by maladies less martial. And there are mounds where one can stand and look out over a wide panorama of the country, the river, the woodlands, and the City of Groves and Bowers itself; and in one place, in a road one is always driven through, there is an opening cut through the trees, and there the coachman—if the people are strangers—draws up the carriage and says, "This is the Vista, ladies and gentlemen." And then one looks down the vista of green trees, and at the end of it one sees the far-away white-domed Capitol, a beautiful, stately thing, shining in the sun on its Capitol Hill.

It is a great, lovely, peaceful resting-place for the old soldiers—this one the City of Groves and Bowers has made.

There is a very delightful thing which is one of the springtime events of the bowery city. It is not a social or a political function, and it is an event I have never heard the origin of.

It is the Egg-rolling on Easter Monday.

Easter eggs, colored red and blue and yellow, and adorned with flowers and stripes, are delights known to the children of many countries; but I think it is only in Washington that there exists a custom—which is almost a ceremony—of rolling the brilliantly hued things down grassy slopes by way of festivity.

It strikes one also as being delightfully illustrative of the power of the children's republic that the places chosen as most suitable for these festivities should be the private grounds of the presidential mansion—the White House itself—and the slopes of the grounds which surround the Capitol.

If one wants to roll red and blue and yellow eggs down a sloping lawn, it appears that a little republican sees no reason why he or she should not roll them by the thousand down the

lawn of a President's back garden. The slope is just the one required, and no President so far has been hard-hearted enough to go out on the portico and wave his hand and order the little intruders away; no Mrs. President has ever thrown a shawl over her head and run out to scold them and say she will not allow it.

So every Easter Monday morning there is to be seen an ever-increas-



"SMALL PERSONS TODDLE ABOUT, AND THINK THE WORLD IS MADE OF FRESH LEAVES AND PINKY-WHITE BLOSSOMS."

ing stream of children of various sizes swarming through the streets, all wending their way to the grounds of the White House. There are well-dressed ones attended by their nurses or relatives; there are shabby little ones attended by no one at all; there are some little black ones in a

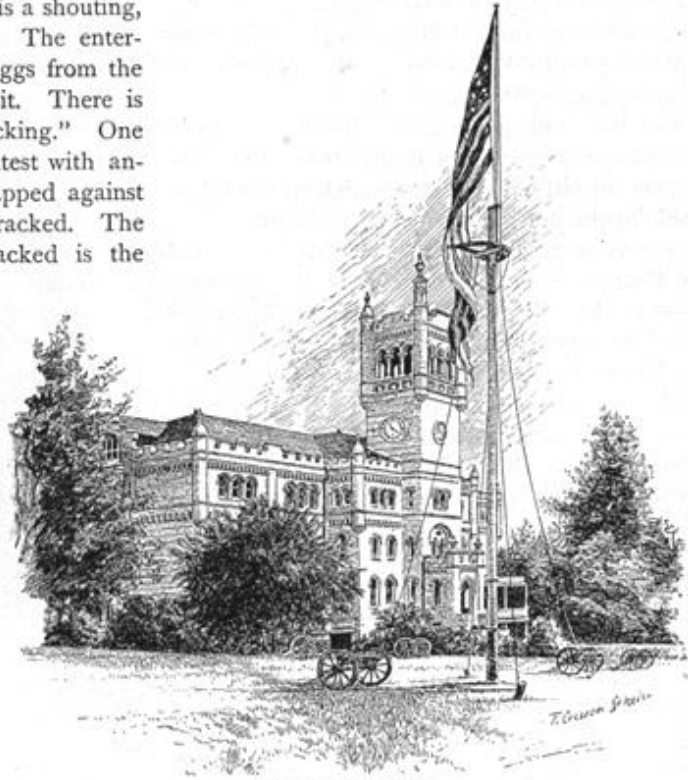
pleasing state of excitement; but everybody has a basket or package with colored eggs in it. A great many also have something which holds a little lunch. There is great excitement and rivalry about the color of the eggs and the number each little person possesses. In a very short time, the President's back garden is a shouting, laughing, romping pandemonium. The entertainment consists in rolling the eggs from the top of the slope to the bottom of it. There is also the exciting sport of "egg-picking." One egg proprietor enters into a contest with another one, in which one egg is tapped against the other until one of the two is cracked. The proprietor whose egg is not cracked is the winner, and the stake won is the broken egg.

Eggs are rolled and "picked," and broken and eaten. When the festivity is over, the President's back garden and the slopes of the Capitol grounds are strewn with fragments of bright-colored egg-shells and bits of paper left for the White House gardeners to pick up, and many little indigestions have gone home and to bed in innocent joyousness and fatigue.

One cannot help wondering what would occur if the same number of little London children decided to go and roll eggs in the grounds of Buckingham Palace. Would Her Most Gracious Majesty order out the Horse Guards? Perhaps not, as she has had nine little children of her own, whom she helped in their childhood to be most delightfully happy little persons; but I am afraid she would regard it as rather a liberty.

When the dogwood has withdrawn its white blossoms into private life, as it were; when there are no more violets scrambling up and down the banks of Rock Creek; when the birds in the linden and tulip and maple trees in the avenues have begun active domestic duties, and have family circles in their nests, the City of Groves and Bowers begins to be warm, and also to be deserted. In the summer, if the

weather was not so hot, Washington would be delightful. The leaves grow thicker and thicker upon the thousands of trees; the fountains play in the parks; everybody's windows are open, and through the streets are driven slowly carts of fruit and vegetables, whose appearance and



THE SOLDIERS' HOME.

disappearance record the progress of the summer season. The carts are always driven by colored gentlemen, whose far-reaching sonorous voices proclaim their wares as the cart wanders along. Frequently a colored boy saunters near it on the pavement, shouting also. Sometimes the proprietor himself walks by the languid, sleepy old horse's head. But in any case, as the cavalcade strolls through a street, the inhabitants always hear what is going by.

"Strawbe'ys! Fine fresh strawbe'ys!" is the cry in the early summer. "Strawbe'ys, twenty-fi' cents er box!"

And then, as the days go on, and the fruit is more abundant, there is a decline in price until "strawbe'ys" may be bought at three boxes for "twenty-fi' cents."

And later appear the loads of watermelons. A few years ago a certain vender of watermelons used to be a source of great delight to the two small boys who were the occupants of one particular nursery. He was a colored gentleman of the name of Johnson, and he had a voice to rend the firmament.

"Watermillions—watermillions!" he used to proclaim. "Joe Johnson's watermillions!

"Red to the rine, an' the rine red too—
Better buy a watermillion while they gwine thoo."

How was this to be resisted on a hot, hot sleepy day?

But at this time the majority of the inhabitants is at the seaside or in the mountains, and those who are detained in town find they have grave need of watermelons, and ice, and soda-water.

When, in the autumn, the houses which have been closed during the hot months begin to open their doors, and once more there are small faces at the nursery windows, another Spirit has passed through the groves and bowers and roamed through the country roads and woods, and over the dips and curves, and down to the water's edge at Rock Creek. It has touched every branch and leaf, every vine and woodland bramble, and even the small, humble things which creep about close to the ground in the wild places and among the rocks. It has painted the groves yellow and red and orange and golden brown; to the vines climbing over walls and about windows and doors it has done wonderful things; the bowers are variegated, the flowers in the parks are deep and richly colored or flaming. The avenues and streets are gorgeous, and when, in walking between the brilliant trees one lifts one's face as one did in those mornings of earliest spring, one's eyes

find a touch of deeper blue in the sky. It seems as if so much color, such tints of amber and crimson and orange, could surely never fade out, and that the City of Groves and Bowers must flame like this always. The small human flowers who came with the leaf-buds in the spring, being rolled into Lafayette and Franklin squares again by their nurses, have grown enough to be of the world which is not always softly asleep or vaguely absorbed in bottles with milk in them. They lie in their pretty carriages and stare at the wonderful branches above them. Sometimes they make remarks on the subject of leaves which are quite scarlet. But the nurses and grown-up people think they are simply cooing or goosing, or doing something quite aimless, while really their observations may be most profound. But it is so often the case that great discoverers are not at first understood.

These great discoverers, at least, have made the most of their City of Groves and Bowers. They have seen only the beautiful, the lovable, the adorable things in it. They have not explained to themselves the workings of the Capitol and the Treasury. They have only looked up at the blue above them and at the blossoming boughs and the flaming ones; they have smiled at the flowers and at the tender little breezes which kissed their soft cheeks in hurrying by. And though the flames of color will die down, the breezes will be less tender, and the boughs will drop their leaves and stand bare, yet there is one thing—just one beautiful, joyous thing—of which even older and less untried creatures can be quite, quite *sure*. Whatsoever of sadness, or clouds, or chill, or fading colors the passing year may hold, the Spring will always come again—the Spring will *always* come again!





EASTER EGG-ROLLING, ON THE GROUNDS OF THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON. (SEE PAGE 376.)