

## THE RABBITS.

Among the children of the French creoles of Louisiana there is a very pretty belief that their Easter eggs are brought to them by rabbits. These dainty little creatures know all the children and are perfectly aware which of the youngsters deserve tastefully decorated eggs, and which of them should have eggs which are merely colored or, perhaps, entirely plain.

This belief that the rabbits bring the Easter eggs is as strongly rooted in the minds of the creole children as are any of our good old notions concerning Santa Claus and Christmas stockings, and that there is good ground for the simple faith of the little ones will be proved by the following story:

There were two rabbits, great friends, who lived in a grove of live oaks not far from a town. One of these was a young rabbit, named Lapinita, and she was very much excited one morning because the next day would be Easter, and her companion, Lapingro, had told her that in the early morning she should carry an Easter egg to her child. It was yet many hours before Easter morning, and the two rabbits had not provided themselves with an Easter egg, nor had they decided to what child they should give it. Lapinita knew where there was a hen's nest. She had examined the eggs, and she was quite sure the old hen would give her one, but they were not very large and they were not very white, and she and Lapingro wanted very fine eggs indeed.

The two rabbits were still wandering through the woods, talking earnestly about the business on hand, when they saw a beautiful figure approaching them. At first they thought it was a woman, but they soon knew it was not, for it had been a woman—even the gentle ladies they would have been frightened. But this charming figure, which seemed scarcely to touch the ground as she tripped gayly under the trees and sat down, but did not frighten them at all. They sat upon their little haunches with their little forefeet pressed against their little noses and with the tops of their little noses trembling and wrinkling in expectation.

The figure bounded toward them and sat down on the ground. "Oh, dear little rabbits!" she said. "How glad I am to see you! You are the first friends I have met since I came into these woods. I know you are friends because your noses wrinkle so affectionately. Do you know who I am? I am Lapingro, but you should be glad for you to tell us who you are."

"Very well, then," said she with a charming smile. "I am a Dryad; one of those beings who live in oak trees. In these oaks," asked Lapinita, wonderingly.

"No, not in these oaks," said the Dryad. "I have never seen any oaks like these. I am a stranger in this country and these trees are not at all like the oaks of my own land, France. The branches of my oaks are ever so much higher than the ground; they are larger, and they have no long beards hanging from their limbs."

"That is moss," said Lapingro. "It is the goats that have beards, not the trees. I am glad to have you tell me that," said the Dryad, "because I know so little about this country. This is the way I happened to come here: I lived in a tall oak, which was cut down by some people who were sending the trunks of trees to foreign lands. I really wish you were with a Dryad in it cut down she gets out and goes to some other tree, but I have always wished so much to see foreign lands that I thought it would be fine fun to stay in my trunk and get out of it when the people took me and that is the way I happen to be here. Everything is so beautiful and I am glad to meet you two dear little rabbits! Where are you going? May I go with you? I am looking for an oak tree to live in, but I don't want to find one yet."

Then Lapingro told the Dryad that they wanted to get an Easter egg to give to some good child early the next morning, but they had not found an egg yet which was good enough for her, and they did not yet know what child they would give it to.

"And I am to give it to the child?" cried Lapinita, the top of her nose trembling with delightful anticipation. "I have never yet given an egg to any child. It will make me happy."

The Dryad was very much interested and when the rabbits told her that they were trying to find a very large and white hen's egg, she said she did not think much of such eggs for Easter.

"Oh, if you could see the Easter eggs that I have seen," she exclaimed. "I remember that was brought to my little girl who lived near the edge of my forest. It was as big—well, it was as big as that!" and the Dryad held her hands about a foot apart.

"Oh, what birds they must have in France," exclaimed Lapinita. "I remember it was not a real egg," said the Dryad. "It was a make-believe egg and it opened in the middle. It had two hinges and shut with a click. Inside of it—oh! if you could have seen what was inside of it! There was a beautiful doll and a sort of clothes for her to wear even shoes, stockings and gloves, with a little seal-skin sacque!"

The two rabbits sat straight up on their haunches, their cottontails wiggling in the grass and their noses so excited that they could scarcely speak. "What a happy little girl that must have been!" gasped Lapinita.

"Of course we cannot get an egg like that," said the Dryad, "but we must find a nice, big one and put something in it. Have you any goose eggs in this country?"

"Oh, yes," said Lapingro, "and I know a goose who will give me one." "Run and get it, please," said the Dryad, "and bring it here. Then we shall see what can be done."

"But don't get one too big for me to carry," said Lapinita, anxiously. When Lapingro came back under the live oaks he brought a large and beautiful goose egg.

"That will do very well, indeed," said the Dryad. "Now we must cut it in half so that we can take everything out of it and make the shell open and shut. We must have some gum to fasten on the hinges, and I will go and get that. It oozes out of some trees so high up that you can't reach it. While I am gone you can cut the egg apart. Cut it the long way, please, exactly in the middle, and try to keep the edges smooth."

They had some trouble at first to keep the saw exactly in the middle of the egg, but as soon as they had made one good cut in the right place it was easy enough to go on. Every time that Lapinita leaned forward her little cotton-tail wiggled to the west and every time she pulled backward it wagged to the east, so that in a short time the ground behind her was brushed entirely bare.

At last the goose egg was cut exactly in two halves, and when these fell apart all the inside ran out.

"It is a great pity to waste a gosling," said Lapingro, "but it can't be helped. Come now, Lapinita! We must carry these two halves of the egg to the brook and wash them clean. I wonder what the Dryad is going to tell us to put in them."

"Oh! I wonder very much," said Lapinita, "but it can't be helped. When the Dryad came back she found the two halves of the egg shell washed nice and clean and already dry."

"How beautifully you have done it!" she exclaimed. "I have brought some nice gum to stick the hinges. But what are we to make them of? It ought to be something like thin leather."

Lapingro clapped his right forepaw to the side of his nose. "I think I can get something that will do," said he. "I saw a tadpole this morning taking off his skin so as to get his legs out, and he was a frog. He does not want the skin any more, and I will go and see if I can find it."

"We must have something to line the inside of the egg," said the Dryad. "Do you know where you can get anything soft?"

"Oh, yes," cried Lapinita. "I know where there is a little cotton patch. I will go and get some." "A cotton patch?" said the Dryad, "what is that?"

"It is where our tails grow. At least I was told so when I was a little bit of a baby. But I have already begun not to believe it."

Very soon the little rabbit came hopping back to the Dryad with a bunch of white cotton in her mouth, which made up the two halves of the tail—one in front and one behind.

Presently Lapingro returned with the tadpole skin, which the Dryad declared would do admirably for the hinges. With a bit of sharp shell she cut it into proper shape and gummed it on the two halves of the egg shell, so that they opened and closed nicely.

"I do not know how to make it shut with a click," she said; "but when we have filled it we can make a cord with some of my hair and tie it up."

She then lined the egg with a thin layer of soft cotton, and when this was done she and the two rabbits set themselves to consider what they should put in the Easter egg. This was not easy to decide, and having hidden the egg under the moss they all went wandering through the woods to see what they could find.

They wandered nearly the rest of the day, and toward the close of the afternoon, as they were nearing a path which led through the woods, they were startled by voices. Quickly hiding behind trees they saw two men who were looking for something among the leaves and grass on the ground.

"Well, it isn't here now," said the other, "and as you are such a lazy fellow, Joseph, always lying down to rest, you get a chance. I can't feel sorry when you lose things out of your pockets."

"But this is a great loss to me," said the other. "With the tickets in that package I expected to ride for a long time. Now I shall have to walk, for I can't afford to buy more."

"It will do you good to walk, Joseph," said the other, "and you ought to be glad you lost your tickets. Come on, I can walk no longer."

"What is a ticket?" asked the Dryad, who had been hidden.

"I don't know," said Lapingro, "but it must be something to ride on. Look at those two birds! What are they doing?"

"Now, then," whispered the Dryad, "we must watch her carefully and see how she rides on those tickets. As soon as the other girl was dressed she picked up her basket, which she had filled the night before, and hurried away toward the town."

"I don't call that riding," said Lapinita. "Let us wait and see what she does next," said the Dryad, and the rabbits quietly followed the girl.

She soon came to a wide road, and there she stopped. Hiding behind some bushes, the three companions watched her. Very soon an electric car came rumbling along the rails. The other girl held up her hand and the car stopped. She quickly seated herself and the Dryad and the rabbits plainly saw her take one of the tickets and give it to the man, after which the car rolled swiftly away and she was lost to their sight.

They looked at each other in amazement. "So that is the way that people ride on tickets," said the Dryad. "I never should have imagined such a thing if I had not seen it."

"Yes, that is the way it is done," explained Lapinita. "And, oh, how I should like to ride on a ticket!"

Lapingro laughed. "Wouldn't you look funny," said he, "sitting up on a red velvet cushion holding out a ticket to a man?"

"I don't believe any rabbits ever took a better Easter egg to a deserving child," said the Dryad. "But now I must hurry back to the forest and find an oak to live in."

"Come on! Come on!" cried Lapingro, hopping briskly before her, "and we will help you to find one."

"Yes," said Lapinita, keeping close to the Dryad, "and it shall be one with a crack in it, so that you can get out whenever you want to be with us."

Never Has a Cold.

"I haven't had a cold all winter!" This was the assertion with which Mrs. Elia Wheeler Wilcox introduced her favorite topic—the benefits accruing from the use of pure cold water. "I have not used hot water for bathing," she continued, "for more than a year, and I have never felt better in my life. Of course," she laughed at sight of some one's horrified face, "I do take a Turkish bath every little while, but that is merely for show. The cold water I regard as medicinal. I take three minutes of ice cold water from the hose every morning."

"Oh!" shivered a wheezy little victim of the influenza, "I never could stand that!"

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## AMERICAN BUNTING.

The Requisitions by the Government for It for Navy Flags.

Imperative regulations by the Government authorities for the production of bunting for navy flags are what insure the superiority so well known to characterize the American article. The regulations prescribe that the fabric be made entirely of wool of the best quality, and show no imperfections, the weight to be five and one-fourth pounds avoirdupois per piece of forty yards of 10-inch width, the yarn to be evenly spun, the warp and filling to contain no less than thirty-four threads to the inch, and the warp-twist with one-ply filling, properly twisted; further, a tensile strength is required of sixty-five pounds for the warp and forty-five pounds for the filling. In test pieces two inches wide, the colors must be as "fast" as it is possible to make them, and not liable to be seriously affected by being soaked continuously for twenty-four hours in fresh water and then thoroughly washed in water with which is combined a good grade of laundry soap. Every stripe and device on the flags made of this superb material are measured with the most perfect geometrical accuracy, and the stars are put on so carefully and evenly that when the flag is held up to the light the stars, which are made of muslin and put on both sides, appear to be a part of the fabric. The stars are cut with chisels out of bleached muslin laid thirty thicknesses together on a large open block.—Boston Transcript.

## THE FRENCH PEASANT.

After Harvest All the Fields Become Common Property.

The French peasant has an independent means of existence. He owns the soil he tills. If he employs laborers, they, at least, will own a house and garden, and hope to own a plot. The English villager is either a small tradesman or a laborer. A garden which he cultivates but does not own is, as a rule, the extent of his possessions. There are two classes in an English village, and these may be subdivided into various religious sects. There is only one class in our French commune—a fact which has a material bearing upon the social economy of the community. Every inhabitant of the commune is a proprietor of something, and all are bent on saving, yet, with all their individualism, they combine for common and mutual interest. This is illustrated by the organization of the syndicate for buying at wholesale prices. They unite for the cultivation of the soil, lending each other horses and making up teams. Every commune has a field, which is common property, and where, on payment of a trifling fee, animals graze. After the harvest all the fields become common property, and the gros betail and the other detail are allowed to roam at large.—Contemporary Review.

## MAID OF HONOR'S DUTY.

Those Who Attend the Czarina Must Be Able to Sew and Cook.

Those who think that the life of a lady about a court is necessarily that of a butterfly, may be surprised to learn that cleverness with the needle is an adjunct demanded of the maids of honor at the court of Russia, to be of use in cases of emergency when in attendance on the czarina. That they have also to read well aloud and to stand for any length of time goes without saying, but it would hardly be believed that in order to pass into the imperial presence Russian maids of honor have to obtain a diploma for cooking! Such is, however, the case. In some imperial menages, too, the maid of honor has to compose the everyday dinner menu. And in all this training there underlies the teaching that an empress or grand duchess of Russia is a personage of divine vocation. Having passed through all this ordeal, the would-be maid of honor, at the age of 16 or 17, is presented to the empress, and if finding favor in the imperial eyes, is appointed a demoiselle d'honneur passing subsequently through the various grades mentioned. From this body of maidens, too, the various grand duchesses, with the czarina's approval, also make their selections.—Chicago Times-Herald.

## BIGGEST WINE TANK IN THE WORLD.

Half a Million Gallons of Wine Pumped Into It by Steam in California.

Half a million gallons of wine, all in one still, deep, red lake, are the feature of this year's wine industry in California. The lake is the biggest vat in all the history of wine making. The famous great tun at Heidelberg held only 50,000 gallons. London boasted tanks twice as large as Heidelberg, and in San Francisco is one which holds 150,000 gallons. Before this huge underground cavern at Asti, in Sonoma, where 500,000 gallons of grape juice are to take on sweetness and flavor, all former feats in storing vast quantities of wine are insignificant.

For one solid week two steam pumps forced into this reservoir four-inch streams of grape juice before it was filled and corked. For this huge storage tank is in reality a sort of Brobdignagian bottle, buried well underground to preserve it from changes of temperature and the heat of the sun's rays. Its construction was a matter of sudden necessity. It unexpectedly became known that there was more grape juice in Sonoma vineyards than there was room in which to put it. The idea of a big concrete cistern was broached and quickly adopted, and in forty-five days from the time the first shovelful of earth was thrown out the steam pumps began their task of filling it.—New York Sun.

## A Change.

"What's the matter wid Briggers?" asked the gentleman with the red shirt. "I thought he was always so radical in his beliefs and wanted the money of the country divided up evenly. Now he doesn't say a word." "Because," remarked the man with the whiskers, "his uncle has just left him \$10,000."—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

## Had No Vacancy.

Mr. Dunham—"I have called, sir, to tell you that your daughter, Miss Fannie, and I love each other very dearly. I want to ask you for her."

Old Millyuns—"Well, you'll have to wait awhile. There's no vacancy in the store now that I could put you in to."—Cleveland Leader.

## An Easy Test.

Timmins—I have never been able to make up my mind whether I am genius or not.

Simmons—It is easily tested. Just act like a hog when you are in society, and if you are a genius people will admire you for it.—Indianapolis Journal.

## A Devotee.

Frank—Some genius in Birmingham has invented a buttonless shirt.

Billy—Why, that's old. I've worn them ever since my wife learned to ride a bicycle.—Boston Traveller.

## THE TURK AND THE IRISHMAN.

Paddy Didn't Wait for Ceremony of Prayers.

Among the Turks employed on the line of the first Turkish railway was an old man who had a son who was a soldier in one of the regiments in the garrison at Rostchuk, whom he had not seen for a good many months. Each day the regular through train arrived and left, but the old Turk never got the chance to run up to Rostchuk to see his son, for the train just came and went at the very moment when he was engaged at his midday prayer.

"Why don't you get leave, and go to see him?" said the practical Irishman.

"How can I?" replied the old man. "Doesn't the train come in and go away while I am at prayers? Allah wills it that I should not see him."

And so the time continued to pass, the old man telling Flynn how his heart was weary to see his son. It happened one day that, as the train drew up at the station, the old man was engaged at his devotions on his prayer carpet close to the line, an empty truck with the door run back had stopped just opposite where he was on his knees and his forehead to the ground, and the Irishman came along. Seized by a sudden inspiration, he caught up the old Turk, prayer carpet and all, and landed him in the truck just as the train moved off. Two days after the old man came back by the down train, his face beaming with pleasure.

"Ah, my friend," he said, as he saw Flynn standing on the platform, "only I flynn standing on the platform, 'only for you I should never have seen my son. It must have been Allah who put it into your heart to throw me into the train. May he reward you for it."—Harper's Round Table.

## AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.

Their Names do not Indicate Their Special Object.

The Providence Telegram says that many agricultural colleges, especially in New-England, show a disposition to conceal their special function as schools of agriculture. "The college in Maine," it declares, "has had its name changed to 'the University of Maine,' omitting any allusion to farming, and will add a school for the production of lawyers to its equipment. The State continues to be taxed for its support. The professors of the Massachusetts Agricultural College are ashamed of the name, and want it called the Massachusetts College. Professors in our Rhode Island College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts have not waited for legislation, but quietly talk about the Rhode Island College, a title which would belong to Brown if it was to be assigned to any institution. How can these men be expected to accomplish much for the elevation of farming, and the farmer when they sail under false colors and do not like to have it known that they are connected with an institution where farming is taught?"

## Her Appeal Not to Vain.

Not long ago President Diaz of Mexico received a letter from a little girl of Pueblo, in which she said: "Mamma locked up my doll, and I wasn't naughty. Please make her let me have it again." A day or two later the child got by post from the general President a handsome doll, with a note stating his belief, should she remain good, her mother would never have occasion to lock it away. By that time the girl's parents had got wind of the message to Diaz, and they wrote to him expressing regret that their wilful child had taken it into her head to communicate with him. A note was received in reply from the President's secretary assuring the worthy people that his exalted superior had quite enjoyed the experience, and was pleased to have the worry of holding office relieved occasionally by such a quaint episode.—New York Tribune.

## A Great Surprise.

A Michigan paper tells a story of a little girl named Hattie, whose mother was putting her to sleep one night. At last her mother said: "Hattie, dear, I am anxious that you get quiet and go to sleep, because I want to go downstairs and join in the evening prayers."

"Who's doin' to pray?" asked Hattie.

"Why, Uncle William, of course, dear."

"Uncle William pray?" said the baby, with wide-eyed astonishment, and springing up in bed in the vigor of her surprise. "W'y I fawt he was a Demokwat?"

## The Reason of a Name.

"Lemme see," asked the boarder who is always wanting to know things of no use, "what is it they call those red, green and blue lights that a skyrocket throws off?"

"Verifiers," said the Cheerful Idiot. "Really?" asked the inquisitive boarder.

"Yes. They give color to the report."—Indianapolis Journal.

## An Adage Knocked Out.

"Love is blind," murmured Mr. Meekton regretfully.

"That's nonsense," replied his wife. "When a girl falls in love with a man she sees magnificent qualities in him which none of her family can make out and which become wholly obscure even to her in the course of a year or so."—Washington Star.

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