

Spirit of Easter



Solemn Scenes of Easter Week at Jerusalem

The Arab festival, which comes during the Christian Easter week, is known as "Nebi Musa," Arabic for "Prophet Moses." It is of comparatively recent origin, and in reality is a political rather than a religious festival started by the Sultan Saladin about the time of the Crusades, because he felt that too many Christians were coming to Jerusalem for Easter who might outnumber the Moslems. He instituted this festival to coincide with the orthodox Easter, which would bring a host of Moslems into Jerusalem. The Arabs pouring into Jerusalem for the "Nebi Musa" festival present a kaleidoscope of color that is quite dazzling. The Bedouin women, in their red and yellow coarsely embroidered finery, are particularly striking.

The large body of Hebronite Arabs make their way around the outside of the city walls, dancing and whirling a weird chant, accompanied by the beating of tom toms and clapping of hands in a measured beat, their leader performing gyrations with a huge curved sword. The banners carried in the procession are blessed and brought from Mecca each year, and they are blessed again by the Mufti on the top of the Mount of Olives, after which the parade moves on. The flutes break into a melancholy wailing this time and the dancing dervishes revolve and revolve, their skirts opening out like an umbrella. This performance takes place at frequent intervals and lasts about 20 minutes, and the dancers look like spinning tops as they whirl around until some of them foam at the mouth. The whole pilgrimage is made on foot and lasts about three days, during which time they do not partake of food.

When Jericho is reached they place the blessed banners on the supposed grave of Moses, in spite of the fact that the exact whereabouts of the burial place of Moses is distinctly disclaimed in the Bible. Deut. chap. 34, v. 6, "And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab over against Bethpeor; but no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day."

Beginning Easter Week.

The first day of Paschal or Easter week for the Christian starts with Palm Sunday at cock crow. All night long the weary pilgrims have walked up and down the courtyard of the church of the Holy sepulcher and over the rough cobblestones of the narrow streets in Jerusalem, while the clanging of the great bell on the church continues until daybreak. But in the words of the Psalmist: "Weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning." When the sun comes up over the mountains the people, weary and worn with vigils and fastings, march slowly into the church and offer special prayers.

Many are overcome with emotion and with hearts ready to break and with weeping eyes they sob out: "I've seen the holy of holies," for they believe their own hands have touched the very place where for three days the Master lay in the flesh. Services at the church of the Holy sepulcher last until noon hour, when the people hurry home to their humble lodgings to eat only such food as the restrictions of Lent permit.

On the Mount of Olives.

At the seventh hour the clergy, with men, women and children following, climb the Mount of Olives, along paths bordered by anemones and shadowed by silvery olive trees, until they reach the summit, and for two hours hymns are sung and chanted, after which the people proceed to the stone of ascension, from which place it is

believed the Christ was seen to have risen.

Old and young alike then take a squatting position in the grass, and the children, with branches of olive trees and palms waving gently in rhythmic motion, sing: "Blessed is He That Cometh in the Name of the Lord." The clergy give the signal that the ceremony is over and the people rise and slowly follow, gently singing and chanting, as they escort the priests in the descent from the mount.

They take the road which leads to the church of the Holy sepulcher, and when they reach there they find the sides of the quadrangle court before the place lined with vendors and fakirs selling sticky sweets, all kinds of relics, holy pictures, brilliant colored glass bracelets, mother-of-pearl crosses from Bethlehem and other small ornaments made of olive wood from Jerusalem.

Symbolic Picture.

During the night, before the crowd begins to assemble, a platform, upon which are two benches, is placed in the courtyard. On each bench is a row of six cushioned seats. On a dais, gained by a step and carpeted in red and gold, stands a gilt throne. In front of which are placed a great ewer, a gold tray and a very large white towel. Against the wall of the court, near the platform, there is a flight of wooden steps painted green, which lead to a small pulpit. In the center of the pulpit is a picture of Jesus washing the feet of the 12 Apostles.

By morning the pavements are echoing with ceaselessly tramping feet and everyone and everything has the appearance of the great festive occasion that is about to take place. At nine o'clock comes a crash of bells and, fairly blazing with jewels, the Greek patriarch emerges from the church, attended by his bishops and priests. The procession ascends the dais and in a loud voice a high official reads from the Gospel of St. John the account of Jesus washing His Disciples' feet.

That night the way to the Garden of Gethsemane is lighted with candles and the people pass along the different stages of the cross, until the garden is reached.

Easter

Long before the Christian religion gave Easter to the world to be observed as the day of Christ's resurrection, there had been an Easter to mark the return of spring, the annual resurrection of nature.

Christianity gave a new meaning to the day, but the underlying theme is the same as it has been for thousands and thousands of years. Easter is the embodiment of hope. It promises renewed fruitfulness of the earth, as it has for ages. It promises, in addition, renewed spiritual growth, as it has for 1,928 years.

Religion

I believe in miracles
For I have seen it snow,
And I believe in God
For I have watched a small seed grow
From out the ground where nothing was
Into a Golden Glow!
—Kathleen Millay in Harper's Bazar.

Truths Brought Home

The intimations of immortality dwell upon by poets, reasoned about by philosophers, fluttering in our hearts, again and again chilled by the cold winds of doubt, eclipsed by the fogs, are made to stand forth clearly in the light of Easter day. The spiritual in us is made to glow, the spiritual about us is set forth in its splendor. Our highest hopes seem reasonable. Great impulses are stirred within us. And we are . . . aware of the splendor that

All things of the earth with the things of the skies.

Easter

Silently, yet swiftly,
The pulsing breath of spring
Is lending life and beauty
To every living thing;
Opening bud and blossom
Along each walk and way,
Spreading gladness and delight
To greet the Easter day.

Tinting skies with sapphire,
Streams with silver bright,
Sending little winds abroad
Through the day and night,
Coaxing fragrant blossoms
From the bursting sod,
Crying out a welcome
To the risen-God.

Prompting feathered songsters
On each leafy bough
To herald out the tidings:
"Spring is with us now!
Let your hearts be happy,
Throw all cares away.
Join in nature's symphony
On this Easter day."

—Katherine Edelman

Real Lesson of the Empty Tomb in Paul's Words

The Easter thought is thus phrased by St. Paul: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, not on things on the earth. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh in the children of disobedience; in the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them." Men have thought and preached so much about the empty tomb, in their effort to prove the resurrection as to have entirely overlooked the question asked by the angel of the resurrection, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" That has been what many have been doing for twenty centuries, and are still doing. There were those whom the empty tomb did not convince—the women thought the body had been stolen. It is indeed written of one of the disciples that, when he entered the tomb, "he saw and believed."

Of St. Peter it is written: "Then arose Peter, and ran into the sepulcher; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass"—plainly he was not convinced, but bewildered. What did convince His disciples was communion with Him, a renewal of the old association and fellowship, the happy consciousness of His presence which they knew would be an abiding one, and the tender words that He spoke to them. Then it was that they knew He was alive, alive forevermore, and realized that they were called to follow a living and not a dead Leader. They saw that "in Him was life; and the light was the life of men." Also they realized—and they never lost their grip on the thought—that death and the grave were but the gate opening on a larger, finer, happier and nobler life.

"Because I live, ye shall live also!"

such was the assurance given by Christ to His disciples on the eve of His departure from them. It was the assurance of a life unbroken by death, of continued and uninterrupted fellowship with Himself. Argument on the subject is, and ever has been, for the most part futile. The most that has ever been proved was that there was a moral probability of immortality—and that is much. But for the Christian, Easter is the festival of the life eternal, and he must feel that the assurance of his Master—"Because I live, ye shall live also"—is as truly for him as for those to whom the words were first spoken. Yet comparatively few Christians, it is feared, give much thought to the subject—perhaps because they shrink from the contemplation of death. And that is to be regretted. There are some doctrines held and preached by the churches which ought to be, and in time will be, abandoned, but the doctrine of immortality is not one of them. On the contrary, it should be more and more stressed, for it may be, as it was in the first days of Christianity, a great power in human life. It will be remembered that St. Paul was sure that there was laid up for him "a crown of righteousness." It might be expected that he would have said "a crown of life." But "a crown of righteousness" is a crown of life, for righteousness is itself life. So we are privileged to enter into the joy of another Easter, and once more to think of it as the foretaste of an immortality which is in truth—or may be—a present possession. Arnold puts it well, though perhaps somewhat severely:

No, no! the energy of life may be kept on after the grave, but not begun; And he who flagged not in the earthly strife,
From strength to strength advancing—only he,
His soul well-knit, and all his battles won,
Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life.
—Indianapolis News.

Easter Toys

The children take for Easter toys
The bunnies, eggs and other toys.
But fairer symbols of the day,
Themselves, the children are who play.

The First Easter



"Transfiguration of Christ," by Raphael. This is considered the greatest painting of the Renaissance. From his last unfinished work in the Vatican.

FOR COLDS

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Mrs. Margaret Washington Tells How to Get Rid of a Severe Cold

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Observations From Height

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Stumped

At the recent dinner of the All New England Brown Clubs, Charles Evans Hughes told this tale to adorn a moral. An athlete, greater in brawn than in brain, carefully chose his course so that the strain might not be too heavy. In the due course of time, he, and kindred souls, enrolled in Semitic 2, the leading cinch course of the curriculum. All went well until the midway exam. Then the athlete was stopped cold by the paper before him. In desperation he scribbled this note to be passed to one of his satellites in the back of the room: "For Pete's sake, who was Jehovah and what did he do?"—Boston Globe.

Adversity is the path of truth.