THE EXECUTIVE'S EASTER.

The Executives had met at the home of their president for their combined business and social meeting. They were a wide-awake class, and were striving to live up to the name which they had chosen. Incidentally, it may be said, the superintendent was learning to depend upon them as an important factor in the development of the school.

The little school, handicapped as it was, needed to be developed even more than the majority of schools. For years it had been "going down hill," until the most earnest of the church adherents had stood aghast as they considered that its ultimate disbandment was only a question of time. Then—no one really quite understood how—there had come an awakening, during which time ten young fellows of the village, who had hitherto found Sunday a day to be spent in doing almost everything except church-going, suddenly decided to go to Sunday-school.

It had created quite an excitement when the boys sauntered into the little Sunday-school room that first Sunday morning. The little boys in the two corner classes had giggled and nudged each other, to the entire demoralization of the lesson, while the little girls had whispered and giggled. The superintendent himself had felt a spasm of wonder mixed with annoyance at first when the young fellows opened the door, for it had not seemed to him that anything but mischief could be responsible for their appearanec—and indeed, it is not improbable that element did enter into their plans when the idea of attending Sunday-school was first broached.

After that one first moment of dismay, however, the superintendent had proved himself to be the right man in the right place, and had welcomed the boys so heartily that they then and there determinto attend regularly. Why not? What else was there to do that might not as easily be done on other days? And then, because the superintendent was the "executive officer"—and there was none other—they formed themselves into a class organization and named themselves "Executives," out of respect to him.

That was six months before their March business meeting, and during this time five of the boys—they were all of them just out of their "teens"—had come to know and love the One of whom the superintendent told them Sunday after Sunday. The other five were not yet ready to enlist in the service, although they still came regularly to the sessions of the school, and, lkie Bannard and Sumner and Bates and Grey and Veasey, were a very different lot of boys than upon that ever-memorable Sunday when they went to Sunday-school "for the fun of the thing."

"One thing is certain, boys," Barnard, the president, said earnestly, after the preliminaries of the meeting were finished; "if we are going to live up to our name, we've got to do something to make our school larger—and better, of course I'm lacking in ideas myself. Racked my brain all last week while I was 'scalloping' until I began to think I'd have brain fever, but 'twasn't any good. Couldn't think of any scheme. What shall we do?

Dan Morris, another young fisherman, laughed a trifle awkwardly as he took the floor.

"There is a suggestion in the Bible," he said earnestly. "And see here, boys, strikes me that if I were in the super's place, I'd want my 'Executives' to just go after folks and make 'em come to Sunday-school. We went for fun, but most folks wouldn't, and folks that don't usually go to church and Sunday-school have to be brought. Couldn't we do something in that line?"

"They might be brought," opined Godfrey Bates, "but they wouldn't stay, nor be brought a second time unless there was something worth coming and staying for. We wouldn't, if we hadn't found the super a "dandy."

"There are just forty-nine members in the school," Barnard said contemplatively.

"Wish I was twins!" ejaculated Guy Naylor. "I do like even numbers! I say, boys, suppose we get up a concert? They have 'em in the cities—Easter especially."

"They do here," the president said corroboratively. "The super was saying only yesterday that the kids would have to begin to drill pretty soon. That's a big idea, though, Guy. Suppose we give the concert this Easter? We've got the voices. You know the super said last Sunday it did him good to hear us sing, and why not just lay ourselves out to have an A-1 Easter concert this year, recitations, orations, singing—everything—all by the Executives?"

"Who'd come." Fred Veasey was something of a doubter, but the others of the class had already caught the spirit of the idea and took up the cudgels in its defense.

"Everybody we're in earnest about getting there."

"The folks who see we are in earnest."

"Folks who believe in us."

"Folks who don't believe—"

"Dont say any more," laughed Veasey. "I'm convinced they'll all be here. But I say, boys, we'll have to get busy mighty soon."

"We will!" chorused the others, while Dan Morris added as a motion that the entertainment committee should be appointed to secure an exercise that they could "get busy" over.

Superintendent Blackmer, when he heard of the proposed innovation, showed his delight unmistakably, assisting them to find a desirable exercise. Then they did go to work, practicing their songs and committing to memory the beautiful Scripture texts regarding the resurrection, while far and near they heralded the news, that they, the Executives, were to take charge of the Easter Sunday evening service.

The announcement did not really "take well" with many of the conservative members of the Little church, the men and women who felt that Sunday-school was a place for children, and who therefore did not themselves attend, and at the same time could not quite credit the evidence of their senses that the young men were really earnest in their attachment for the school. Nevertheless, the boys continued their preparations at all possible times, until, the day before Easter, all was in readiness.

All day the girls of the Sunday-school searched the woods for the dainty spring blossoms so abundant near the shores where the passengers of the "Mayflower" landed so many years ago, and in the early evening were joined at the church by eight of the Executives, who, with them, decorated the building more lavishly than it had ever been before.

Only eight of the young men put in an appearance at the church, although every one had pledged himself to be on hand to help, and, as well, to take part in a final rehearsal. The absent members were Jack Barnard and Dan Norris, the young fishermen, and the two who were mainly responsible for the concert soon to be given.

"They should have been here," Fred Veasey said uneasily. "If they wern't such good sailors—but, of course—"

The superintendent looked in a moment later.

"Jack and Dan haven't come, eh? Their families are anxious enough," he said gravely. There's been a terrible ground swell to-day. And it seems they left word they would be back by two this afternoon. Suppose we all leave this now—you can, can you not?—and go down to the shore. A searching party will probably go out if they do not get in by ten o'clock."

The night was one of inky darkness, but already when the boys reached the shore a huge bonfire had been lighted, giving encouragement and assistance to the succoring party, which even then was setting out in hope of finding the missing boys.

All night the classmates of the missing boys fed the bonfire, while strong and clear their voices rang out over the water in songs of hope and inspiration. With the morning light, however, the searching party returned, haggard and weary with disappointment and unsuccessful toil.

"There's a possibility," Mr. Barnard said slowly, as he stepped from the boat, "there's a possibility, friends, that they may have drifted out to sea and been picked up by some steamer, but—oh, my boy! my boy!"

"And mine!" sobbed a pale-faced woman. "My Dan is all I have—and if he's been taken—"

"Let us go to God's house, at the hour appointed for worship, with our sorrow," suggested the superintendent, who was acting pastor as well as superintendent; and the people of the little village nodded assent.

In the class the boys debated the question concerning the evening service. Could they, they questioned, could they possibly carry out the plan they had made for that evening of the Resurrection's anniversary? And yet, if the boys were indeed safe, as they hoped against all hope, would not they desire it above all else? And if—oh, if, somewhere beneath the waves of the ocean, Jack their president, and Dan—dear old Dan—were lying—no, no! rather if on this Resurrection Day they were with Him who had conquered death would they not wish them to tell the joyful news of the day instead of sitting in sorrow and silence?

They motioned to the superintendent, who that morning had not been their teacher as usual, and told him they would carry out the proposed program for the evening if he would give out the notice.

It was a wonderful service. The little church was crowded to its utmost capacity. Everybody was there. I wish I could describe what really was an indescribable scene, for the boys outdid their brightest dreams concerning the service, which was concert, memorial and evangelistic in character, all at the same time. To be sure, it was especially hard on the young fellows who so willingly, nevertheless, undertook the work; and yet it paid, for it seemed to them they could almost see their missing comrades while they spoke and sang.

And it was in very truth an Easter service, for as they sang the songs of the risen Christ, the boys who as yet had never decided to follow the Master resolved that in newness of life they would henceforth go about their daily toil—like Jack and Dan.

And then the superintendent spoke, telling of the interest taken by "his boys" of whom indeed the two most indefatigable were the dear fellows whom they were striving to leave trustfully in the Hand that held the very waters of the sea. It had been they who had suggested this wonderfully carried out service, and the love and loyalty of their comrades had made it all a success. He trusted that the successwas not alone for that evening, however, but that in days to come the church might be crowded by men and women, boys and girls, old and young, who would do their part in making the work of Aucoot Sunday School and church successful, even as the Executives—those present and those whom God held in his divine keeping elsewhere—had striven to do.

As the boys ostentatiously turned the leaves of their singing books and surreptitiously wiped away tears that would persist in gathering as they thought of what it would mean to meet hereafter without their chums, a telegraph operator pushed his way into the church, crying, "Good news!" all unmindful of day and place and occasion, and waving a telegram he had not stopped to place within the envelope prescribed by law.

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BARNARD, NORRIS."

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