

EASTER OBSERVANCES AT HOME AND ABROAD

PEOPLE MOST TALKED ABOUT

EASTER is the principal festival of the Christian year, observed in commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The resurrection took place just after the Jewish feast of the Passover. The Christians of Jerusalem, and after them those of the Asiatic churches generally, were accustomed to hold the feast of Easter on this same day, or simultaneously with the feast of the Jewish Passover. This custom was not acceptable to the Gentile churches in Italy and the west generally, and they changed the time of Easter observance to the Sunday following the fourteenth day of the moon, or month, and this difference of practice led to grave discussions between the east and the west, which were finally settled by the agreement at the council of Nice in the early part of the fourth century to make the western usage universal. From that time

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NEW YORK'S FIFTH AVENUE EASTER PARADE



EASTER PROCESSION IN A JERUSALEM STREET



GOOD FRIDAY ON THE VIA DOLOROSA



EASTER DAY ATLANTIC CITY, N.J.

Easter has been observed not only in Christian Europe and America, but far across the sea in the ancient strongholds of pagan superstition. And so it has come to pass that the very word Easter thrills the heart with gladness, bringing its welcome announcement that the gloom is past, and the time of bud and blossom, leaf and spray, glancing wing and sudden song, floating cloud and prismatic shower, the time of affluence and beauty and growing, and rapture of high vitality in plant and human life alike—that wondrous time has come, again.

In every Christian land the season is observed with deep, religious feeling. In Jerusalem, the Holy City, enshrined with so many memories of Christ, his life, his work, his death and his resurrection, the celebration of Easter is of peculiar interest. Representatives of so many churches and sects assemble here at this season for special religious celebrations that an elaborate schedule has to be planned to prevent worship according to one form of the Christian faith from interfering with that of another. Turkish soldiers are much in evidence at this time to check the smallest beginning of open conflict. One of the most impressive features of the Eastertide observance in Jerusalem is witnessed on Good Friday on the Via Dolorosa—supposed to be the road over which Christ bore the cross to Calvary—when this commemorative journey is made by the pilgrims on their knees.

Easter customs still cling to England in many places. Maundy money is distributed on Thursday at Westminster Abbey, as in the days of Pepys, old men and women over 60 years of age receive specially minted coins, corresponding to the years in King George's life. It follows that the older a British king is, the more money is distributed.

On Good Friday there is a procession to St. Paul's cathedral revived from early times by the Bishop of London, and the suburban districts have smaller ones to their parish churches.

The veiling of the crucifix at Easter is still maintained as a survival of that older ceremony of "watching the sepulchre." In olden days this graphic and elaborate rite commenced on Good Friday with the lowering of the great crucifix and its bestowal in a shallow grave dug beneath the high altar, where it remained until early in the morning of Easter day. In course of time, as the ritual became more ornate, the grave was discarded in favor of a temporary wooden sepulchre erected on the north of the choir, and the host as well as the crucifix were deposited therein.

An old writer on Durham cathedral thus describes it: "On Good Friday, after the singing of the Passion, two monks took a large crucifix and, laying it upon a velvet cushion, brought it to the lower gressias (steps) of the choir and there betwixt them held the crucifix."

"Then one of the monks rose and went a pretty space from it and setting himself upon his knees to the cross and kissed it, and after him the other monk did likewise. Afterwards so did the prior and all the monks, the whole choir in the meantime singing an anthem. Amidst the light of the candles and the burning of incense, the cross was then carried to the sepulchre and there was laid, together with the holy sacrament, within the sepulchre."

Guards were then placed to watch until Easter morning, when the singing of "Christus Resurgens," the sacred symbols were taken out of their temporary grave and replaced upon the altar. It was an old belief that the eyes which beheld this Easter elevation would not close in death during the year to come.

The churches in many poorer quarters, including St. George's in the Borough—"Little Dorrit's church"—and St. John's, Walworth, are so thronged by Easter wedding couples that the clergy often marry them in groups.

At the church of St. Mary, Woolnoth, near the mansion house, a queer distribution is still carried out in accordance with the will of Sir John Spencer, who was lord mayor in 1594. He left a

legacy with instructions to the church wardens to distribute colored eggs to communicants on Easter morning. That entails giving away about 600 of these eggs.

Many ceremonies and sports distinguished the celebration of Easter in olden times. In a royal roll of the time of Edward I preserved in the tower, appears an entry of 18 pence for 400 eggs to be used for Easter gifts. Town authorities engaged with due dignity in games of ball. In the northern parts of England the men paraded the streets on Easter Sunday and claimed the privilege of lifting every woman they met three times from the ground, receiving in payment a kiss or a silver sixpence. The same was done by the women to the men the next day. It is recorded also that on Easter Monday the women had a right to strike their husbands, and on Tuesday the men struck their wives, as in December the servants scolded their masters. From a German authority it is learned that in the Neumark on Easter day the men servants whip the maid servants with switches, and on Monday the maids whip the men. In some parts of Germany parents and children try to surprise each other in bed on Easter morning to apply the health-giving switches.

In Palestine, Easter is the day when relatives and friends exchange gifts and it is the family reunion day, much as is Christmas in America. On Easter a grand mass is celebrated at 12 o'clock midnight, at which all present receive the Lord's supper. After the service, which lasts about four hours, the crowds go home to break their fast and feast on the dainties prepared before hand. In the morning visits are exchanged between relatives and friends, the younger people go to the older people first to wish them a bright Easter and many happy returns. About 1 p. m. a grand patriarchal procession walks to the church of the Holy Sepulchre singing those melodious Gregorian songs. The scene is particularly imposing. There now follows a service in the Greek cathedral at which the gospel for Easter day is read in all the leading languages of the world.

The first person to salute the czar of Russia on Easter morning with the words "Christ is Risen" must be greeted in turn with a royal kiss. No matter how lowly the person—the meanest of beggars, even—the great czar must bestow upon him a brotherly kiss. Not so many Easters ago the czar was compelled by this inexorable custom to kiss the cheek of a peasant sentry, stationed in the garden to which the czar had escaped for an early morning walk.

The Spaniards believe that he who is born on Good Friday has the gift of second sight. They delight to tell that Philip IV was second-sighted because he came into the world on this day. Spanish women, as well as many English countrywomen, declare that sewing done on Good Friday will never come undone.

By many European peasants the wind is watched on Palm Sunday, in the belief that from whatever direction it then blows, thence it will come most frequently during the ensuing year. The Spaniard who is fortunate enough to secure a palm, blessed and used in a church procession on Palm Sunday, fastens it to the balcony of his house for protection from lightning.

An interesting Easter egg custom prevails in Poland. On Easter Monday every head of a house, man or woman, presents each visitor on his call with a hard-boiled egg, or, rather, the

half of one. The head of the house divides the egg, gives a half to the caller, and eats with him the other part. The custom has such a hold on the people that the nobles, even when living far away from the fatherland, observe it. Many years ago Prince Czartoryski was in residence in Paris, when he held the usual reception on Easter Monday, receiving each guest at the door of his salon, and dividing the egg in traditional style with each visitor, who ate it conscientiously.

In America, with its population drawn from all sections of the globe, many Easter observances distinctive of the various countries have been retained by the immigrants and their descendants.

So decidedly has Easter Sunday come to be thought of in the United States as the great show day of the year that the average person no longer regards it in its most inspiring light—the crowning feast day of the Christian year. Yet its religious significance still lives and while the strenuous money seekers of the present day seem to have lost sight of any save its worldly interest the spirit of worship is by no means a thing of the past and nowhere is it more actively alive than in the up-to-date church of a great city. Music is the chief feature of the usual service, and no pains or money is spared to make it a noteworthy event.

Easter egg rolling on the White House grounds in Washington has become an affair of international note. The children gather in crowds outside the tall iron fence that incloses the grounds, and when the gates are thrown open at exactly 9 a. m. they flock in pell-mell and distribute themselves in squads over the hillocks. No time is lost, the sport beginning at once, and soon it is in fast and furious progress, the greensward speckled with eggs and rainbow hues. All the children wear their best clothes, which are destined to be sadly mussed and more or less torn before the day is over, yet a thoroughly democratic spirit prevails, the youngsters being of all classes.

To the eye of the casual observer the egg play is somewhat devoid of meaning, but a study of it shows that it is both varied and interesting. Some of the children make races with their eggs, starting them simultaneously from the top of a hillock, with the understanding that the one to reach the bottom first is the winner. If it is "for fair" the egg of the loser passes into the possession of the successful contestant. Another way is to roll an egg down hill, to be received at the bottom on the point of a second egg if the thing is properly done, and failure or success in this object gives rise to much merriment. Or, again, two children may roll their eggs toward each other on a flat piece of ground, and when they have met the one cracked is lost.

In no other land does the Easter egg so splendidly symbolize democracy as in America.

AMBASSADOR WILSON DOING WELL



Public opinion, as well as such official opinion as can be sounded in Washington, seems agreed that Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson is handling a very difficult situation in Mexico in a manner thoroughly creditable to himself.

In times of uproar like that which has prevailed in Mexico City during the last month, the ambassador of a foreign power usually has a chance to wrap his country's flag around him and arouse—at home, at least—the cheers of the multitude by delivering as stiffish an ultimatum as his state department will allow.

But in the present situation Mr. Wilson has had to muster considerable personal firmness to mask the temporizing and hesitating policy of the administration. Anything remotely resembling "heroics" was denied him, and yet the personal safety of Americans in the mob-ridden city and the heavy financial interests of American investors demanded that he make it perfectly clear to the provisional government that the United States would not permit an indefinite period of anarchy.

He managed to do this in a way which was fairly effective in its results and which also managed to make the Americans popular, instead of unpopular, with the crowds in Mexico City.

KING ALFONSO OF SPAIN AN IDOL

Alarmists have been predicting the overthrow of the Spanish monarchy as the consequence of the present tangled situation in Spanish internal politics. To any one but an assiduous student of Spanish affairs it would seem highly probable that King Alfonso will go the way of Don Manuel, his one time neighbor. But one who knows the Spain of today in contrast with the Spain of yesterday, when Alfonso as a young and inexperienced youth ascended the throne, will shortly conclude that herein lies the key to the whole situation. It will not be Alfonso whom Spain will banish, writes the Madrid correspondent of the New York Sun, but his successor will come to a throne so undermined by past abuses that a crash is very likely. This declaration of opposites clears itself when it is explained that it is the popularity of Alfonso himself, and not of the throne, that keeps Spain loyal to a monarchy.



The popularity of the rey valiente since as a boy of sixteen he took up the reins of government has been ever on the increase and today he is the idol of all his subjects, from the highest to the lowest.

DOES IT PAY TO LIVE LONG



Sir George Birdwood, M. D., a noted English scientist, himself an octogenarian, throws a new light on the question by suggesting that abnormal longevity is a most undesirable thing. Sir George spent nearly fifty years in the public service. He was formerly an army surgeon and professor of anatomy and physiology. He was in the India office for thirty-one years and is founder of Primrose day. In India his name is a household word.

Writing to a contemporary, he refers to the people who have been telling us "how they have, in their own thinking, managed to achieve this profoundly questionable glory; for imagine millions hugging their boards for 100 years, to leave them to already senile sons to go on hugging them for twenty or thirty years more, and so from generation to generation, until the heavy drag of these veritable Struldbrugs stops the turning of a too 'conservative' world on its axis. It is, indeed, a most disheartening sign—this desire of people to live beyond three score years and ten, unless its prolongation is desirable in the interests of others; and, fortunately, these abnormal ages of eighty, ninety and one hundred years are not to be achieved, they simply occur as exceptions to a rule. The question under discussion in its true form is not how to live to four score or five score, but how to live profitably and profitably and pleasantly alike for yourself and for others."

Sir George concludes by quoting the words on the ring of Senecianus: "Live careless of the gods."

FERVENTLY LOVED; PASSIONATELY HATED

No man in England is more fervently loved—and more passionately hated—than Mr. Lloyd George, chancellor of the exchequer. The bright blue eyes, the thick hair—rapidly growing gray—tossed back from the forehead in moments of excitement, the spare, alert form, all combine to make a whole which interests, if it does not always attract; most people are surprised to find that the chancellor is a short man.

The majority of those who come in personal contact with him admit that here is a compelling and attractive personality. While you talk to him—and he is a good listener—you feel that you too are a personality, and a personality in whom he is interested. As he chats in a corner of the lobby of the house of commons his manner suggests that you are the center of the universe, that in fact until that moment his soul has been hungering for just this exchange of ideas. The musical Welsh voice promises—what does he not promise? Anything?

Yet this is not insincerity, it is only part of the man's devouring mania for popularity.

