

## 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. 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 sealiskin 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."

The Dryad glided away among the trees and the two rabbits sat and wiggled their noses in earnest cogitation. "I know how we can do it," presently said Lapingro. "I will gnaw off a leaf of the saw palmetto and we can do it with that."

Away hopped Lapingro, while Lapinita remained to watch the precious egg. In ten minutes the goose egg was laid in a little hollow, and the two rabbits, each with an end of the saw-edged palmetto leaf in its mouth, had begun to cut the egg down the middle. One of them sat at one end of the egg and one at the other, and they pulled the leaf back and forth as if it had been a cross-cut saw worked by two people.

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 waggled 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 not had gone.

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

On the ground, not far from the path, two young birds, scarcely fledged, were pulling at something which looked like a black worm. Each held an end of it in its bill, and each tried with all its might to get it away from the other. The black thing stretched and stretched, and suddenly, it slipped from the bill of one of the birds and snapped back into the face of the other one, so that they both were frightened and ran away.

"These must be the tickets!" cried Lapingro, picking up a small package. "There are ever so many of them, and that black thing must have been round them to hold them together."

"Yes," said the Dryad, "and in trying to pull it off they dropped the package out of the path, so that the men could not find it."

"But these are the tickets, are they?" said Lapinita. "But I don't see how people ride on them."

"Nor do I," said the Dryad, "but they do, for the man said so. People who are lazy or tired ride on them."

"I might take four of them," said Lapinita, "and put one foot on each, but I don't believe they would ride me."

"No, indeed," said Lapingro. "We don't know how they are used."

"I'll tell you what will be a good thing to do," said the Dryad. "Let's put them in the Easter egg, and then we can give it to some child; not to one who is lazy, but to one who is tired."

"I know a child who is tired," cried Lapinita. "It is the okra girl. Every morning she has to walk to the town to carry okras for the people to make the soup. Sometimes she feeds me, and I have heard her say that she was very tired."

"The okra girl shall have the egg!" cried the Dryad. "Now let us run and fill it."

When the tickets had been neatly packed into the goose's egg, which fitted nicely over them, the Dryad drew some long hairs from her head and twisted them into a pretty cord. With this she tastefully tied up the egg so that it could not come open. Then everything was ready.

Very early the next morning the Dryad and the two rabbits went to the cabin of the okra girl; Lapinita carrying the egg clasped close to her breast as if it were a precious baby. The girl slept soundly on a pallet on the floor, and when Lapinita had placed the egg where she could see it as soon as she opened her eyes. Then the three companions stationed themselves outside the open door, where they could watch.

As soon as the sun was up the okra girl awoke with a start, for she was very late. Easter Sunday was a great market morning in that town, and she feared that someone else might supply her customers with okra. When she sat up in bed and saw the egg she clasped it in her hands. "An Easter egg that the rabbits have brought me!"

She saw that the egg was intended to be opened, and when she untied the cord of hair, lifted the upper half of the shell and saw what the egg contained, there was never such a happy girl as in this world. She took the cord out of her lap and gazed at them with delight.

"Oh, now I can ride to town," she cried. "Every day for so many days! What a wonderful thing the rabbits have brought to me!"

"Now, then," whispered the Dryad, "we must watch her carefully and see how she rides on those tickets."

As soon as the okra 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 okra 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 do not 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 on."

"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.

## 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.

## 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.

## CURRENT HUMOR.

Mistress—Oh, Bridget! Bridget! what an awful numskull you are. You've put the potatoes on the table with the skins on—right in front of our visitors, too! You—you—what shall I call you?

Briget (affably)—Call me "Agnes," if ye like, mum; 'tis me other name.—New York World.

Mrs. Pakenham (of Chicago)—S you passed right through London and never stopped to see the Queen?

Mrs. Beaconstreet (of Boston)—Yes, Mrs. Pakenham—Goodness gracious! I should as soon think of passing through Dakota and not stopping for a divorce.—Judge.

Fuddy—What has it to do with this case that the new doctor has lots o' money?

Duddy—Everything, my dear boy. The man who is well healed ought to be able to stamp out disease if anybody can do it.—Boston Transcript.

Neighbor—"Does your father rent that house you live in?"

Boy—"No, indeed. It's his own house, every bit of it. It's been bought and paid for and insured and mortgaged and everything."

New Clerk—"Have you ever read 'The Last Days of Pompeii'?"

Mrs. Neurich—"No; what did he die of?"

New Clerk—"Some kind of an eruption, I believe."—Chicago News.

A German thus discouraged learnedly upon the business situation recently:

"If business is no better next week than it was yesterday two weeks ago I'm a son of a gun, dat's vat hopes!"—Philadelphia North American.

The Sentimental She—Oh! the everlasting ocean! How it fills me with sad, vague longings!

The Practical He—You're mighty lucky. It empties me of everything.—New York Herald.

"I see the critics, almost to a man, are praising Pensmith's latest book."

"Then they must regard him as being too weak to be in any danger of getting to the top by their help."—Cleveland Leader.

"So you refused him?"

"Yes; I told him it was better to make a great many men happy by being engaged to them than to make one miserable by marrying him."—London Fun Almanac.

## ODD TRICKS OF MEMORY.

Forgetting One's Name and Remembering Another Person's Backward.

Joe Jefferson never forgets his lines but has an imperfect recollection of names, even forgetting his own sometimes. One day he called at a post office in a small place and asked the clerk:

"Any mail for me?"

"What name?"

"Name? Good gracious! I don't know. Let me think. Why, I am to play 'Rip Van Winkle' to-night at your hall."

"Joe Jefferson?" suggested the clerk.

"Yes, Jefferson; certainly; thanks;" and, receiving his mail, the actor went away happy.

A favorite trick of a capricious memory is to substitute some other name for the one wanted, a process due to assimilation. A couple of ladies on a Chicago street car asked the conductor to leave them at Pennsylvania avenue.

"There's no such avenue in this suburb," said the conductor.

"But there certainly is," reiterated the ladies; "We have friends living there, and ought to know."

"Perhaps you mean Keystone avenue," suggested a passenger, and they said that was just what they did mean, but they knew it had something to do with Pennsylvania, which was impressed upon their memories as the Keystone State.

A good story is told of an excellent woman who had this fatal faculty for misconstruing names. Her daughter was expecting a call from a gentleman, and she impressed upon her mother the fact that his name was a very simple one and easy to remember—Cordry. The mother repeated it until she was sure she could not possibly forget it, and on the evening when he called hurried forward to meet him, saying, graciously:

"How are you, Mr. Drycow?"—Chicago Times-Herald.