

ORIGIN OF EASTER.

SOME OF THE CURIOUS CUSTOMS OF THE DAY.

How the Goddess of Spring is Welcomed in Different Countries—The Imaginary Moon That Regulates the Coming of Easter—The "Feast of Eggs."

Easter Sunday, or as it was formerly called, the "Sunday of Joy," like many other ceremonies which have come down to us from earlier times, has been changed from its original, and to some extent pagan, character to a religious observance, until now, more especially limited to the Romish and Episcopal churches, it is the festival of the resurrection of Christ.

In olden times there was a feast of the Teutonic goddess Ostera (in the Anglo-Saxon *Easter*, whence naturally comes our Easter), the goddess of spring, and the Anglo-Saxon name for April was *Easter-month*. The pagan worship of Ostera was strongly rooted in Northern Germany, and was brought into England by the Saxons; and the early missionaries, finding it impossible to abolish it, endeavored, as with some other ceremonies, so far as was possible, to change it to a Christian festival, and to give to the rites a religious significance. This was easily done in this instance; for joy at the rising of the sun, at the bursting of spring from the bonds of winter, the resurrection of the natural world, could quite easily be changed to joy at the rising of the sun of righteousness, at the resurrection of Christ, his triumph over death and the grave. Easter has often been called the Christian Passover, because the Jewish Passover was celebrated, according to the Mosaic law, on the 14th day of the month of Abi, that is, within a day or two before or after the vernal equinox.



Although the church has always been united as to why Easter should be celebrated, there has been a wide difference of opinion as to when it should be observed. This controversy grew out of a diversity of custom. The Judaizing Christians keeping their paschal feast on the same day the Jews keep their Passover—the 14th of Nisan—the Hebrew month corresponding to our March or April—while the churches of the west, in remembrance that Christ arose on Sunday, had their festival on the Sunday following the day observed by the eastern church. This discussion was kept up until the time of Constantine, who (A. D. 325) brought the subject before the Ecumenical council of Nice, from which time to this Easter Sunday has been everywhere on one and the same day—the first Sunday after the full moon which happens on or next after the 21st of March; and if the full moon comes upon a Sunday, Easter day is the Sunday after. This decision was in favor of the western usage, that body holding that the Sunday after the 14th of April was proper for the commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The introduction of the Gregorian calendar made some changes necessary, and the ecclesiastical authorities at last decided to regulate the time of Easter by the moon—not, however, the actual moon, nor what is called by astronomers the "mean moon," but an imaginary moon, whose movements are so arranged that it follows the real moon by some two or three days.

Easter, which is now preceded by Lent, in early days was introduced by fasting on one day only—the Friday in Passion week, known as Good Friday; by and by the time was extended to forty hours, in token that Christ had lain that long in the tomb, and from this it was at last prolonged to forty days—the season of the temptation in the wilderness. The primitive Christians on the morning of this day saluted each other with the words, "Christ is arisen," to which the person addressed answered, "Christ is arisen, indeed, and hath appeared to Simon," a custom which is still retained in the Greek church. "Indeed," says an eminent foreign writer, "all the ceremonies attending the observance of Easter were at first exceedingly simple, but in the early part of the Fourth century a decided change was brought about. Constantine, naturally vain and fond of parade, signalized his love of display by celebrating this festival with extraordinary pomp. Vigils, or night watches, were instituted for Easter eve, at which the people remained in the churches until midnight. The tapers, which it had been before customary to burn at this time, did not satisfy his majesty, but huge pillars of wax were used instead; not only in the churches, but all over the city, were they placed, that the brilliancy of the night should far exceed the light of day. Easter Sunday was noticed with most elaborate ceremonies, the pope officiating at mass, with every imposing accessory that could be devised."

During the interval between Easter and Pentecost, a period of fifty days, the Christians were not expected to pray kneeling, for this attitude was considered as a token of humility, but rather with outstretched arms, and faces looking to heaven, at this season, when only songs of joy and gratitude were expected. Both Easter and Pentecost Sunday were accounted fortunate days on which to baptize children, and the interval lying between these days as favorable for marriages.



Various ceremonies, spirits and superstitions have in time past characterized the day, and still are many of the old Easter customs practiced in different parts of the world. That of making presents of colored eggs was at one time almost universal, eggs being considered symbolical of the revival of nature, the springing forth of life.

Passover week in Rome may be termed the "feast of eggs." Every good Catholic not only fasts every Friday throughout the year, but for a week together at Easter. The church does not allow any flesh food; but eggs may be eaten in any quantity. On the first day of Passion week everybody presents everyone else with some little gift emblematical of an egg in some shape or other, which is known as *Pascal eggs* (*œufs des Pâques*). Among a people so ingenious in trifles as the Parisians the opportunity is not lost, so that egg-shaped articles are to be had in every conceivable variety of materials. One would think that the once imperial eagle of France had summoned all the birds of the air to come to Paris, build their nests in shop windows, and there deposit their eggs, for go where you will, look into whatever shop you fancy, there you see eggs from the size of a caraway comit, such as is found in the nest of the humming bird, to one as large as a bowl—the ostrich egg, for instance. The toy shops are full of egg-shaped boxes; within them are dolls and playthings. Here you have chocolate eggs, full of cream where the yolk should be; there you have sugar eggs filled with liquor, and again, ivory eggs within which is a scent bottle. Passing along the streets are women with barrows crying aloud, "*Des œufs! des œufs!*" "Eggs! eggs!" On their perambulating boards are piled two lots of eggs, one white, natural; the other red, cooked in logwood water. Thus red eggs ready-boiled, are sold in every street in Paris.

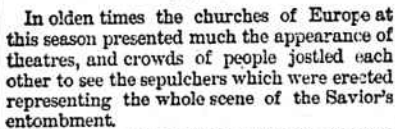
Some of the nests are beautiful works of art. Here is a snail or weasel stealthily climbing up a tree to suck the eggs, with the parent bird in battle array, ready to drive the intruder away. Altogether in Paris, Easter eggs are one of its sights, and well worth seeing.

The rank of a princess does not shield her from a salute on the cheek by the lowest boor who presents her an egg at Easter, in Russia; and the custom of distributing *pace*, or *pace eggs*—the Passion or Easter egg—is still observed by the peasantry in different parts of England; while the young people of Scotland, where the festival has been suppressed for centuries, still throw about and play with hard-boiled colored eggs, which they finally eat.

In the days when old and young alike received these eggs, the demand for them was such that they commanded oftentimes great prices. After they were boiled hard, and colored in red, violet, blue, green, etc., dyes, inscriptions and various designs were traced on them, and those ornamented were exchanged by those sentimentally inclined, very much after the same fashion as are the valentines of the present day. The planter ones were saved by the youth and used on Easter Monday in playing ball, which, by the way, was a favorite game.

On Easter Monday even the clergy indulged in the delights of this game of ball, which men, women and children revelled in. In many instances it formed a part of their service, bishops and deacons taking a ball to church, and at the commencement of the anthem, while dancing to the music, threw it forth to each other during the singing. After this service they all retired for refreshments, which usually consisted of a dish of bacon with tansy pudding—this last symbolical of the bitter herbs they were commanded to take at the Paschal feast.

Though these old customs are often modified and greatly changed, they all bear resemblance to those from which they sprung. In certain parts of England the absurd and senseless practice of "lifting" or "heaving" is in vogue. This is performed by two strong men or women joining hands across each other's wrists, forming a sort of seat, in which the person to be lifted sits, when he is thrown up into the air two or three times, being often, during this process, carried several yards along the street. On Easter Mondays the men "lift" the women, and on Tuesdays the women return the compliment. Very ludicrous incidents have been related of travelers who, ignorant of the prevalence of this custom, have been astonished to find themselves in the strong arms of these people, and "heaved" in spite of their execrations and efforts for release.



In olden times the churches of Europe at this season presented much the appearance of theatres, and crowds of people jostled each other to see the sepulchers which were erected representing the whole scene of the Savior's entombment.

In those days the belief prevailed that the Lord's second coming would be on Easter eve, hence the sepulchers were anxiously watched through the night preceding Easter Sunday, until 3 a. m., when two aged monks would enter and take out a beautiful image of the resurrection, which was held up before the worshipping audience during the chanting of the anthem, "Christus Resurgens." It was then carried to the high altar, where a procession formed with lighted tapers, and old men bearing a canopy of velvet over the image; they proceeded around the exterior of the church, all singing, rejoicing and praying, until, coming again to the high altar, their precious burden was placed there, not to be removed until Ascension day.

Easter week is still the great season at Rome. For Easter Sunday the greatest preparations are made, and it is celebrated with elaborate ceremonies. The day is ushered in by the firing of cannon, and early in the morning carriages with their eager freight of men and women, begin to roll toward St. Peter's, which is richly decorated for the occasion, the altars freshly ornamented, and the lights around the tomb of St. Peter all blazing. On this day the pope officiates at mass, with every imposing accessory that human invention can devise. From a hall in the palace of the Vatican he is carried into the church, borne on the shoulders of his officers. On his head he wears a round, gilded cap, representing a triple power, signifying spiritual and temporal power, a union of both. On all sides of him are carried large fans of ostrich feathers, in which are placed the eye-like parts of peacock feathers, to represent the vigilant eyes of the church. When in the church he rests under a rich canopy of silk. After mass, to the sound of music, he is borne back to a balcony over the central doorway, where, rising from his chair of state, he pronounces a benediction, with indulgences and absolution.

The crowd of people who witness this most imposing of all the ceremonies at Rome at this season is immense. Below the balcony at which the pope appears to pronounce the benediction is the densest crowd, who watch with upturned faces the falling of the papers containing copies of the prayers that have been uttered, which are thrown down by the pope and his assistants.

GEORGE BANCROFT GRIFFITH.

Orangeburg and Lewisdale Rail Road.

Editor Times and Democrat:

Allow me space in your valuable columns to say a few words in reference to the proposed rail road from Orangeburg to Lewisdale. While a considerable number of our citizens were absent from the last meeting, they are none the less anxious for a road, their absence was on account of a misunderstanding. It seems that the general impression was that the meeting would be a failure, as such meetings had often failed in the past, among us.

It seems that the whole community is thoroughly interested in the move. We feel that a good road is a long felt want. Messrs. Riley and Redmond voiced the sentiments of this community in the last meeting, they themselves are anxious to have the road through our section and will have the co-operation of this entire section of country, which we venture to say, without fear of contradictions, is one the most desirable and well adapted portions of the county in which to build a rail road; it offers the best road bed we know of any where, indeed the whole route from Orangeburg to Lewisdale would be found almost entirely free from hills and swamps with an abundant supply of pine, oak, hickory and ash, with other varieties of timber as well as an extremely fine cotton section. While we offer these advantages over any other route to the points mentioned we would say to the business men of Orangeburg that it is decidedly to their advantage to develop this portion of country. They have, already, almost the entire trade of the Fork and Bull Swamp sections, while the trade from the borders of Bull Swamp to the Congaree goes to Columbia, thereby cutting their business; with a rail road the tide of this trade would soon turn and flow back to Orangeburg.

The road can be put through on the ridge between Bull Swamp and Beaver Creek at a much less cost than to go through any other community known to us. If it passes between Bull Swamp and the Edisto or beyond it will be of but little consequence to our section; while if it runs through this section, that is, between Bull Swamp and Beaver Creek it will be of material benefit to the people of the Bull Swamp section. Now this seems a little strange to some of your readers, but I venture to say the assertion can be substantiated, should any one feel doubtful on that point of the assertions of this article. We feel that the road is a necessity and will take an active part in its construction, should we be favored in the coming survey, in which, when we receive a just consideration, we are confident of having the road laid out in our midst.

Fearing that this may be too long an article for your patience, I come to a close without having attached half the importance to this matter which we feel due the subject under consideration.

We ask the earnest consideration of the corporators with the many others concerned, when the road is surveyed. We again remind them of the almost natural road bed, timber, cotton and other products of our country. We feel it a long felt want, we desire it, and if our co-operation will supply the want, we will have it. P. T. H. Centre Hill, S. C.

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Piles are frequently preceded by a sense of weight in the back, loins and lower part of the abdomen, causing the patient to suppose he has some affection of the kidneys or neighboring organs. At times, symptoms of indigestion are present, flatulency, uneasiness of the stomach, etc. A moisture like perspiration, producing a very disagreeable itching, after getting warm, is a common attendant. Blind, Bleeding and Itching Piles yield at once to the application of Dr. Bosanko's Pile Remedy, which acts directly upon the parts affected, absorbing the Tumors, allaying the intense itching, and effecting a permanent cure. Price 50 cents. Address the Dr. Bosanko Medicine Co., Piqua, O. Sold by Dr. J. G. Wannamaker.

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Excitement in Texas.

Great excitement has been caused in the vicinity of Paris, Tex., by the remarkable recovery of Mr. J. E. Corley, who was so helpless he could not turn in bed, or raise his head; everybody said he was dying of Consumption. A trial bottle of Dr. King's New Discovery was sent him. Finding relief, he bought a large bottle and a box of Dr. King's New Life Pills; by the time he had taken two boxes of Pills and two bottles of the Discovery, he was well and had gained in flesh thirty-six pounds. Trial Bottles of this Great Discovery for Consumption free at Dr. J. G. Wannamaker.

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Use Dr. Gunn's Liver Pills for Sallow Complexion, Pimples on the Face, Bilioussness. Never sickens or gives. Only one for a dose. Samples free at Dr. J. G. Wannamaker.

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With the Annual Report of the above Company is attached a large number of Death claims paid from February 1882 to February 1st 1886, representing all parts of the Union, amounting to \$1,685,200.00 from, this list we take claims in South Carolina which have been paid:

- Valentine R. Jordan, West Wateree, \$5,000.
- J. S. Small, Grahams, \$1,250.
- Henry L. Krause, Fort Royal, \$1,250.
- J. E. Todd, Due West, \$2,500.
- Wm. H. Whilden, Jacobsonboro, \$5,000.
- E. Parker, Abbeville, \$5,000.
- A. S. Barns, Walterboro, \$2,600.
- Em'l Nehemas, Beaufort, \$1,600.

J. S. ALBERGOTTI, Agent. Feb. 25-6ms.



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