

QUAINT EASTER CUSTOMS

Wonderfully Impressive Experiences Within Prison Walls.

OBSERVANCES IN THE OLD WORLD

Scenes at Sacred Shrines in Jerusalem—Trees of Ancient Lineage—Love Festivals, Miracles and Superstitions.

"There are two Easters in my life," said Mrs. Ballington Booth, "the 'Little Mother' of the state convicts, "which started out with the brilliancy of the stars on a moonless night." The Easter service in Clinton, a small town in Dane County, N.Y., was an ideal festival, such a day as I believe was made forever holy by the first resurrection.

"We started at 10 o'clock for the chapel and when we entered found it packed and crowded to its utmost capacity. Long planks had been placed across the aisles to form impromptu seats and every place was filled. The platform at the rear of the room was a mass of flowers. The standard of the 'Volunteers' Prison League was draped against one side of the wall, while on the other was the stars and stripes. All the work of 'my boys' and you have no idea how beautiful it was."

They followed the usual service, or rather, I should say, the most unusual service, for never before had I met an audience like that one. There were no sullen expressions, no faces of scoffers among those who looked down upon them. They all wore the prison stripes and many looked as though the waters of the earth had rolled over them. But it had left them hope and that hope made their faces radiant. As I rose to sing my little daughter, who sat with the warden's family in the audience and who was making her first visit to a prison, became impatient and, leaving her seat, quietly slipped off the platform. She clung so tightly to my skirts that I finally lifted and plied her on the desk at my side. When I had given out 'You've Carried Your Burden,' I asked her if she would not sing a verse of it for the boys.' Much to my surprise she immediately began and sang the verse through without a break.

A Memorable Scene.

"I shall never forget that scene. The childish voice rang out sweet and clear, and so distinctly that every word was heard. The little figure in white, with her golden curls about her face, smiling sang her message, and tears streamed down the face of the men as the baby voice repeated, 'O Bring it to Jesus, He's Living and Strong; I believe more than one lonely, aching heart, who perhaps for many years had not heard a childish voice, was lightened that Easter day, and found for the first time the great Easter Day."

"In the afternoon we held our second service, and it was like gathering in harvest. There wasn't much said; there seemed no need for talking, but when I left Duncova that evening I felt that Christ had risen again and that to many men I was leaving, though in stripes and behind prison bars, the peace that passeth understanding, a renewal of hope and faith in God and mankind."

An Easter in the West.

"Now, my other memorable Easter was spent in the state prison at Joliet, Ill. It was my first visit to my boys after my illness, and after the doctors had limited my span of life. For, you know, they read my death warrant and told me just how much longer I shall be allowed to finish my work. And when your time is limited it makes you love your work all the more, and makes every moment more precious, and each incident stands out like a milestone."

"Well, this Easter was as sunny and beautiful as the one of which I have just spoken. The bars and stone walls could not keep out the sunlight this morning, and when I entered the chapel for the morning service I found it wreathed with spring blossoms. Not potted plants, nor bushes, but wild flowers, sent in by friends of the league and arranged by the prisoners. I never saw my boys with more smiling faces or heard them sing more lustily."

"The prison orchestra was unusually fine, and as every voice joined in singing the opening hymn, 'We're Marching to Zion,' it did not seem as if we were really in prison. The grey uniforms seemed to fade out of sight, sadness and helplessness were dispelled for the time being, and the boys appeared to catch the spirit of the moment and look beyond present surroundings and to realize there was a better, a happier home beyond, to which all who loved the Lord were steadily marching."

"But it was the closing scene that made me most grateful. When at the last I made my final plea to those who had not confessed Christ more than 100, one by one, stood up and dedicated themselves to God. That Easter day had opened with 500 members of the league in Joliet prison, and before the services closed nearly 200 more had been added to the list."

"So I call these the two great Easters of my life. Days when prisoners hardened by crime and bad passions gave themselves up to God, cast their burdens on the Great Burden Bearer and became like little children. I have had many letters, both from my boys and the wardens of these prisons, and do not know of a single instance where the converts of these two days have not lived up to their baptism. Some of them will never again know the blessings of liberty in this world, but they live with a hope of a better world and a determination to act well their part in this, even though it be behind prison bars and in the uniform of a state prison."

Historical Easter Miracle.

It was in the year 1799 when the armies of the great Napoleon were passing over the continent of Europe and conquering all that came in their way. It was Easter morning, and there was a bright sun on Feldkirch, a little town situated on the Ill river, just within the borders of Austria. The Ill flows into the Rhine.

Quite early on this morning there suddenly appeared on the heights above the town, to the west, the glittering weapons of 18,000 French soldiers. It was the division under the command of General Massena.

There was not time to make preparations for defence and what could 3,000 or 4,000 of peaceful people do against such an army?

So there was a hasty assembling of the town council and it was decided that a deputation be sent to Massena with the keys of the town and a petition for mercy.

In the midst of all the confusion of the hurrying to and fro and the anxious consultation the old dean of the church stood up

serene as was the morning, with no thought of fear in his brave Christian heart.

"It is Easter day," he said. "We have been reckoning on our own strength and it is weakness. Let us ring the bells we have service as usual. We will leave our troubles in the hands of the Higher Power."

Soon from all the church spires of Feldkirch the bells rang out joyously. The street became thronged with worshippers on their way to church. Louder and more triumphantly pealed the bells as they rang out the glad message and the bells, putting on their new green, echoed back, "Christ is risen. He is risen from the dead."

The French army heard the sounds of rejoicing and Massena concluded there could be but one reason for it. He was sure that the Austrian army had arrived in the night. He ordered his men to break up camp and almost before the bells had ceased ringing before Easter services were over, the French army was in orderly retreat.

By noon not a tent, not a soldier, not a glittering bayonet was to be seen on the heights above Feldkirch.

Easter Superstitions.

Every day of the year, almost, brings with it the superstitions and folklore of the common people. Thus Easter has its own superstitions, with a bit of weatherlore, also, wholly its own. The old-time prophet of the weather, for instance, declared in rhyme:

If it rain on Good Friday or Easter day,
It's a bad year for grass but a sorry year
for corn.

Another rhyming superstition of Easter weather is so obscure that it is really disappointing, as well as an unique gem of choice poetry it is well worth repeating here:

If Easter be early,
Or M. it be late,
It is sure to make
The grass take.

In all this world there is not a more superstitious people than the peasants of Transylvania. According to their ideas the greatest luck that could befall a mortal is to be born on Easter Sunday while the church bells are ringing, but, on the other hand, it is not lucky to die on that day. The spoon with which the Easter eggs have been removed from the boiling pot is carefully treasured by the Transylvanians and is worn in the belt by the shepherds. The superstitious shepherd believes the spoon gives him the power to distinguish the witches who seek to molest his flock.

In certain parts of Germany the smaller children are told on Easter morning that the wild rabbits lay the colored Easter eggs and in following out this apparent superstition the children find great pleasure in hunting for the nests of the wild rabbits on Easter day.

Hott cross buns have been a church superstition of Good Friday ever since the day was first celebrated by the church. Every one knows the old rhyme:

Hott cross buns, hott cross buns,
One a penny, two a penny,
Three a ha'penny,
If your husbands don't eat them,
Give them to your sons;
One a penny, two a penny,
Three a ha'penny,

It is said that hot cross buns recall the offerings made at the doors of the temple at Jerusalem. Here is one of the most interesting superstitions: "If you eat a hot cross bun on Good Friday your house will be protected from fire during the ensuing year."

The custom of women appearing at Easter in new bonnets is founded on an ancient superstition.

At Easter let your clothes be new
Or else see you will it rue.

Superstition believes that ill will befall you unless one or more of your garments at Easter are new.

In old times Easter and Pentecost were considered "lucky" days for baptizing children and the time between those days found favor for marriage. In the ancient days slaves were given their freedom on Easter day, as a sign of "good luck" for the slaveholder.

Easter Customs.

In the city of the pope at day of day the guns from the castle at St. Angelo announce Easter morning. Soon all the people are astir and in holiday attire, everybody wearing or carrying flowers. All drift toward St. Peter's, interest centering in the magnificent procession, in which the pope is preceded by all the church treasures and followed by princes and prelates. Immense flocks made of ostrich feathers are carried on each side of his chair, significant of the watch-care the church gives him. The procession is long and brilliant and the cardinals follow him with an honest story of suffering. He has been an active member of a number of charitable organizations, and his private charities are carried on without regard to society or creed.

Immediately after breakfast returns to his reception room, and callers are admitted. Some of them are the characteristic officers of the papal court and capital. Some of them come to him on matters connected with the national republican committee, of which he has been chairman. Still others are of them call because they fancy that to have the ear of the man in the White house, a long stone's throw across the park. Some of them have business with him which concerns some one of the almost innumerable commercial enterprises, shipbuilding, lake carrying, banking, railroading, mining and what not, in which he is interested, and some of them come to him for reasons which few who know Mr. Hanna only as a skilful and determined political ever guess. His friends say that he is one of the most open-handed and charitable of men, and that he never turns a deaf ear to any honest story of suffering. He has been an active member of a number of charitable organizations, and his private charities are carried on without regard to society or creed.

At 11:30 he drives to the capital. He enjoys thoroughly the part of the day he spends there. He never makes speeches. Almost the only public address of his record is the one he made in Chicago, during the last presidential campaign. It was brief, forcible and unadorned. Senator Hanna's work in the senate is done in the committee rooms, and not on the floor of the senate chamber. He makes other men do his talking for him. He prefers to be the power behind the throne. In comparison with senator orators, with Senator Wolcott, for example, Senator Hanna is as the engineer, deep in the bowels of a man-of-war, to the gold-laced captain on the bridge. He does not seek for applause, and he cares not a rap for criticism. He knows exactly what he wants, and as he never changes his mind, never loses his nerve and never gives up, he always gains his point in the end.

Fond of Operas. He reaches home after his day in the senate only in time to dine. After dinner he has usually some social engagement, for he is undeniably fond of society. He is fond of the theater, and enjoys the lighter operas. In Cleveland he is owner of the opera house, which is a pet hobby of his. He gives it a great deal of attention, and all his bookings are subject to his approval. When he is in Cleveland, he never fails to appear at the theater, with Mrs. Hanna, every Monday evening.

For books he has no great liking. In the days when he was not quite so busy he used to read a great many light novels for relaxation. Now, he finds time for nothing but newspaper reading. The tansy cakes and the bacon rolls he still eats, but the tansy cakes are now served instead of the tansy cakes.

Germany, too, has her queer Easter observances. On some of the inland estates there is a solemne custom which dates back many hundreds of years. All the working people form in procession, each one carrying some article suggesting the relation of her or his occupation with events of our Saviour's life.

In France more than any other country is Easter a season of gift-making. The egg is the ruling emblem, almost as endless in diversity and costliness as in form. There is one such gift-egg on record that was of white enamel, and had doors which when opened revealed the gospels engraved on all its walls, and for this reason was a tiny music box which played twelve tunes. The cost of this trifle was \$12,000.

This is certainly the strangest love test ever recorded, but its foundation on the beauties of a wife's devotion to her beloved husband is far more reasonable than most superstitions practice.

Easter Monday Love Test.

In Cires-les-Melo, a small town of the department, or county as we should call it, of Oise in France, they have a strange method of testing fate on Easter Monday. To understand the custom it is necessary to glance at an incident in French history. When the Constable Henri-Anne of Montmorency, owner of the chateau at Melo, was so pursued by the hatred of Cardinal Richelieu that he was at last beheaded for the crime of high treason at Toulouse, his wife had a little chapel built in the park of the chateau and begged the cardinal to permit her to place the remains of her husband in it. Richelieu and Louis XIII denied her prayer, and she was forced to return to Paris, where she had a sumptuous chapel built, which now stand statues in marble of her and her husband. But the little chapel of Cires-les-Melo, though empty, became the center of the pilgrimages of lovers on account of the affection which had prompted its erection. It is to this modest place of worship that youths and maidens resort from miles away on Easter Monday to learn their fate.

The mode of divination is most curious.

The entrance to the chapel is protected by a grill work through which it is easy to pass your hand. The young man or woman who wishes to learn whether the chosen one will be kind to her during the ensuing year takes some bread and butter, holds the butter in the palm of his hand, and the woman the bread, while the man passes the butter through the grill tries to cast the sun on the altar. If the sun falls on the altar and stays there it is thought certain that the saint will intercede for the lover and bring him or her the happiness of marriage within the year. If, however, the candle should not fall on the altar or should roll off after a long time all hope of marriage is gone.

The sun of fortune and unfortunate alike are gathered by the priest afterward and devoted to the purchase of masses for the unhappy.

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Easter in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is the ideal city of all others for the celebration of the Easter festival. It stood atop the hill of Calvary 1,897 years ago and looked down upon the town that was born and labored and then betrayed.

That was the first Easter morning,

and since then every kind and loving hand,

representing countless generations of all nations, creeds and all races, have left some token in honor of the day at least one of those places made sacred by the memories of the Son of Man. On Easter day the tomb of Christ in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is covered with the lilies which are used all over the world. The Mount of Cal-

vary is visited by the Christian population of the town and the members of the various religious orders inhabiting it and flowers are strewn upon the spot where the cross is supposed to have stood. The day always under which crucifixion tells us Christ stood upon his way to the spot of crucifixion are standing just as they stood fully 2,300 years ago. Every Easter the little children of many of Jerusalem's families are taken to this place of the cross and told what the various objects signify and of the great events which transpired there. These are the only children in the world to whom the true significance of Easter Sunday is made apparent by an object lesson, and such an object lesson as no Christian mind ever fails to appreciate.

Although nearly nineteen centuries have elapsed since Christ passed from among men, the city of Jerusalem does not exhibit notable changes from his appearance, as judged from history, at the beginning of the Christian era. The same trees grow there. The same species of birds are seen upon the streets now that were familiar to those who lived when Pontius Pilate was a disciple of justice, so called. The famous localities which the world has learned to know are absolutely as they were then. All about, through and through, it is a place of memories and one which stirs the emotions of even the most flinty-hearted.

Perhaps the most notable of all these places with which mankind has become familiar is the "Place of the Skull." The most of us know it as Mount Calvary. When the traveler is at the famous Gate of Joppa he sees the mount outlined against the blue Palestine sky. The guide tells him that the name first given, if we may believe the records, is the name of the mount. The name of the skull is derived from the cause of the stony feeling of familiarity which has first come to him when he caught his first glimpse of the mount. On Easter Sunday every believer in the doctrines which were preached by the Being whose resurrection is celebrated, makes his way to the mound, and there, in some form or other, observes the day. There are processions of old and young. One hears that familiar anthem, "Gloria in Excelsis," all about. Now it is lucky to die on that day. The spoon with which the Easter eggs have been removed from the boiling pot is carefully treasured by the Transylvanians and is worn in the belt by the shepherds. The superstitious shepherd believes the spoon gives him the power to distinguish the witches who seek to molest his flock.

Senator Hanna's abiding place in Washington is the Arlington hotel, and his rooms are on the ground floor of an annex which was once a prison. A soldier man in the livery of the hotel is appointed to guard the street door, and of the ten score callers whose cards he receives every day not more than fifty or seventy-five succeed in obtaining an audience. Many call, but few are chosen. To give heed to the speech of even fifty persons in one day, however, is no small thing. Only a man trained as Senator Hanna has been from boyhood in business methods and endowed with a remarkable executive ability could accomplish it. It is the penalty of being in the confidence of a president, for Senator Hanna is nearer President McKinley than any other man in the land.

Senator Hanna is a business man, first, last and always. He is politic in business, business-like in politics. He exacts business methods from all with whom he comes in contact. The president of his carriage is his coachman. He is a man of the world, who sees more than a direct, concise and to-the-point statement of a case, but his official political face is the face of a sphinx. Not a line nor a muscle of it ever betrays whether he is thinking, nor an expression ever tells whether he is pleased or displeased. He is an unerring judge of men, and when he thinks a man worthy of confidence he is unreservedly communicative, but with his average caller he is as unresponsive as a graven image.

Hanna Not Methodical.

Although he accomplishes a great deal in a day, Senator Hanna is not a methodical man. He has no fixed plan of daily life. He wakes early in the morning. He breakfasts at 9 and breakfast is his chief meal of the day for he says that he does not feel that the day is properly begun until he has breakfasted well. His morning meal is a hearty one, and soft boiled eggs are an invariable item on his bill of fare. He has always been blessed with a fair appetite, and although by no means an epicure he is fond of good living. He likes sweets. Coffee he drinks sparingly, and in regard to alcoholic liquors he is exceedingly abstemious. He is very fond of a good cigar, but smokes only moderately.

The Easter celebrants are also almost sure to visit the bunch of seven venerable olive trees, some of them nineteen feet in circumference, and so old that their trunks are heavily wrapped up with stones of those which stand on the same spot at the time Christ lived in the world. This belief is lent what seems positive proof by the fact that they are unlike all other trees of the same variety in that country. The only spots in the garden where the appearance of the Easter visitors indicates other than a feeling of joy and religious inspiration are those where a monument marks the spot where Judas Iscariot gave the kiss of betrayal. Even the little children scorn the memory of that most famous of traitors.

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