

HEATHEN FRILLS OF EASTER

Popular Church Festival Traced Back to Pagan Customs.

INVESTED WITH CHRISTIAN IDEA

Date of Celebration a Source of Much Discard in Early Times—Why It Became a Movable Feast.

To the student of the world's history there is great interest and food for reflection in the facts concerning the origin of the religious observance of Easter. Strange though it may seem, this popular church festival dates back to a heathen custom. Our twentieth century celebration is the modern evolution of heathen ideas and the transformation by Christian usage and environment of a great popular pagan festival of olden times—that of the goddess Ostara. In the Anglo-Saxon language this festival was termed "Eastra," and the name was applied to a celebration which the Saxons of old were wont to observe about the same season at which the Christian festival of Easter takes place.

The goddess Ostara seems to have been regarded as the personification of the morning, or of the east, and also of the opening year, or the beginning of spring. Apropos of this heathen representative of the east, it is to be noted that from very early times the east has been held in certain distinction above the other points of the compass and enveloped with a sort of sacred halo. The ancient worshippers of the sun used to place their altars in the eastern part of their temples facing the rising orb of day. That the east had a certain sacred character is evidenced in the Scriptures, which contain several noteworthy references: "The glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east." (Ezekiel xlii, 2); "There came wise men from the east to Jerusalem." (Matthew ii, 1); "And, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them." (Matthew ii, 9). A high regard for the east was manifested by the early Christians, who perpetuated the idea handed down from their ancestors. Looking toward the sun in the east, in praying or repeating the creed, was thought to put worshippers in remembrance that Christ is the sun of righteousness, and such was the attitude in olden times during devotion—a custom now obsolete.

Worship of Ostara. It was from northern Germany in the very early days that the worship of Ostara, the goddess of the east, was brought to our ancestors in Great Britain. It is well known that the Anglo-Saxon name of April was Eostermunoth, and in Germany this month is still known as Ostermonath. Many of the popular observances of Easter, even to this day, clearly indicate its heathen origin. The heathen bonfires were perpetuated in the paschal tapers with which the churches were once lighted on Easter eve. The brilliant illuminations of the churches, and parts of some of the cities in Russia at Easter are also reminders of the early heathen festival.

Easter, it is said, is the modern English form for the Saxon word, "oster" or "osten," meaning "rising." The German word is "ostern," the Hebrew-Greek form is "pascha," the French "paques," the Scotch "pasch," the Dutch "paschen," the Swedish "pask," and the Danish "paske." The common name in the east was the "paschal feast," because kept at the same time as the paschen, or Jewish Passover, and in some measure succeeding it. In the sixth of the An-cyran canons it is called "The Great Day."

A source of discord. The proper time for the celebration of Easter was the source of great discord among the early Christians. It has aptly been pointed out that though there has never been any difference of opinion in the Christian church as to why Easter is kept, there has been a good deal of disagreement as to when it ought to be kept. The paschal controversy, which for a time led to a schism, grew out of a diversity of custom, the errors of an impostor, and the necessity of amalgamation of a new order upon the old. The great mass of the eastern churches in Asia Minor, among whom were many Judaizing Christians, kept Easter on the 14th of Nisan, the Jewish month corresponding to our March or April, considering it to be equivalent to the Jewish Passover. But the western churches kept the feast on the Sunday following the fourteenth day, remembering that Christ's resurrection took place on the Sunday, and also desiring to mark more clearly their disconnection with the Jews.

The difference, borne at first with mutual forbearance and charity, assumed regrettable bitterness and rancor during the third century. The east was unhappily severed from the west, and all who, after the manner of the Apostles, kept Easter day on the 14th, whether that day were Sunday or not, were excommunicated by those who adopted the Roman practice.

A primary source of the divergence was the imperfection of the Jewish calendar. This was so defective that it came about that the Jewish Christians often celebrated Easter before the vernal equinox, a circumstance which was strenuously objected to by the early Christians of the west, who regarded the vernal equinox as the commencement of the natural year. They were opposed to a mode of reckoning which might sometimes cause them to hold their paschal feast twice in one year, and omit it altogether the next. So strong was this feeling that it culminated in a drastic apostolic decree which declared that, "if any bishop, priest or deacon celebrated the holy feast of Easter before the vernal equinox, as the Jews do, let him be deposed."

Fixing the Day. It was through the happy initiative of Emperor Constantine, in the early part of the fourth century, that the uniformity of practice was inaugurated which, though not immediately accepted, finally prevailed and obtains at the present time. The emperor so influenced the great ecumenical council of Nice of 325 A. D. that a canon was passed which favored the practice of the western church by declaring that everywhere the great feast of Easter should be observed upon one and the same day, and that not the day of the Jewish Passover, but the Sunday after. As a result the rules were laid down which we find in the book of common prayer of the twentieth century. "That March 21 shall be accounted the vernal equinox. That the full moon happening upon or near that March 21 shall be taken for the full moon of Nisan. That the Lord's day next following that full moon be Easter day. But if the full moon happen upon a Sunday, Easter day shall be the Sunday after."

On Easter day depend all the movable feasts and fasts throughout the year. It was debated, at the time of the intro-

duction of the Gregorian calendar, whether Easter should continue to be movable or a fixed Sunday. Deference to ancient custom, it is said, led the ecclesiastical authorities to adhere to the method of determination by the moon. It is an interesting fact and worthy of remembrance that the date of Easter was fixed by what is known as the "calendar moon," which, it appears, always follows the real moon by two or three days. The object in arranging a calendar moon, it is said, was to prevent the occurrence of Easter on the same day as the Jewish Passover. The precaution, however, has been a failure, for the two festivals, it transpires, have fallen on the same day in 186 and 1835. The year 1963 was marked by the same unique coincidence, both Easter and the Jewish Passover occurring on the same day, April 12. This unusual event will happen again in 1933, 1957 and 1981. Many like to think that, instead of owing its derivation to the heathen goddess "Eastra," the word comes from the Teutonic "oster," which signifies "rising." If the latter supposition were correct, Easter would be in name, as well as in reality, the feast of the resurrection.

Apostle Paul's Arguments. The apostle Paul calls Christ "our Pasch." It was he who wrote the inspired words which are embalmed in church liturgies and hallowed in the hearts of men because of their beauty, truth and power: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." The blessed argument is that Christ's resurrection is the proof of the fulfillment of the promise of the resurrection of His faithful followers. Orthodox Christianity hinges on the reality of that event, which is the real origin of the spirit of the Easter festival.

It is perhaps to be regretted that the inauguration of the holy celebration of Easter should have been connected with a heathen festival; that from pagan sources comes the word which commemorates the most blessed fact in the Christian faith. But it is well to remember, as has been appropriately pointed out, that we must take it as it is found and fill it with the noble, high and divine meaning for which it now stands. The names of the days of the week and the months of the year are also heathen in origin and in their earlier associations; but we must accept them, as we cannot unwrite history and unmake language. Easter in its modern sense has no taint of heathen idolatry. It means a living, pulsating Christianity born of the life of God, which is illustrated in the life, death and resurrection of Christ—in the soul of man.—Jane A. Stewart in Leslie's Weekly.

IMPOSING RITUAL AT CONSECRATION

(Continued from First Page.)

for the ablution of the hands, a vessel with holy water, and an aspersorium, and a thurible, with host, spoon and incense. If the office is sung, otherwise this is omitted; cruets with wine and water for the sacrifice, a chalice, the box of hosts, crumbs of bread for cleansing the hands, and holy chrism. Furthermore all the pontifical vestments of color suitable to the time and the office of the mass, namely, sandals and amice, alb, cincture, pectoral cross, stole, tunic, dalmatic, gloves, chauble, precious mitre, pontifical ring, pastoral staff, mangle and gremial.

Symbolic Ornaments. These are the ornaments used by the bishops when they officiate solemnly. The stockings are purple and the slippers have a large cross worked on the instep. Under the Roman emperors the sandals of the people were replaced among the nobles and men of rank by campagus, adorned with gold and purple. The church

preserves this tradition by giving the bishops and sandals foot covering. When not officiating the bishop wears ordinary footgear.

Cross of Gold. The pectoral cross is an elaborate gold ornament filled with relics of the martyrs, and reminds the wearer of the Savior who died for him and the martyrs who sealed their faith with their blood.

The small tunic and dalmatic, the vestments of the deacon and subdeacon, show that the bishop is invested with the plenitude of the priesthood. The gloves are to be found as a part of the episcopal garb as early as the eighth century. Like the slippers, they have a large cross embroidered on the back. They call to mind Jacob's strategem in the Old Testament, when he wished to obtain his father's blessing. He prays when he puts them on, "Oh, Lord, surround my hands with the purity of the new man descended from heaven."

Ring, Mitre and Crozier. The ring is the sign of the spiritual alliance that exists between the bishop and his church. He wears it on the forefinger of his right hand. The consecrating prelate says to him when it is given, "A mark of discretion and dignity, a sign of fidelity, that you may know how to be silent regarding what ought to be kept silent, to manifest what ought to be manifested, to bind what ought to be bound, and to loose what ought to be loosed."

The mitre reminds the bishop of his sacerdotal supremacy. It dates back to the old Mosaic law. The two bands that fall on the shoulders figure in the Old and New Testaments, in which the bishop has full knowledge. The crozier is the emblem of his pastoral power. He says both crozier and mitre aside when he ascends to the altar. This power vanishes before Jesus Christ. For a contrary reason the bishop resumes his insignia when he turns to the people.

The gremial is a piece of richly embroidered silk stuff that the bishop puts on his knees when he sits during the pontifical mass and on which he rests his hands.

Altar Pictures. All these being at hand, a faldstool is prepared for the consecrator and three seats for the bishop-elect and the two assistants, a missal and a pontifical. The consecrator should have at least three chaplains in surplice and two acolytes at his credence. In the smaller chapel for the bishop-elect, which is distinct from the larger, an altar is prepared with a cross and two candlesticks, a missal and a pontifical, and all the pontifical vestments in white as enumerated above, for the consecrator, and in addition to these a white cope; near the altar a smaller credence, with a clean cloth, vessels for washing the hands and crumbs of bread for cleansing the head and hands. Eight small strips from two rolls of fine linen, cut in lengths thereof the middle, of which two are each six palms in length, the remaining six being of equal quantity, are prepared, and at least eight candles, each one pound in weight, four of which are placed on the altar of the consecrating bishop, two upon his credence and two upon the altar of the bishop-elect; a jeweled ring, to be blessed and to be given to the bishop-elect, and an ivory comb.

An Ancient Utensil. The comb is a very ancient liturgical utensil employed for the purpose of keeping the celebrant's hair in order during the divine service. The cathedral of Sens has yet among its curiosities a comb of ivory that belonged to St. Lupus, who was bishop there in 608. Dugdale mentions that among the spoils carried away from Glastonbury Abbey by Henry VIII was "a comb of gold, garnished with small turquoises and other course stones." When the bishop officiated the deacon and subdeacon combed his hair as soon as the sandals had been put on.

The use of the comb in the western church is now entirely unknown except in the consecration of the bishops. The new bishop is anointed on the hands and head with holy chrism, the oil on the head and hands cleansed off with bread crumbs, which are afterward burned, and the comb is then used to rearrange the hair.

Offeritory Taken. For the offeritory there are two torches, four pounds each in weight; two loaves of bread, two small barrels of wine, the bread and wine to be ornamented, two to be decorated with silver and two with gold, bearing the emblems of the consecrator and the bishop-elect, with hat or cross or mitre, according to the dignity and grade of each.

The offeritory is the survival of the ancient custom of the people in the early ages of the church, when bread and wine for the use of the altar and oil for the sanctuary lamp were presented by the people. This is now symbolized in the lighted candles and the miniature barrels of wine and loaves of bread. The collection passed in the pews is the form the custom has now taken for the laity, who in the olden time brought their offerings in kind. All that was left after the immediate necessities of the altar on these occasions went into the common fund for the support of the clergy and the poor.

Vestments Used. At the appointed hour the consecrator, the bishop-elect, the assistant bishops, and all others who are to be present at the consecration, assemble at the church. The consecrator, having prayed before the altar, ascends to his throne, or to his chapel, to faldstool near the epistle side and there is vested as usual. The bishop-elect with his assistant bishops goes to his chapel and there puts on the necessary vestments—the amice, alb, cincture, and the stole, crossed as it is by priests. The assistant bishops in the meantime are clothed in the rochet, and if they are regulars, in the surplice, the amice, stole, cope, and the plain white mitre, and each one has his own pontifical. All being ready, the consecrator goes to the middle of the altar and there sits on the faldstool with his back to the altar. The bishop-elect, vested and wearing his beretta, is led between the two assistant bishops vested and mitred, and when he comes before the consecrator, uncovering his head and profoundly bowing, he makes a reverence to him, the assistant bishops with their miters on slightly inclining their heads.

Taking the Oath. Then they sit at a little distance from the consecrator; the senior assistant bishop sits at the right hand of the bishop-elect, the junior at his left, facing each other. When they all have thus been seated, after a short pause they rise, the bishop-elect without his beretta, and the assistant bishops without their miters. The consecration is then begun by the reading of the pope's mandate appointing the bishop-elect. He then kneels before the consecrator and on the book of the Gospels takes the following oath: "I, Patrick Aloysius McGovern, elected to the church of Wyoming, from this hour henceforth will be obedient to Blessed Peter the apostle and to the holy Roman church and to our holy father, Pope Pius X, and to his successors canonically elected. I will assist them to retain and defend the Roman Papacy without detriment to my order. I shall take care to preserve, to defend, increase and promote the rights, honors, privileges and authority of the holy Roman church, of our lord, the pope, and his aforesaid successors. I shall observe with all my strength and shall cause to be observed by others, the rules of the holy father, the apostolic decrees, ordinances or dispensations, reservations, provisions and mandates. I shall come when called to a synod unless prevented by canonical impediment. I shall make personally the visit ad limina apostolorum every ten years, and I shall render to our holy father, Pope Pius X, and to his aforesaid successors, an account of my whole pastoral office and of all things pertaining

CREIGHTON'S REPRESENTATIVE IN ORATORICAL CONTEST.



PRESTON McAVOY.

In any manner whatsoever to the state of my church, to the discipline of the clergy and the people, and finally to the salvation of the souls which are intrusted to me and in turn I shall receive humbly the apostolic mandates and execute them as diligently as possible. But if I shall be detained by legitimate impediment I shall fulfill all the aforesaid things through a designated delegate having a special mandate for this purpose, a priest of my diocese, or through some other secular or regular priest of known probity and religion, fully informed concerning the above mentioned things. I shall not sell nor give nor mortgage the possessions belonging to my menas (the investments) for the support of the bishop, nor shall I encroach thereon or alienate them in any manner, even with the consent of the chapter of my church, without consulting the Roman pontiff. And if through me any such alienation should occur I wish by this act to incur the punishment contained in the constitution published concerning this matter. So help me God and these holy Gospels of God."

The examination, the mass and the special acts of consecration then follow.

Oratorical Contest to Be Held This Week

The annual oratorical contest of the State Inter-collegiate Peace association will be held at the Creighton University Auditorium under Bellevue college direction Friday, April 12. Creighton university, Bellevue, Omaha university, Hastings, Grand Island, Doane, York, Cotner and Wesleyan will be represented. The association was organized to promote the idea of Universal Peace, and this is its second contest. Cash prizes of \$15 and \$20 will be awarded the winners of the first and second places. Preston McAvoy will represent Creighton university with an oration on "America and World Peace." McAvoy is a native of Elkhorn, Neb., and is a Junior in the Creighton university department of arts. McAvoy is a prominent orator and won the gold medal in the college elocution contest last year.

CLUBS RESOLVE TO HELP UPBUILD DEAF INSTITUTE

The Northwest Federation of Improvement Clubs has addressed a resolution to the public dealing with its desire to interest citizens in upbuilding state institutions, especially the Nebraska School for the Deaf. The resolution follows: "We, the Northwest Federation of Im-

provement Clubs of the city of Omaha in meeting assembled, do respectfully ask your assistance in investigating and bringing to a speedy end the procurement for the state of the ten acres adjoining the Institute. The improvement clubs of Omaha have already had appropriated \$12500 for the purchase of this site, but as yet nothing has been done in the matter. This being the only state institution in our city, we feel it our duty to see that the money does not go back into the state treasury and we hope you will take sufficient interest in Omaha's welfare to assist the Federation of Improvement Clubs to close up the matter."

ELKS INSTALL OFFICERS AND EAT FISH CHOWDER

Officers for the ensuing 1812e year were installed by the Elks Friday night as follows: Exalted ruler, Robert W. Patrick, esteemed leader knight, Walter P. Thomas; esteemed local knight, George F. West; esteemed lecturer knight, William E. Bauer; secretary, Isaac W. Miner; treasurer, Charles L. Saunders;

Tilden Wins Debate. ALBION, Neb., April 6.—(Special).—The Albion high school debaters in the Nebraska high school debating league fought an unsuccessful battle with the Tilden high school debaters last Thursday evening. The Albion debaters were: Oscar Ase, Amos Cacy, Myrtle Thompson. For Tilden, Hessler Cahill, Myrtle Snyder and Neal Erskine carried home the victory. The decision stood two to one in favor of Tilden. County Judge, Hecocoe Smith presided. The judges were Superintendent C. E. Newell of Elgin, Superintendent C. M. Sutherland of Genoa and Superintendent D. M. Murphy of Neligh.

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FREE! \$50.00 IN GOLD. First Award, \$25 in Gold Second Award, \$15 in Gold Third Award, \$10 in Gold FOR Why Does a Name Mean So Much? Because The mere MENTIONING of a name stands for GOOD principles or BAD principles. Some pianos, like some people, have GOOD names, while some pianos, like some people, have BAD names. We Are Offering These Prizes for a Name for a Player Piano. Why We Do It: Our factory at Minneapolis is prepared to launch on the market a full size 88-note Player Piano. What we are after now is a NAME for this Player Piano that is expressive of quality, a name that is easy to pronounce and that will mean something. We are not going to depend upon our own ideas, but will leave the naming of our Player Piano to the people of this city and community. Too many people nowadays are buying pianos and player pianos with actually "any old name" on the fall-board or front of the instrument, and simply because of that fact they do not know what they are getting. We are authorized by the factories to spend a large part of our energy and advertising money to burn it in the minds of the people so strong that the NAME of "OUR" Player Piano will become a by-word and a common household word with everybody in this community. Isn't this good judgment on our part? WHAT does the piano-buying public have to guide or direct them in the purchase of a piano or Player Piano? Only "A NAME" in reality. Of course they have the piano dealers' guarantee back of it, but most people want more than that. IF WE, as piano dealers, can tell YOU about our Piano: "Your next door neighbor has one." "The people themselves named it," and we have hundreds of them in this community, then we have "SAID SOMETHING" haven't we? CONDITIONS OF CONTEST: Write out plainly the name you suggest for the Player Piano, whether it be long or short, a word expressing quality or something musical, no matter what it may be, give your reasons why you think it appropriate. A short name means as much as a long one just so it is what we desire. This proposition is conducted for the purpose of getting the "BEST NAME" obtainable for our new Player Piano and to popularize the makes we handle. No one connected with our house or any other music house is eligible to enter. The superintendent of our factory will choose or select the first three best names. This is with the utmost fairness to all. All those sending in suitable suggestions will be notified by mail. Proposals must be mailed to our store by April 16th, 1912. In case of a tie, equal awards will be given. E. B. Segerstrom Piano Co. Omaha's Exclusive Representatives of the genuine Knabe Piano 1825-27 Farnam St. OMAHA, NEB. "Walk Out of Your Way to Buy From Us—It Pays"

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