

Superstitions of Easter

THROUGHOUT all ages superstition has awayed the world. In antiquity a few of these prophetic beliefs crystallized around the Easter period, leaving so deep an impress upon the susceptible minds as to cause them through the centuries to be passed down with the greatest care. Even now there is scarcely a nation that does not put faith in one or more of the Easter omens.

Some of these attach to Good Friday. In the time of Catholic England there was a superstition which the king publicly honored with his trust. It was the ceremony of blessing the rings. This was done to preserve their wearers from "the falling sickness," a trouble commonly known to us as cramps. The cramping service was of exceptional originality. Walsh gives a vivid description of it.

"The king and his suite," he tells us, "would proceed in state to the palace chapel, upon the floor of which rested a crucifix upon a silken cushion, and in front of which was spread a rich carpet. The king would creep along the carpet to the crucifix—as a token of absolute humility—his almoner creeping after him. Having reached the crucifix he would there bless the cramp rings, which were deposited in a silver basin. After this was done the queen and her ladies-in-waiting entered the chapel and also crept to the cross. This completed the ceremony and the rings had been transformed into the most potent remedial agents."

Drinking a mixture of bread and water was a means of curing several ailments. The superstition still holds in a few places. Good Friday morning leaves of bread are baked and then laid aside until the following year, when the people grate a small portion of the bread into water and give it to the sufferers.

Who has not heard of the English "hot cross bun"? On the morning of Good Friday throughout England the street venders usher in the universal cry of "Hot cross bun," and so family, as a precautionary method, if not for their toothlessness alone, would dare run the risk of not purchasing them. Even kings would not miss eating them, for whoever eats a bun need have no fear of having his home destroyed by fire during the coming year.

Early Good Friday morning large numbers of men, women and children start out in quest of customers for their fresh, hot buns, which they guard from the cold with a flannel covering. And the shops as well are festive with their own supplies of it. The peculiarity of the hot cross bun lies in its being highly spiced and bearing on its brown, sugary surface the mark of a cross.

The "one a penny, two a penny, hot cross bun" have a more ancient origin than is generally supposed. The name itself is taken from the Greek name of a certain cake which the ancients gave for an offering to the gods. In the biblical period the prophet Jeremiah had occasion to notice this offering, when he saw the idolatry of the Jewish women at Patros, Egypt.

As a preventive of fevers certain nations abstained from eating meat on Easter day. But this practice never obtained in England.

One of the most ancient and universal of all superstitions attaching to Easter day was that of the dancing sun. At first it was believed to dance over the general joy at the renewal of nature's life in this season of the year. Later, it danced over the resurrection of Christ. Many centuries ago on Easter day people arose early and repaired to the fields to view this dancing sun.

In certain countries they had a way of observing the sun at his antics that made him appear more playful than ever. By viewing it as it rose through the morning vapor or watching its reflection in a stream or a pail of water, they could strengthen their illusion. In Scotland the sun was merrier than anywhere else, for here it was expected to "whirl round like a cart wheel, and give three leaps."

Then one of the greatest concerns of the day came to be whether the sun really did dance or not. Grave and learned men over all the world set themselves the task of solving the weighty problem. Sir Thomas Brown left some quaint ideas on the subject.

"We shall not, I hope, disparage the resurrection of our Redeemer," he writes, "if we say that the sun doth not dance on Easter day; and though we would willingly assent into any sympathetic exultation, yet we cannot conceive therein any more than a tropical expression. Whether any such motion there was in that day wherein Christ arose, Scripture hath not revealed, which hath been punctual in other records concerning time, depositing a thick body of intermixed bowlders, sand, and clay as a terminal moraine, which is now the "backbone" of the island. The ice moved southward and brought these materials from the north, dropping them at its melting edge. This peculiar method of deposition developed a very peculiar topography, consisting of an irregular aggregation of hummocks and hollows, which have produced the many beautiful details of configuration that make the higher parts of Long Island so attractive to lovers of nature. The most notable of these hollows in the moraine ridge is the one holding the picturesque Lake Ronkonkoma, which lies in a depression 50 feet below the surrounding ridges. Several other similar pits are 80 to 85 feet deep, and some of the larger irregular hollows are several miles in length.

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GOOD ROADS

GOVERNMENT AID FOR ROADS

Committee of Congress Expected to Make Favorable Report on Highways Measure.

The question of federal aid for good roads looms large. A joint committee of the senate and house, with Senator Bourne, Oregon (the father of the parcel-post bill) chairman, is now investigating the entire subject with every likelihood of a report being submitted favorable to the general project. The main subject under investigation at present is the manner in which federal aid when finally forthcoming shall be distributed, whether to the states according to their population, their area or the mileage of their highways. In a recent magazine article Senator Bourne expressed himself as favorable to a plan which shall combine all three of these elements, inasmuch as it would not be fair to grant more aid to Rhode Island, for instance, than to Iowa, although the population of the former state is much larger than that of the latter; or more aid to Nevada, for instance, than to Nebraska, although the former state is much larger in area than the latter; or to some state which has already solved the good roads problem by thousands of miles of good roads, leaving a state with impassable highways suffering because of lack of the necessary aid.

With federal and state aid both imminent, an impetus is being given to road building greater than ever before. The statement is made that \$500,000 a day is being spent for good roads in this country, but the general consensus of opinion is that until within the last year or two results commensurate with this immense expenditure have not been secured. There is a feeling all over the country that road building must be made as systematic and as scientific as railroad building, hence the movement for a state highway commission with plenary powers and scientific supervision by expert engineers. Congress has already appropriated \$500,000, to be distributed \$10,000 to each state, for improvement of stretches of road over which rural free deliveries operate regularly. The results of this appropriation will go a long way to show whether or not the federal government will be justified in making still greater appropriations and in going still more extensively into this important subject. The secretary of agriculture and the postmaster-general have both been ordered to loan their influence to the investigation, to the end that actual facts may be secured so that road building may be carried on in a practical manner.

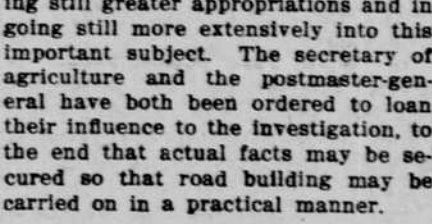
GOOD ROAD-MAKING DEVICE

Machine Invented by Idaho Man is Simple in Construction—Fills Holes, Smoothing Road.

A road-making device for road building has been invented and patented by Hugh G. Taylor of Buhl, Idaho. The machine is simple in construction; it is a drag, constructed of a piece of sheet metal four feet long, four inches wide by a quarter of an inch thick, says a writer in the Western Farmer. It is attached by means of rods to either axle of a wagon or buggy, and drags immediately behind the wheel, smoothing the track and inclining loose dirt toward the center of the road-bed. At the outer end of the drag is a disk which serves to cut down the sides of the track.

Mr. Taylor has one of these machines attached to his mountain hack, and it attracts a great deal of attention. Good road advocates in southern Idaho are enthusiastic about the machine; it has been proposed by them that the county commissioners buy them in large lots and let them out to every farmer who will agree to use them, rebating the user on his road tax.

It is a well-known fact that the roads of southern Idaho are in a frightful condition for nine months out of twelve; from the time they dry up in the spring until about June they are in fair condition, but after that they are so full of "chuck holes" as to render them discouraging to a light rig driving fast, or to a heavily loaded wagon. By the use of Mr. Taylor's chuck hole filler this can be eliminated—it fills all holes, leaving the road smooth after the passing of the vehicle.

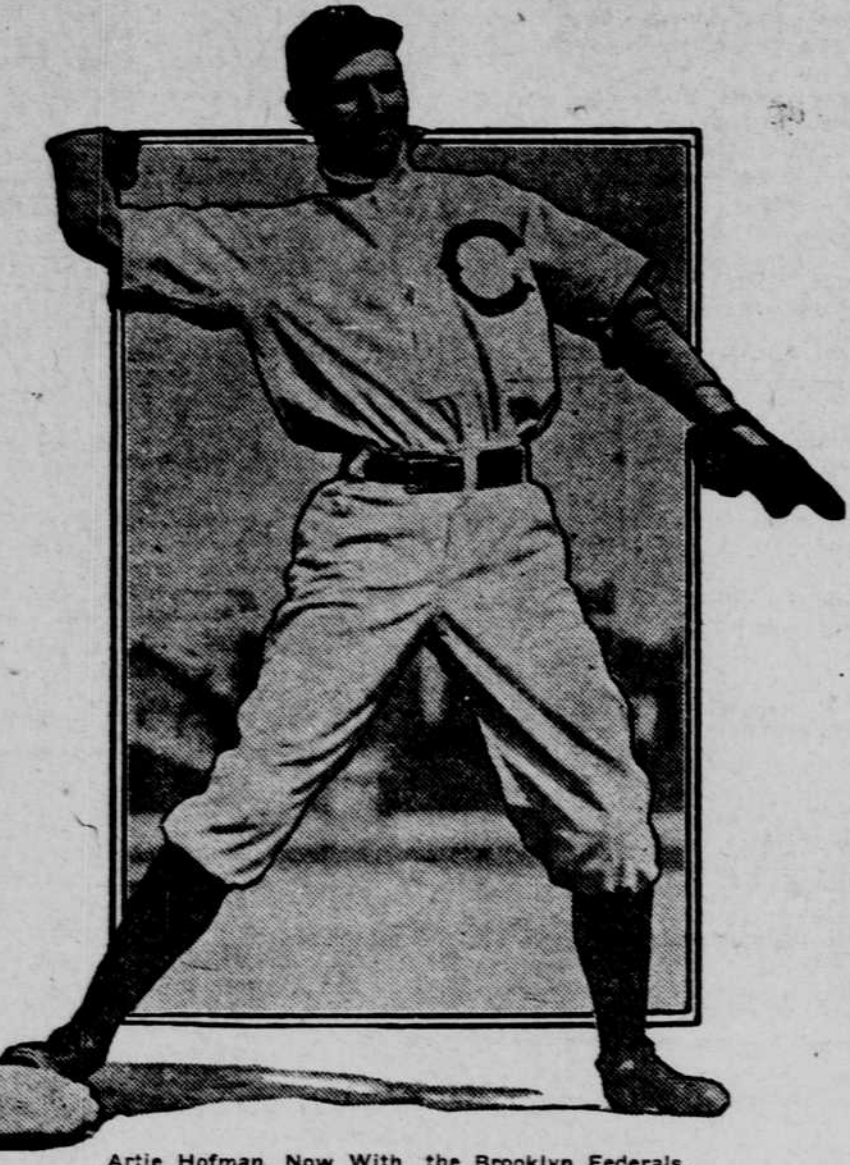


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HOFMAN RESPONSIBLE FOR MERKLE PLAY BALL PLAYERS STICK



Artie Hofman, Now With the Brooklyn Federals.

Art Hofman, and not Johnny Evers was responsible for the famous play in the final New York-Chicago game in 1908 which robbed John J. McGraw's Giants of a National league pennant and possible world's championship, to say nothing of depriving each and every member of the New York team of at least \$2,500. For years, or ever since 1908, Evers has been famous for "Touching Second." It is true that Evers touched second and completed the play, but Evers should get the least credit for it, as two men thought of the play before he did. These two were Hofman and Steinfeldt. Hofman it was who engineered it. He first realized the opportunity ahead, and Evers came in away at the finish, behind Hofman and Steinfeldt.

After more than five years Hofman comes in for a share of credit, but it is doubtful if he will ever get the full amount due him. Mordecai Brown, the former great curve pitcher of the Chicago Nationals, and now manager of the St. Louis Federals, tells the inside story of the play, which for year after year has been kept secret. This is Brown's version:

"Evers knows as much baseball as any man in the game," stated Brown. "He's a quick thinker, always thinking of some play to stop the opposition. But he won credit where it wasn't deserved on that Merkle stuff.

"It wasn't Evers who saw it, but Artie Hofman, and as long as I live I'll never forget the scramble on the Polo ground field. Evers made the putout; and he got it because he was the only one near second. Still, Hofman was the one who started it.

"With McCormick on third and Merkle on first, Al Bridwell shot a single to center. McCormick raced home with the run in the ninth inning that would have beaten us and won the pennant for the Giants. But Merkle, getting near second, didn't touch the bag, and raced for the clubhouse."

MIGHTY FEW OF THEM QUIT UNTIL THEY ARE FORCED TO.

Holdouts Tell Many Stories of Reasons for Leaving, But They Come Back—Owners and Fans Often Fall for the Trick.

Adelina Patti has often made her "farewells." Barnum also, but neither of them equals the ballplayer who proclaims to the world that he is tired of drawing \$6,000 or \$7,000 a year, says Ted Sullivan.

Let us see how he first sounds the alarm. It may be he is to marry an heiress, or it may be a rich widow who wants him to quit the horrid game and lock out for her interests. Still it might be that some relative left him a mine in the far west. One or the other will be an excuse anyway.

His pet reporter will first hear of this, and will say: "Oh, no; that can't be."

The speaker will say: "Yes, it is so. I confidentially told me in the dressing room yesterday that this is his last year in the game."

"Has he told the president of the club?" the reporter will ask.

"No; he hates to. He has been treated so nicely the present year."

Next morning, in large type, the newspaper will lead off, "Mr. So-and-so is to retire from baseball."

Holy Moses! The followers of this player are up in arms. One excitable fan will say: "I knew it! I knew it! I don't blame him. He never could get along with that secretary and directors."

Another fan is on his feet: "I bet some of those other clubs are after him."

The first fan remarks: "Don't you see he is to retire altogether? Going into business with his uncle in their mines."

A third fan speaks up: "Well, that will settle the club. I gave it my last half dollar."

The next day the president meets the player: "What, John? Is this true?"

The player says: "Yes, Mr. President; I am afraid it is. You see, I cannot play ball forever, and this chance may not come again. My uncle has been at me the past two years to quit the game. Then, you see, I bought some property lately on which \$5,000 has to be paid, and uncle will do it if I quit."

Here the president speaks up: "Why, pahaw! Stay with me the coming year and I will advance that amount and increase your salary to \$8,000 for a year. You know, John, I cannot replace you this year at least, and you know I have always treated you well."

The player looks at the president in a sympathetic and innocent way: "Why, Mr. President, for that reason it breaks my heart to leave you, and I hate to have you believe I want any increase in salary; but I will write to uncle to allow me to stay in the business one more year at least just to please you."

Well, reader, this player remains in the game that year, and many other years afterward, and the only time he will leave the ball field is when the field is tired of him, says Scout Sullivan. The only ballplayer in the history of the game who retired when he said he would was Jim McCormick, the famous National league pitcher who played with Cleveland and Chicago.

This may be a little satire on the retiring ballplayer—but who can blame him? Don't all trades and arts have their tricks? Indeed they do—from the minister of the gospel down. A minister out west was to retire and go into business. The congregation raised his salary, he reconsidered, and he remained with his beloved parishioners simply because he loved them and his salary.



Johnny Evers, Boston's Second Baseman.

of the St. Louis Federals, tells the inside story of the play, which for year after year has been kept secret. This is Brown's version:

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NOTES of the DIAMOND

Outfielder Coyle of Omaha has been released to Memphis.

Why do the Browns and Cardinals go south to do their spring training?

"I'll be boss of my team and run things as I see fit," says Charlie Herzog.

The Jersey City club will give Outfielder Fisher, formerly of Louisville, a trial.

Fred Snodgrass won't join the "fly-catching" contest. He has signed with the Giants.

"Money is not the only thing which attracts players to baseball," says Larry Lajole.

The Topeka club has passed into the hands of Dan Breeser, who will retain Dale Gear as manager.

Nick Maddox, former Pirate heaver, will manage the Wichita club of the Western league this season.

Hughley Jennings says that speed is all his Detroit team needs. And he doesn't say a word about the pennant.

Three of Detroit's left-handed hurlers come from the Southern league. They are Cavet, Covaleski and Williams.

Mathewson has a life job with the Giants," reads an exchange. But how much is his life worth when his arm fails?

Pitcher Palmero, the Giants' new Cuban southpaw, has been pitching two and three-hit games all winter in Havana.

President Hedges of the Browns, declares baseball would be better off if it had several Rickeyes to help "reorganize it."

Manager Clark Griffith says that picking the pennant winner for the coming season is harder than picking the horses.

Walter Longman has signed a contract to play with Hugh Duffy's Portland club in the New England league next season.

Pitcher Ralph Glaze, who used to burn 'em over for the Red Sox, has signed up with the Topeka club of the Western league.

Josephus Daniels, son of Secretary of the Navy Daniels, is a candidate for catcher on the Tome institute baseball team at Port Deposit, Mo.

Catcher Jenkins, who was secured by the Browns from Keokuk of the Central association, caught 121 games last season before he had to quit.

Tom Daly, who was on the receiving end of the Tenor-Daly battery many years ago, has been given a position as scout for the New York Yankees.

In Walter Johnson the Nationals have without a doubt, the best hurler in Ban Johnson's circuit. He exceeds all slab artists in striking out the opposition.

Wally Schang of the Athletics is quite some bowler. He is captain of the Wales Center (N. Y.) team, which made a strong bid in a recent Buffalo tourney.

"The Giants are off for their fourth straight pennant," voices a New York scribe. Well, they can be sure of some good bumps before they land there, which we doubt.

There will be two sets of brothers in the Southern league this year. The Coyle boys will play with Chattanooga and Memphis, and the Reynolds brothers with Memphis and Atlanta.

St. Louis Browns have something else to worry about besides the seven other American league clubs. Manager Rickey has prohibited his players from smoking cigarettes and playing poker.

ICE SHEET OVER LONG ISLAND

Geologists Explain Its Configuration by Action of Nature Many Thousands of Years Ago.

According to geologists Long Island affords particularly clear evidence as to the history of the great continental ice sheet which covered the northern states many thousand years ago. The southern margin of this great ice sheet extended to Long Island. It is said, and remained there for a long time, depositing a thick body of intermixed bowlders, sand, and clay as a terminal moraine, which is now the "backbone" of the island. The ice moved southward and brought these materials from the north, dropping them at its melting edge. This peculiar method of deposition developed a very peculiar topography, consisting of an irregular aggregation of hummocks and hollows, which have produced the many beautiful details of configuration that make the higher parts of Long Island so attractive to

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Cool in Adversity. A cool hero of an Alpine fall was the stout German tourist whom George Abraham encountered in strange circumstances on a glacier near Zermatt. Having insisted upon unrooping himself from his guides, he had disappeared into a crevasse. It was supposed he must be dead, and eventually a party arrived with ropes and ladders for the rescue. But meanwhile Mr. Abraham's party appeared on the scene, and his guide was lowered 60 feet into the crevasse. Voices were heard in

the depths. The guide found the German with a broken leg, his body much battered, yet he was smoking a cigar. And he absolutely refused to be rescued until he had bargained at some length for the cost of that operation.

Patriotic. Teacher—Tommy, can you tell me what great men were born in February?
Tommy—George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, St. Valentine and Mr. Groundhog.

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POINTED PARAGRAPHS.

The Romans are afraid base ball is brutal. Some of them must have heard Helnie Zim talking over an umpire.—New York American.

The action of the rules committee in emphasizing that all home runs must be run out isn't much consolation to Manhattan, for Frank Baker always did it anyway.—Cleveland Leader.

If by hook or crook, organized baseball knew how to get Charley Wegman in possession of Charles Webb Murphy's Cub franchise, maybe it wouldn't break all Stockholm records doing it.—Philadelphia North American.

The tango and hesitation dances have figured more or less prominently in the base ball situation.—New York Journal.

Manager "Robbie" will teach his men how to slide, but will not try to do so himself.—Brooklyn Eagle.

Another Star From Brainerd. The little town of Brainerd, Minn., will be more interested than ever in the success of the Athletics next season, provided young Joe Graves, an eighteen-year-old native, makes good as a member of Connie Mack's pitching staff. Chief Bender was born in Brainerd and Leslie Bush makes his home there in the off season. If Graves is half as good as these other Brainerdites he is sure to win added distinction for the little town.

Stone Goes to Federals. Dwight Stone, released last fall by the St. Louis Browns for Oakland, where he failed to make good, and was then turned over to Montgomery, is reported so disgusted with his prospects that he has cast his lot with George Stovall's Federal league team in Kansas City.

Five Big Colleges Compete. Cornell, Pennsylvania, Harvard, Yale and Princeton will be in the running for the highest honors in the track and field championships.