

# Easter Week in Spain

A. V. H.



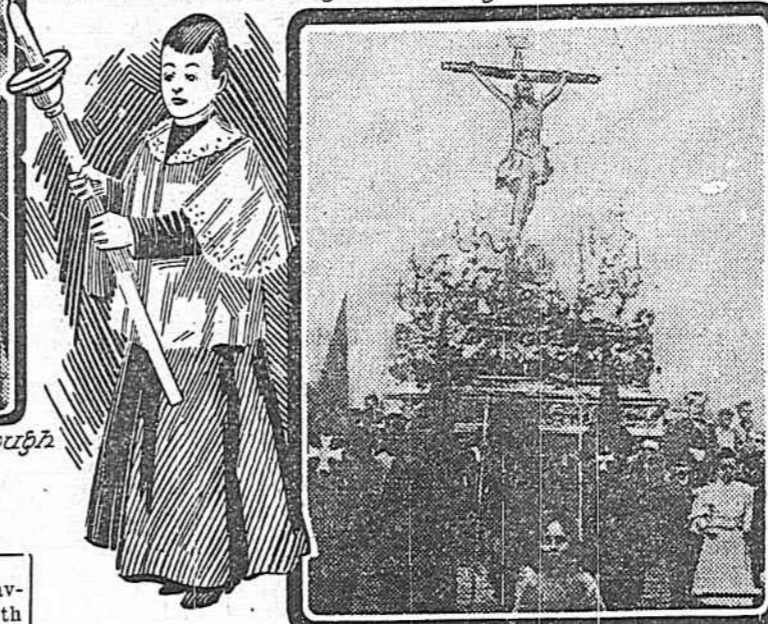
Beautiful Figure of the Virgin



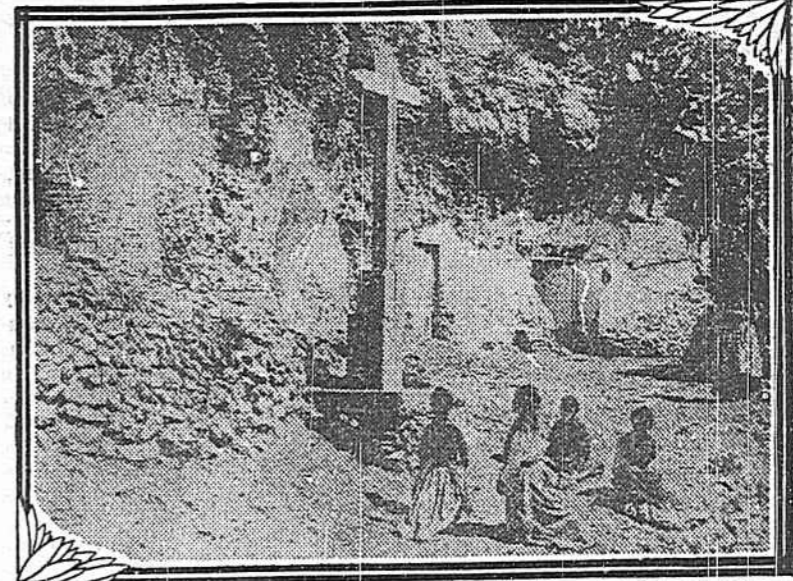
Figure of Christ Carried through the Streets of Seville by Spanish Noblemen



Gold Litter Bearing a Statue of the Virgin in the Parade of Maundy Thursday



The Famous Image of Christ known as "Expiracion"



Gypsies at Grenada Praying in Front of a Cross

Spain as a nation can never be reproached for insincerity as far as religion is concerned, for there is, perhaps, no nation on the face of the globe which clings to the Catholic Church with a greater tenacity. To be sure, there is a certain element among the younger men who have made an attempt to copy the modern Frenchman and boldly declare that they stand for no religion, but these unfortunate creatures form a very small part of the population. Spain is wholly Catholic and likely to remain so for many years to come. Her long fight with the barbarians and later with the Moors, has made her cling closely to the Christian religion, and her people seem to be imbued with an unwavering faith in the dogmas taught by her religious instructors.

The Spaniard will make sacrifices which the American would never think of doing in order to assist in building some great church. This is as true today as it was a hundred years ago, for in the city of Barcelona a great church which has already cost eight millions of dollars is in the course of construction. This money has all been collected from the poorer classes of Spain. "The Church First," seems to be the watchword. When the outbreak against the convents took place in Barcelona two years ago, the attack was not on the church as was generally supposed, but on the commercialism of the church. Barcelona is a manufacturing town and when the convents and monasteries of that city began to turn out articles cheaper than some of the factories and this lowered the wages of the working

classes, the wage earner rebelled, and urged on by the anarchists and labor disturbers from various countries, they destroyed 56 convents and churches, entailing the loss of thousands of dollars. After it was all over the same poor people gave liberally of their small earnings to aid in repairing the damage and for the purpose of caring for the nuns and priests.

Of course, to the uneducated of Spain religion is a mere superstition and their prayers to the saints mean little. A story illustrating this is told of a servant girl of Seville who prayed to San Antonio to send her a sweetheart. The girl spent her small wages in candles and other offerings trying to propitiate the saint, but the sweetheart came not. Finally the girl became angry and jerked the wooden figure from her little altar and hung it in the cellar, declaring that it should remain there until her wish was granted. A month later a lover appeared and San Antonio was once more installed on the altar and tapers were burned in his honor. Hanging figures of saints until a prayer is granted seems to be a common thing in Southern Spain. In Madrid, when San Isidoro, the patron saint of the laboring classes, had the bad taste, as they considered it, to send rain on his feast day, several workmen broke the windows of the church named for him in order to teach him not to err again. Later in the day when the skies cleared

these same workmen gave their savings to replace the windows with even finer ones than they had broken.

With the better class the superstition is absent, and there is a genuine love of the church and a desire to further its cause in every way. At times they may not be as subservient to the Pope as the Catholics of other countries, but they are none the less faithful to their church.

These little incidents may serve to make the reader understand more clearly just what the Holy Week ceremonies mean to the Spanish Catholic, for that week to him is the very crowning glory of all church festivals. Shops are often closed for several days and employees given a holiday to participate in these services. As the weather at Easter is delightful hundreds of Americans are elaborate ceremonies, and hotels always charge double the regular price. In every nook and corner of the country there is a celebration of some sort. In many of the smaller towns a figure of Judas is set up and stoned until it falls to pieces, and in others little plays of the life of Christ are given. At one of these a few years ago there was a scene in which Christ entered bearing the cross. He was followed by young men representing Roman soldiers. One of these, who was a particularly fine actor, was rather rough in his handling of the Christians. The audience became

wildly excited and in order to keep him from being mobbed the curtain had to be run down. Even the Spanish gypsy is Catholic, and any day during Holy Week these dark-skinned, dark-eyed people may be found kneeling in prayer before one of the many crosses set up in the Albacin district of Grenada.

Madrid and Seville are both interesting places at Easter season and the ceremonies are entirely different. In Madrid the church bells are silent for 48 hours and no vehicles are allowed on the streets. Gravel is spread over certain places—the route the royal family will take on Good Friday when they walk to the seven churches where the Holy Sepulchers are displayed. On Holy Thursday the famous foot-washing takes place. Twelve beggars are brought to the royal chapel at the palace. The entire court is present when the beggars are lined up in a row. The Queen then washes the feet of each one while the priests chant and pray. The spectacle is most solemn and impressive. Outside of court circles it is whispered that the beggars are selected as early as February. They are said to be kept closely confined from that time until Easter and treated to several baths each day.

After the ceremony they are given a small sum of money and sent away with the Queen's blessing.

Seville, however, is the best place to study Catholic Spain at Easter, and inside and around the great Cathedral are enacted many scenes which impress the Christian world. The magnificent processions, the solemn services and the great number of people who take part, their devotion and the discomforts they endure prove a source of wonder to the American. These parades are in charge of different Catholic brotherhoods and are managed entirely by them. A large stand is erected in front of the City Hall and the mayor greets the procession as it wends its way through the narrow streets. Huge images and litters bearing thousands of candles are carried on the shoulders of the men. In front march the gendarmes, who are known as Romans; these are followed by the masked members of the brotherhood, girls wearing white robes and members of the town council. The long line of men pass through the narrow streets and finally into the great Cathedral, where the flickering candles light up the ghostly recesses of that vast edifice. Here and there at the dif-

ferent private chapels one finds people kneeling in prayer, and in the central church there is a service with a full choir. It is impossible to fully describe the impressiveness of these scenes in the space of a newspaper article. Procession after procession takes place and every one of a different character.

Holy Week begins with the march on Palm Sunday, after which there is the consecration of the palms in the Cathedral. On Wednesday there is a great procession of thousands of people followed by music in the Cathedral with an accompaniment of thunder; with the veil of the Temple rent in twain. In the evening there is the parade of men bearing the Sacrament to the Chapel of the Segario. On Thursday the consecration of the oil takes place in the presence of a large number of dignitaries. Later in the day comes the outdoor procession in which hundreds of the cigarmakers take part.

Seville is the home of the tobacco industry of Spain. The factories are run by the Spanish government and thousands of people are employed. They have their own church brotherhoods, and the parade of "Maundy Thursday" is in their charge. There is also a procession on Good Friday early in the morning. Services are held throughout the day in the different churches, the one held in the Cathedral being interspersed with peals of thunder and the ringing of bells. The whole thing savors of the supernatural.

As the treasury of the Cathedral of Seville is one of the richest in the world, many of the figures and litters carried are worth a fortune in themselves. The Virgin of "Esperanza" is practically hidden by the silver ornaments which adorn the litter on which the figure rests. The wonderfully hand-carved sides are set with precious stones and the canopy is held in place by solid silver supports which are an inch and a half in diameter. The canopy is of the finest French silk. It requires twenty men to carry this litter.

The image of Christ known as Expiracion is hand carved ivory and rests on a solid silver base. Over one hundred candles are used to light up the exquisitely formed statue. An-

other famous piece carried in the procession is the gold litter containing the statue of the Virgin known as La O. This is one of the priceless treasures of the church. The Virgin in solid gold is in the centre of a mass of glittering candlesticks set with precious stones. The great golden figure is almost hidden by this mass of precious stones.

Another is a figure of the Virgin in white and gold with a halo of precious stones about her head. A golden statue of Christ on the cross is carried by ten or more Spanish noblemen. Dozens of magnificently carved statues of pure gold and silver set with precious stones of the rarest type are carried during this great religious festival. The way leads through dark and narrow streets, and the jewels are unguarded save by those who carry the figures. Even the thieves of Spain have a superstitious fear of religion. Holy sepulchers are displayed in all of the churches and Saturday is spent in prayer. On Easter morning there is a grand service of praise, and the day winds up with the greatest bullfight of the season. At least six bulls are tortured to death and twice as many horses meet a horrible death by being gored by the bull after he is goaded to desperation by the matadors—a strange ending to the solemn scenes of Holy Week.

Truly, Catholic Spain is a wonderful sight at Eastertime.

### The Exception.

It was married men's night at the revival meeting.

"Let all you husbands who have troubles on your minds stand up!" shouted the emotional preacher, at the height of his spasm.

Instantly every man in the church rose to his feet except one.

"Ah!" exclaimed the preacher, peering out at this lone sinner, who occupied a seat near the door and apart from the others: "You are one in a million."

"It ain't that," called back this one helplessly, as the rest of the congregation turned to gaze suspiciously at him. "I can't get up; I'm paralyzed!"

### OUR WASHINGTON LETTER.

(From our special correspondent, Frank Fuller.)

The President's return to the city a few days ago brought the cabinet together and a general consideration of the Mexican situation was the result. No further information was given out regarding the matter and the mystery surrounding it is still maintained. It is now understood that the President in his message to Congress will allude only incidentally to the movement of troops to the frontier, but that reciprocity and the tariff will be the burden of his appeal. This, however, will not satisfy Congress, especially the House, and a request will be made for full information leading up to the ordering the troops out.

Miss Margaret V. Kelly has just been appointed acting director of the Mint, which will at short intervals place her in charge of the Government coinage system. She is the highest salaried woman in the Government service. She entered the classified service from New Hampshire more than seventeen years ago at a salary of \$650, but rapidly rose until her last promotion gives her \$2,500.

It is given out here that Mr. Bryan will be in the city to be present at the opening of the special session of Congress. His presence here at that time is thought to be to assist in the organization of the House along lines favorable to his faction of his party. He is not pleased with some of the committee selections and has given the leaders to understand it, but influences emanating in New York have so far prevailed against his suggestions. He will be at the capitol during the caucuses of the House democrats and in consultation with leaders, but he may not be able to swing them into line for his recommendations.

The forty-eight postal savings banks established January 3 received deposits of \$133,869 up to March 1, and from this it is believed that if banks are established at all money order postoffices, they will receive at least \$200,000,000 in a year. Clifton Forge, Va., ran the lowest in average amount of deposit, its twenty-seven depositors placing only \$245 an average of \$9.07. The leader in per capita deposits was Globe, Ariz., where the average for 138 depositors is \$70.93. In gross deposits Leadville, Colo., leads with \$21,253, with 362 open accounts.

The Democrats Win. With the exception of three councilmen and the Police Judge, the Democrats regained control of the city government of Joplin, Mo., Tuesday, which they lost two years ago.



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