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THE SPRING BONNET.

WHY IT USUALLY BLOSSOMS FORTH ON EASTER SUNDAY.

Olive Harper Writes of the Origin and Evolution of the Easter Bonnet—Some Samples of the Hats Worn by Our Grandmothers.

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Probably nine persons out of ten, if asked how the habit of appearing in new garments, and particularly bonnets, on Easter Sunday originated, would speak of it as one evolved from a desire to commemorate in a measure the rising of our Lord, and to be clothed outwardly anew as a symbol of refreshed and renewed faith and a sign of rejoicing. But it is not due to that, though probably that is the sentiment actuating the fair of today when they don their pretty new clothes, and, above all, their Easter bonnets.

To say Easter bonnet brings to the mind the undefined sense of early spring, blue skies, the scent of lilacs, and out of this dim and misty haze materializes the image of a lovely girl with tender eyes heavy with reverent tears, standing mute and sweet in church, with a vision of beauty in the form of a mixture of lace and flowers and glistening ribbons overshadowing her brow.

The beginning of the Easter bonnet pure and simple is lost, for the Christian church took its rise in countries where women do not and never did wear bonnets. When after many centuries women began to wear a settled head covering, no particular importance was attached to Easter Sunday as requiring such an emblem, and it never has obtained in any country but France, England and America, and of late years a very little in Italy. This, however, has been on account of the example foreign visitors have set.

In almost all of the foreign countries women wear fewer clothes than they wear here, and the habit has generally been to renew their wardrobes in the spring, and as settled weather was never



expected until the latter part of April they did not wear their garments until then, and as Easter is a great holiday the women by a natural transition wore their new things on that day as we do on the Fourth of July. Little by little the habit spread, and France took it up. I find as proof of this in an old French book of fashions, "There may be dames who now refrain from wearing their new bonnets for the spring until Easter Sunday, as until then the weather is unsettled."

And in that same book I find an illustration of a bonnet of the most fearful and wonderful shape, described in these words, "In this bonnet art makes wealth ashamed."

In this book, which is "Cabinet des Modes," published in April, 1786, is first mentioned the Easter bonnet, as "a black chapeau a la Maltese. It is bordered with a ribbon en diademe; the crown surrounded with a bunch of rose colored crepe, forming several knots; aigret formed of black cock's plumes and one large tuft of white plumes." With this is worn a "large gauze fichu, trimmed with a scalloped ruffle. Bouquet of roses; hair hanging behind a la coiffure, with a curl on each shoulder."

The remarkable hats published herewith are from the papers of the period—viz., 1785, 1786 and 1794—and with them are worn the robe en fourreau, the robe en chemise and the redingote ajustee, and keen eyes can find many points of resemblance to our present modes.

I cannot leave the "Cabinet des Modes" of 1786 without making one delicious extract, which proves that the gushing fashion writer is not of modern growth: "Our merchants of fashion make the past and will make the future centuries ashamed as they will necessarily degenerate, because that is always the fate of that which has reached perfection."



In Pepps' "Diary," written in 1664, I find several mentions of Easter Sunday and services at church, and the dear old gossip says next to nothing of Easter bonnets—the nearest approach to it being where he says, "My wife dressed herself, it being Easter day," and speaks of her wearing "her new gown, which is indeed very fine with lace, and this morning her tailor brought home her other new laced silk gown, with a smaller lace

and a new petticoat I bought the other day—both very pretty." In another place he speaks of his own new suit for Easter but never mentions bonnets. But women having been women from the beginning it is certain that with the new dresses went new bonnets.

The fashion of Easter bonnets is more generally observed in this country than any other and in large cities more than in smaller places. Still it has come to be a habit that all follow who can, and everywhere, if the weather is fine, new bonnets are seen.

The decorations are put up in the churches at Christmas and left till Easter, and then everything symbolizes the return of spring as well as the resurrection.



tion, and if any sacrifice is made in the offering of a new suit of spring garments and a beautiful and becoming Easter bonnet the fair wearer will endure it and make no sign. From a bunch of flowers, through many phases, the Easter bonnet has passed until now it is accepted as a necessary part of Easter. A thing of beauty and joy forever to women.

OLIVE HARPER.

EASTER MARBLES.

German children have a game of marbles played only at Easter. The Easter eggs are cut off squarely, perhaps one-third of the distance from the broad end. They are then set up, say, three or four feet from the wall and in triangular positions. Three or four may be set at once. Sides are chosen if there are more than two players. Then the children roll their marbles with a deft thud against the wall or baseboard. If in the rebound a marble touches one of the eggs, it becomes the property of the side to which the marble belongs. Then the opposite side must "set up," and the game is only won when all the eggs are captured by one side. Candy animals and cake people who are able to stand alone are often victims in this war of marbles.

RIVALS IN BUSINESS.

On the street on Easter morning two boys met. There was no need of a verbal challenge. No. 1 held his champion egg, a poem of sky blue and crimson, firmly. No. 2 waved back his answer with his red, white and blue unbreakable.

Crack! The small ends of the gay eggs clicked together. How much depended on the outcome.

But no crunch of weaker egg followed. The two gladiators eyed one another. "What's yours?" "Chiney. What's yours?" "Boxwood."

And they parted, for though rivalry is the life of commerce there is such a thing as ruinous competition.

THE MEASURE OF SUCCESS.



Clara—I thought your Easter gown was quite a success.

Maude—Yes. It is the most expensive one I ever had.

CURIOUS CUSTOMS IN LONDON.

Many quaint methods were devised by the founders of old English charities for promoting happiness among their beneficiaries at Eastertide. Good Friday and Easter customs in this old country are numerous and curious. For instance, in London 60 of the youngest boys of Christ's Hospital school attend divine service at a church in Lombard street, in the midst of the great banks, and afterward receive each a bag of raisins, one new penny and one bun at the old priory church in West Smithfield, and 21 widows each pick up a new sixpence from a tomb in the churchyard, a custom that is said to be 500 years old.

AN UNWELCOME EASTER KISS.

Russia is not the only country in which the early Christian custom of kissing all comers at Easter survives. In Northumberland, England, the men still claim a kiss or a silver sixpence from every woman they meet in the streets. In the town of Bedlington last year at Easter a coal miner was sued for kissing a woman and pleaded the old custom. He was released by the justices, who informed the complainant that "if she did not want Georgie's kiss she could have given him a silver saxepece."

ORIGIN OF EASTER.

Easter is said to be older than Christianity. The name by which we know the day is identical with that of the ancient Saxon goddess of spring, Eostre. The early missionaries gave a Christian meaning to the observance of the day, but it has retained its ancient name.

A PRIVATE CITIZEN.

NOW EX-PRESIDENT HARRISON WENT DUCK SHOOTING.

Some Rare Sport by a Good Shot—Order of Exercises in the Boathouse—An Affair That Was Not Disturbed by Newspaper Men.

(Special Correspondence.)

HAVANA, Ills., March 30.—This ancient Illinois town, situated on the Illinois river between Peoria and St. Louis and within a short distance by rail from the former city, has been pleasantly honored by a visit from ex-President Benjamin Harrison. The kindly faced ex-president, in company with several friends from Pennsylvania, Indianapolis and St. Louis, arrived in Havana in their special car Wildwood. The party were equipped for a 10 days' shooting bout along the lagoons and marshes bordering the Illinois river. Some of General Harrison's Indianapolis friends are interested in some shooting preserves near Havana, and the ex-president accepted the invitation to shoot ducks from fine cover during the early spring days. A quaint little river tugboat called the City of Peoria, of which the pioneer, John Shulte, is master, took the hunters on board and steamed away to Spring lake, near a little fish mart called Liverpool, a few miles from this place.

Arriving at Liverpool, General Harrison and his friends were transferred to the houseboat Marion, a most primitive and unique affair, owned by the Indianapolis Sportsmen's club. The boat, though rough looking, is fitted up neatly and comfortably within, and the accompanying diagram will give the reader some idea of the interior arrangements of the boat. However, the ex-president is a true sportsman and loves to rough it with the rest of the boys. On the journey up the river he sat on a hard bench on the prow of the little City of Peoria, and to one who did not know him the ex-president appears no differently in looks and actions from any other gentleman sportsman.

It was hoped that the party would get into the shooting boxes at once, but a stiff norther set in, which sent the wild fowl scurrying southward. Some good shots were obtained, however, and the party were arranging to get after the birds in earnest when the weather turned very cold and the wind blew a gale. The ex-president and his friends were compelled to remain under cover until the wind subsided and the atmosphere modified. Old hunters say that General Harrison came a little too early for good shooting, as the spring flight northward had hardly begun. Then, too, the very high water and ice jams have made box shooting very difficult. Notwithstanding these discouragements, General Harrison was rewarded with some rare sport. He was in the very best of health and spirits, and it seems strange how the reports had gotten into circulation to the effect that the last days of his presidency had told upon him.

It was the wish of General Harrison that his visit here be attended by as little notoriety as possible. Newspaper men have not found much to write about. All they could say was that the ex-president was in the vicinity in quest of ducks. The natives did not annoy the party by loitering around the camp, and those people who did essay to make a call were received very courteously. On the 16th inst. the Illinois encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, in its session at Springfield, wired General Harrison at Havana that they wanted him to come over and see them. The ex-president responded in a kindly dispatch to the effect that he was there on a hunting trip, in his hunting gear, and was not prepared to make a visit of ceremony. So the distinguished sportsman remained in camp.

The "order of exercises" in vogue on the Marion during the ex-president's stay were simple and methodical. Breakfast was usually had at an early hour, and some mornings General Harrison was out long before daybreak, popping away at the ducks as they swooped past his box. General Harrison is an excellent shot. He uses one of the latest improved styles of breechloaders and is well acquainted with its use.

Shooting from a box is not the easiest method of securing game. These boxes are well concealed by grasses, yet in these latter days the wild fowl are very suspicious. Unless the conditions are of the most favorable sort, the sportsman will rarely get a good shot into a flock of ducks as they are dropping their wings to settle. This is the moment when the guns should speak. Then as the frightened birds wheel to rise two more shells can be rapidly slipped into the gun and two more broadsides poured into them. The locality visited by the ex-president has been famous for years for its excellent shooting and fishing.

The Illinois river in this part of the state is surrounded on both sides by lagoons, marshes and small lakes. Thompson's lake is the largest of these, and here is where some of the best sport is obtained. During General Harrison's stay he hunted in various parts of the country contiguous to Havana. The last few days of his vacation were the most successful, as the birds began to come in by the thousands.

It is a matter for congratulation that this distinguished guest was enabled to enjoy a fortnight of true sport without being compelled to resort to the methods in vogue in a foreign country, where game must be propagated solely for the use of the royal sportsmen and their friends. General Harrison grew considerably tanned by the exercise and the stiff winds during his outing, and no doubt is in far greater health by reason of his visit to the Illinois river marshes.

GAY DAVIDSON.

England is not the only nation which can boast that the sun never sets in her dominions. It is equally true of the United States, for when it is 6 o'clock in the morning at Attou island, Alaska, the most westerly point of American territory, it is just 9 o'clock in the morning of the following day at Eastport, Me.

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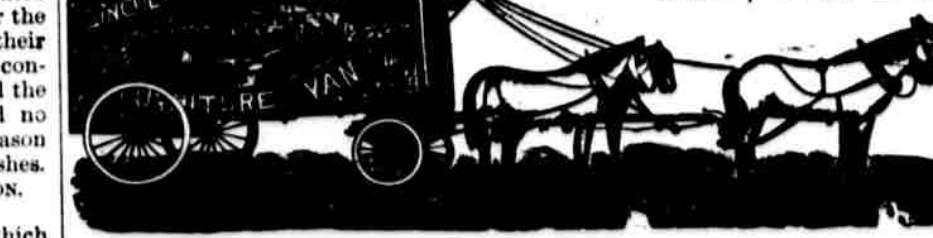
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