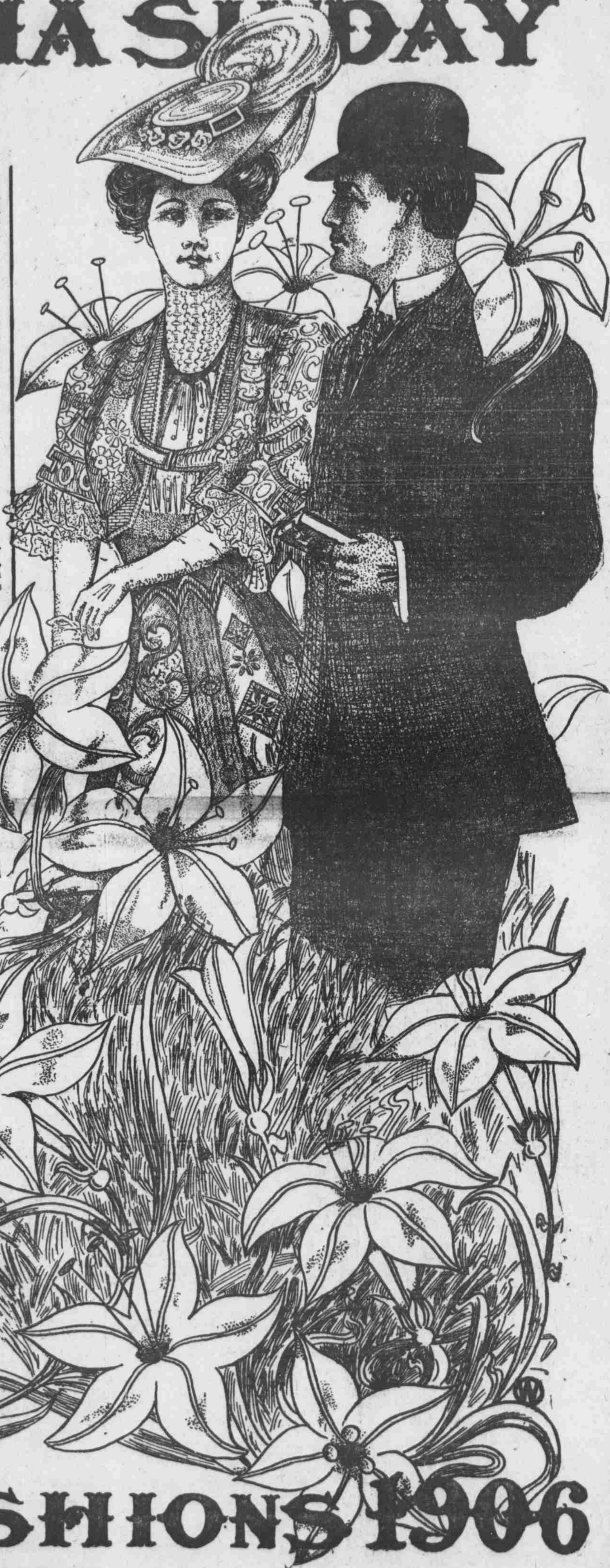


# THE OMAHA SUNDAY BEE

**B**ACK in the misty past, when man worshiped Nature in her manifestations, and knew no god but the things he could see; when religion was complex and involved the deification of everything not easily comprehensible, and a god ruled each of the functions of the simple life of the people, Easter was already an established feast. Man's dawning intelligence recognized the equinoctial and solstitial periods, although he did not understand the causes, and the annual return of spring was made the occasion of a joyous celebration. It was dedicated at different times and places to different gods, but it had always the same significance. It celebrated the reawakening of nature, the breaking of the bonds of winter, and the renewal of the life that was pleasant and enjoyable. Winter was a dull and depressing season, when the earth was dead and nature slumbered, and the coming of the bright warm days when gentle rains and vivifying sunshine promised another season of warmth and comfort and life was welcomed by all the dwellers on earth with joy and feasting. The early fathers of the Christian church seized the established Easter feast as they did other pagan customs and gave it a new significance, making it typify the resurrection of Christ and the promise of life everlasting. As the most joyous feast of the church it has been observed with special customs, not the least important among which is the outward show of pleasure by the donning of new clothes. Not many people have taken the time to inquire as to why they wear new clothes on Easter Sunday, but this is the real reason. They do it, not in blind obedience to a dictate of fashion, but in commemoration of the return of Spring. Quite naturally, among Christian peoples the religious aspect of the day overshadows the original meaning. The resurrection of Christ is the most important of all the events in His life, for without it the faith in a life hereafter and all promise it contains for the believer is lost. The risen Christ is the symbol of the triumph of the soul over death; it is the new life that is to come that is celebrated in this festival, and as "this mortal must put on immortality," so the devout believer arrays himself on Easter in his newest and most expressive of raiment, feeling that in doing so he is only paying a proper tribute to the importance of the day. Those who are not devout believers are, perhaps, animated as were the pagans, by the general impulse that comes with the new season, and they, too, join in the general display of new togs on this festal occasion. Even were there no religious element in the feast, and if man had not yet attained his proficiency in astronomical calculations, still the impulse toward the display of new garments would be irresistible. All Nature tends toward it, and just as "In the Spring a livelier iris gleams

upon the burnished dove," so in spring mankind and womankind are irresistibly moved to don new garb, and to show by all outward signs the pleasure and satisfaction they have in the revival of life and activity in the world about them. And Easter Sunday affords a most opportune and appropriate occasion for uniform action in this regard. The modern dealer, not any wiser perhaps, in his day and generation than all the dealers that have preceded him in

history, has provided each season against the coming of Easter, and in his shop displays the most attractive of garments and decorations for male and female loveliness. For the current season the arbiters of fashion, whose dictates are law to so many millions of civilized people, have determined that the woman may have even more beautiful garments than she has ever worn. In the shops a bewildering display is made of every sort of article of feminine wear, and in fabrics that all but surpass belief. Potentates and princes of the past could not command the exquisite creations that are now within reach of the humblest of citizens. Man's inventive genius has united utility and beauty in a combination that seems to have all but attained perfection, and the result is shown in the fabrics from which the spring and summer gowns are made. And the dressmaker has decreed that these beautiful creations of the loom shall be fashioned into costumes that will enhance their wearer's personal charms without detracting from their own. This is entirely in keeping with the spirit of Easter, for it evinces the purpose to rejoice with the day, and to exhibit a proper satisfaction in the occasion. So when on Easter morning Milady arrays herself in seasonable finery and comes forth into the world and mingles with the throng she has but performed an act of devotion, just as she does when she goes to church and takes a part in the prayers and hymns sung there. Easter is celebrated in beauty, and not the least of its glory is that furnished by the eastern bonnet and the new dress. Man has his share in this, and while his garments are soberly designed and add no touch of color to the parade, they testify to his willingness to contribute to the general expression of joy at the return of the season. Good clothes mean as much on Easter Sunday as a good heart.



## EASTER FASHIONS 1906