

# May Day Festivities



**W**HAT a varied and versatile holiday is May Day, meaning, of course, the first of May—an occasion which has significance of one kind or another in a number of different countries. For us latter-day Americans probably the greatest prestige comes from the circumstance that May Day is also "Dewey Day," meaning the anniversary of that memorable spring morning when our most notable living naval hero took his fleet into Manila Bay and dealt the blow which did more than any other single incident to determine the outcome of the Spanish-American war. To be sure, it is not the custom of the nation to indulge in spectacular observances of "Dewey Day," but there is a general display of the flag on residences and public buildings in honor of the occasion and it is a favorite occasion for banquets and speech-making.

To go at once to the other extreme in cataloging the functions of May Day it may be noted that May Day is also "moving day," meaning the date on which expire most leases of residential property and when, in consequence, there is a general flitting to and fro of the folk who live in rented houses and in apartments or flats. In some communities April 1 is more generally observed as "moving day" than is May 1, but in most sections of the country the later date is preferred. In more recent years, too, custom has given October 1 some significance as a moving day, but for the great majority of our people who move only once a year, at most, May 1 still has the call as a fixed festival for the shifting of household shrines.

May Day is a date marked for its own by organized labor not only in the United States, but pretty much throughout the civilized world. In many cities there are on this day each year monster parades of the union labor organizations, and it has long been accepted as the most auspicious occasion for inaugurating great general strikes in the various trades. Some May Days have been rendered memorable by riotous disturbances, but during the past few years the observance of the holiday has, for the most part, passed off quietly.

To all American children May Day is an event to be looked forward to. There are May-pole dances and frolics of various kinds in the parks if the weather permits and these are so organized as to enlist the participation of the kindergartners and the smallest children as well as the older ones. When weather or other conditions prevent the festivities in the open air, special exercises are held in the school rooms. In short, May Day is for the whole body of American young people an occasion of relaxation and joy, but for all that there are so many frolics, dancing parties and social gatherings on the date, there is one discordant note in the dearth of weddings. May 1, and, indeed, every day in May, would seem to be ideal for weddings, but the old superstition that May marriages are unlucky restricts the number of brides on May Day and on the thirty days that follow.

May Day, although not always, of course, known by that name, is one of the oldest holidays on the calendar. In the church calendar the first of May is the combined day of St. Philip the Apostle and St. James the Less, but the festivities which mark the day in Great Britain, France, Germany and other countries are what may be termed the direct descendants of the ancient Roman Floralia and the Druidic feasts in honor of the god Bel—the Baal of the Scriptures. Indeed, the origin of the holiday seems to date still farther back in the history of India and Egypt, and in both of those ancient countries the May-pole was a recognized and conspicuous emblem.

History relates that the Druids celebrated the first of May by lighting immense fires in honor of this deity, and it is interesting to note that this same custom (for all that it has lost its religious significance) is yet followed by the Irish and the Scotch Highlanders. Among these remnants of the Celtic stock the festival is to this day referred to as Beltane or Bealtaine—meaning, literally, "the day of Bel's fire." There are other reminders of the ancient May Day rites yet to be observed in certain portions of Ireland and Scotland, but these have lapsed to a certain extent with the advance of time and the invasion of a new population and the curious person who would behold the observance of the traditions of May Day in all its pristine glory must penetrate nowadays to some remote or isolated hamlet in the Highlands.

Where the old customs yet obtain all the youths of a township or village meet on May Day on the nearest moor. A round table or altar is cut in the green sod and the entire company station themselves in a trench which is formed around the table. A fire is kindled and a custard prepared of eggs and milk, a huge cake of oatmeal being meanwhile kneaded and baked on the embers. The custard is eaten but the cake is merely divided into as many pieces as there are persons in the company and these pieces are all thrown



OPENING OF A MAY DAY FESTIVAL

In London some years ago there were May-poles standing permanently in the streets. One famous May-pole, erected with much ceremony, was of cedar, was put in place by twelve seamen and had the astonishing height of one hundred and thirty-four feet. The Puritans who settled our New England states frowned upon the custom of frolicking at a May-pole and one of the early governors of Massachusetts cut down a May-pole in God's name.

The celebration of May Day in Sweden is very picturesque and embodies many reminders of its ancient origin. On the previous evening huge bonfires are built in every hamlet and around these the young people dance merrily until all hours. May Day itself is characterized by a fantastic sham battle in which the opponents represent, respectively, Winter and Summer. Of course, Winter is always defeated, as becomes an occasion that ushers in the true Spring season, and at the conclusion of the struggle a figure representing Winter is burned or buried in effigy. May Day is in fact the chief and almost the only gala day of the Swedish children, and they are wont to include as a feature of the occasion a splendid banquet to which all the housewives are expected to contribute good things to eat.

In the United States, May-pole dances can be made especially effective from a spectacular standpoint by reason of the fact that our national colors, red, white and blue, when utilized in the streamers or festoons of the May-pole, make for a color scheme that is particularly pleasing as the streamers are entwined during the progress of the dance. There is no May-pole dance more pleasing to the eye than that in which the dancers skip lightly in their encircling mazes on a level greenward, but May-pole dances on roller skates, on bicycles and on horseback are among the novelties

which have been introduced by persons who love the bizarre. May Day has become a favorite for pantomime performances and for outdoor comic plays in which the always popular clowns play a most prominent part.

## Abdul Hamid's Days

Abdul Hamid, otherwise acclaimed as "Abdul the Damned," is now sixty-nine years old. In his Aladdin-like villa, where he is closely kept out of sight, it is said that he occupies himself with working at the carpenter's bench and arranging elaborate dinners with his chief cook. The Young Turks have not sought to take away a reasonable amount of what the old man considers necessary to his comfort and amusement, provided he will not plot to return to power, in which case they will cut off his subsidy. "Since his dethronement," says Le Cri de Paris, "he has added 20 Circassian girls to his household, and to these, quite recently four more, and the Ottoman treasury pays the expense of these acquisitions."

It is said that the old sultan as thoroughly detests his jailer, Rassi Bey, as did the great Napoleon his jailer, Hudson Lowe, at St. Helena, and has not addressed ten words to Rassi since his captivity began.

## Call to Duty

"I try to do my duty," said the exceedingly sincere person, "and I do not hesitate to remind others of their duty."

"Go ahead," replied the easy-going citizen. "You may prove to be a very useful member of society. But when you get through you'll have about as many sincere friends and admirers as an alarm clock."

New York market, but nowhere have I found pure heather honey. Clover honey abounds, and buckwheat honey and the common mixed honey, but heather honey, which is best of all, seems a luxury that New York epicureans have not yet learned to appreciate.

**It Often Happens.**  
"I guess I got a little too gay," admitted the landlord. "I wouldn't paint a doorstep for the old tenant."  
"And he moved?"  
"He moved; and now I've got to paint the entire house before I can get a new tenant."

## "Shorty" Was An Angel

Batsman's Good Right Arm Responsible for Credit Given to Heavenly Agency.

"Shorty" Griffin, third baseman of the old Jersey City baseball club—five feet two, but gifted with intellect and with such an arm!—was returning from the grounds one day when he ran into an amateur game. "Shorty" could never pass one of these contests. The score was tied in the ninth. The team at bat was eager to win at all hazards, so they agreed

upon a scheme to "ring in" their best hitter out of turn. A wordy argument ensued.

"Shorty," without the slightest hesitation, entered the confab in an effort to straighten matters. Did he manage to ring the difficulty? Certain it is that by the time the field was cleared he was at the plate, coat off, sleeves rolled up, borrowed cap on his head, bat in hand, awaiting the pitcher's offering. A fast out-curve was delivered and "Shorty" swung heavily. A few blocks away a little boy

heard something drop with a resounding crack a foot away. Picking up the ball, he ran home and cried:

"Oh, mother! See—see the baseball an angel threw to me!"

**New Honey.**  
On general principles the provident Scotsman objected to paying import duties, yet he expressed his willingness to pay whatever the government demanded for a jar of heather honey, says the New York Sun.

"That is about the only good thing in the eating line that the New York palate has never learned to crave," he said. "I have inquired in many a

## INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Director of Evening Department, The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)

### LESSON FOR APRIL 28. THE BEATITUDES.

LESSON TEXT—Matt. 5:1-12. GOLDEN TEXT—"Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall (No doubt about it) see God."

It was St. Augustine who first gave the ordination address of Jesus, after choosing the twelve, the title of "The Sermon on the Mount," a title now universally accepted. It is better perhaps "The Gospel of the Kingdom," telling us of the characteristics of these members of the new kingdom Jesus came to establish, the influence of these members upon the world, and is a commentary upon the laws of this kingdom. It is this, and more, for it is a prophecy of the church at work and also a test whereby we are to know who belong to this kingdom.

**Their Spiritual Meaning.**  
There are in reality only seven of the Beatitudes, the "blessednesses" and seven is always typical of perfectness. They are written in Old Testament language, but give the old form a new and spiritual meaning. The rewards are not arbitrary, but are the logical outgrowth of the character depicted.

The first four are passive virtues. Happy are those who are poor in spirit, not the poor-spirited but the humble minded ones conscious of their need. It is the poor, as to this world, that are to be rich in faith and to be heirs of that kingdom which Christ has promised to those that love him (Jas. 2:5). Happy are those that mourn, for they mourn not as those who have no hope, they shall be comforted, yea, they shall be strengthened. Paul tells us of that sorrow which is unto salvation and need not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death. Happy are the meek, those who are not proud. The pride of man is soon cut off as grass. In him, the meek and lowly, we are to find rest to our souls. We are exhorted by the meekness and gentleness of Christ to receive instruction and Peter tells us that our ornamentation that shall be of the greatest price is to be meek and quiet in spirit.

At this point the master begins to make his practical application of the lives of those having these characteristics, upon the world about them. Happy are the merciful. The withholding of mercy tends to poverty, but the liberal soul shall be made fat, for to the merciful he will show himself to be merciful. Forbearing, and forgiving we enter into this happiness, being kind, forgiving, tender-hearted, even as Christ hath forgiven us.

**Righteousness Defined.**  
Happy are the pure for they may draw nigh unto God in full assurance of faith for themselves and on behalf of others. Indeed the writer of Hebrews tells us that without holiness (purity) no man can see God, not our own righteousness wherein we might boast but the righteousness of Christ which is by faith.

Happy are the peace-makers, the receivers and the diffusers of this kingdom. Not merely peaceable men, nor pieces of men, but rather as Tyndale's version is, "the maintainers of peace." Led by the spirit of God they are not only called the sons of God, but are the sons of God (Rom. 8:14). "The cause, not the pain, makes the martyr," said St. Augustine. Those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, not those who seek persecution, are possessors of this kingdom; possessing it they are persecuted.

Being is doing—doing does not produce life, and we have here a linking of the old law and the new gospel. His kingdom brings blessedness, happiness; Satan's kingdom turns to the apples of Sodom. God says, speak out, endure for others. His kingdom is distinguished by altruism. The kingdom of darkness says: "Keep still, live for yourself." This kingdom knows not the essence of brotherhood.

Man ever asks this old question: "How may I be happy?" Those whom Jesus selects as the happy ones are looked upon by the world as the most unfortunate, but time has proven and eternity will justify these declarations of Christ. The good of this age belongs to the selfish and self-assertive, the good of the coming age to the self-renouncing. It is better to have sorrowed and to have received his comfort than never to have sorrowed at all. The message of the meek will get a hearing as against the censorious, and the supremely happy are those who shall see God.

Hunger for the highest and the noblest can find a supply for all its needs in Jesus the Son of God and only according to the principles he here sets forth.

Jesus saw the multitude when he gave us this sermon, which is not a sermon at all. He understood their need, the state of their hearts and what was in their minds. He did not see them as so many pawns upon the chess board of life; he saw their life, their sorrows, their sins. He read the story of human need and human destiny.

Why rejoice over our reproach? Because this is the path into this new kingdom. And when we walk "for Christ's sake" we shall enter therein and rejoice greatly for we shall have "great reward in heaven."

## CITY WAS BUILT ON A SWAMP

St. Petersburg of Russia, Most Beautiful Metropolis of Nation, Founded by Peter the Great.

St. Petersburg, Russia.—St. Petersburg, the beautiful and majestic metropolis of Russia, founded by Peter the Great, is constructed on a veritable swamp. It is said that moisture underlying the city can be seen sometimes oozing up between the paving blocks on the Nevsky Prospect, a busy thoroughfare. The city is not only built over water, which often threatens to inundate it, but it is visited by rain and snow at least two hundred days of the year. The city is practically surrounded by water, for swamps abound on two sides, the sea and the river on the other.

At the beginning of the building of St. Petersburg Peter the Great set



Greek Church Architecture.

thousands to work, "under compulsion of the knout," to build dikes and reclaim the land. Everyone, nobles and peasants alike, hated the place, all save Peter the Great, who called the city his "Paradise" and forbade the use of stone in building elsewhere in Russia, ordering all the stone accessible to be brought to St. Petersburg. Any peasant who wished to enter the city could do so by fetching a cartload of stone. This was his passport. Indeed, people did not have to beg to enter St. Petersburg. They were forced by the czar's command to abandon other places and come to dwell in his "pet" city. The consequence was a crowded quarter where the poor herded together like so many rats, living in squalor and misery. Even to this day, the Russian metropolis is the most unhealthy capital of Europe.

But, in spite of all the drawbacks, St. Petersburg is a beautiful and majestic city. The Winter Palace is splendid, as are also entire streets of beautiful buildings. It might be called a city of space, for the streets are very wide, and nowhere—save in the slums—does one find crowding. Everything seems on a gigantic scale—cathedrals, public and educational buildings, art galleries, etc. Beautiful statuary is seen in the public squares, the statue of Peter the Great being a magnificent monument to the glory of the ruler who built the city in the face of nature's and man's opposition.

Nevsky Prospect is the fashionable street of St. Petersburg. It is only three miles in length, but it is as celebrated a highway as Regent street, London, or Fifth avenue, New York.

## WASHINGTON SOCIETY PET



Horace Emanuel Havenith, the little son of the new minister from Belgium and Mme. Havenith, was born in far-away Persia three years ago. Horace has crossed the ocean and may claim three countries—Persia, the land of his birth; Belgium, his father's country, and America—for his mother, Mme. Havenith, was Miss Helen Ftoulke of Washington.

Forbids Saloon Near Veterans' Home. Springfield, Ill.—In denying a rehearing in the case of the people against Kaelber, the supreme court upheld a decision that saloons shall not be located within two-thirds of a mile of the Quincy home for veterans.

Left \$2,000 for Parrot. Rochester, N. Y.—Clare Ide, a wealthy spinster who died recently, left an income of \$2,500 a year to care for her pet parrot, "Captain Flint."

Priest Is Elected Mayor. Detroit, Mich.—Rev. E. W. Dunnigan, a Catholic priest, was elected mayor of Lapeer, near here, by a majority of 100.