

Bringing in the May



THE DANCE AROUND THE MAY POLE

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON
 AMERICA may be the "melting pot of the nations," but there is one day in the year, at least, when she offers striking evidence that she is the daughter of Old England and that the descendants of the founders of the nation, despite the infiltration of other racial strains during the centuries in which the nation was building, are still conscious of their English ancestry. That day is the first of May. To some people who live in America but who have not yet been transformed into Americans by the alchemy of the melting pot, May 1 means a day for protest against the prevailing order of things, for so-called "radical" activities, for calling for an "uprising" which somehow never seems to come off successfully. For millions of Americans May 1 means disorder of another kind, the semi-annual upheaval in domestic arrangements and change from old firesides to new, known as "Moving day."

But to millions of young Americans, in our schools and colleges, May 1 is a festival day, a time of rejoicing and merrymaking, of song and of dance. And as they, gaily dressed, weave in and out with the long streamers attached to the top of a Maypole erected on some level stretch of greensward, they are perpetuating an old custom of "bringing in the May" which traces back in an unbroken line to the Elizabethan days in Merrie England. In that respect, May day is almost unique. Few, if any, of the holidays which we celebrate are observed in a manner so closely resembling its ancient observance as is this one. It is one of the popular customs of the long ago which persists after others have long since passed away.

The month of May is named for Maia, the Roman goddess of fertility. Maia was the personification of spring and was thought to have every blossoming wild flower and shrub under her special care and protection. The Romans engaged in elaborate floral games during the first week of May. So the May day celebration of a later period had its roots in the rites originally offered in honor of the goddess Maia. But it was another Roman festival which brought to May day the character of the ceremonies which made it distinctive. This was the Floralia, held in honor of Flora, the goddess of flowers, when there were gay costumes, dramatic performances and dances. When Christianity began to prevail over Europe, certain pagan customs were retained in a modified form and among these was the May day celebration. In medieval times it became an important festival and all classes of people, old and young, participated in it. Among the Russians there was a spring festival celebrated by the boys and girls with a choral dance called "Khorovod" and in Sweden there was also a May day celebration with a dance.

But for some reason the festival reached its highest development in England and we now think of it as a distinctively English custom. Early in the first morning of May the men and the maids of Old England would set forth singing for the fields and the woods to gather flowering boughs, wayside blossoms and any pretty, fresh green things that might await them. These treasures were used to "May" the doors of the popular houses in the village. It is this custom which survives in the hanging of May baskets by the children of today.

However the "Mayers" went into the woods primarily to choose the tallest, straightest hawthorne, to cut it down and, with its greenness still freshly fragrant, to bring it into the public square, there to raise it to the center of their long day's festivity. They did it with much ceremony. A writer in the Fifteenth century says: "They bring home with great veneration; they have twentye or fortie yoke of oxen—every one having a sweet nosegay of flowers tied to the tip of his horns, and those oxen draw home the May pole. . . covered all over with flowers and hearbes. . . and thus equipped it



was rear'd with handkerchiefs and flagges streaming on the top." The Maypole having been raised, what follows is resented by a Puritan writer thus: "And then fell they to banquet and feast, to leape and dance about it, as the heathen people did at the dedication of their idols, whereof this is a perfect pattern, or rather the thing itself." The beloved festival, called by the Puritans "an impious and pagan superstition," was long celebrated by the rich and poor alike. Chaucer writes: "Fourth goth al the court, both most and lest, to fetch the flowers fresh and blome." Stow, in his "Survey of London," 1602, says: "In the month of May every man, except impediment, would walk into the sweete meadows and greene woods there to rejoice their spirits with the beauty and savour of sweet flowers."

As already indicated, these Maypole affairs were obnoxious to the Puritans. To them the revelers were only heathens. So the May day observances were forbidden by parliament in 1544, but same into favor once more at Restoration. A Maypole once set up might remain for many years and annually be made the focus of popular amusements. The cities joined in the celebration just as eagerly as the country folk. Stow, in his "History of London," mentions several Maypoles, one of which stood at what is now St. Mary-le-Strand, a crowded thoroughfare. In his day it was 100 feet high. The last Maypole erected in London was of cedar, 134 feet high. It was set up by 12 British sailors under the personal supervision of James II, then duke of York and lord high admiral, near the site of the present church of St. Mary's in the Strand. Half a century later, it was removed to Wanstead Park in Essex, where it was used by Sir Isaac Newton as part of the support of a large telescope which had been presented the Royal society by a French astronomer.

Another celebrated Maypole was that from which St. Andrew's Under-shaft in Leadenhall street in London is supposed to have taken its name. Stow says that it was due to a "high or long shaft or Maypole higher than the steeple (hence undershaft) which used early in the morning of May day—the greatest spring festival of Merrie England—to be set up and set with flowers opposite the south door of St. Andrew's."

It was in the Elizabethan days, however, that the May day celebration reached its highest development. What had previously been a simple, spontaneous celebration became one of much pomp and pageantry. If you read Sir Walter Scott's "Kenilworth," you will learn what a colorful spectacle it was. "Enter six young men in leather jerkins; follow on six young maids leading a sleek cow adorned with flowers. Now struts Robin Hood in Lincoln green, accompanied by Little John, Will Scarlet and the others of that famous outlaw band," writes one

historian of this festival. "After these walk demurely the pretty bride maidens escorting Maid Marian, the Queen of the May; follow other attending girls. Comes a rumbling, creaking sound—the oxen pull the great Maypole to its place of honor, and after the 'May' come a medley of personages the hobby horses, the dancers, the jesters and the crowd. Ah! The pole is raised. Every one shouts. The woodmen and the milkmaids dance around it. The bagpipers play for their steps; the jesters and the hobby horse are busy with buffoonery; ribald Friar Tuck attracts attention. Now there is a contest with the low bow; a prize of laurel and ribbons is given to the winner, a crown of ivy to the second."

Finally the morris, or morrice, dancers come up to perform. These are an energetic, talented crew. A Puritan writer says of them: "They have their hobby horses, their dragons, and other antiques, together with their bandie pypers and thundering drummers, then march this heathen company, their pypers pyping, their stumps a dancing, their bells ingling, their handkerchiefs fluttering about their heads like madde men."

Morris dancing is a different thing from the ordinary folk dancing done by all at the May day fetes. Those who did the morris dances were especially trained for it and were known as "the morris men." Each village of any pretension had its own troupe. The old men took pride in teaching the youngsters the steps between Easter and Whitsuntide each year. Then on Whit Monday all went out about the countryside dancing, and got many a piece of silver for their antics.

The fiddler played early in the morning "to entice 'em to dance," and off they were with "Green Garters" around the pole. The morris men usually had their own fool. Sometimes, too, they had in their troupe that old-time burlesque figure, the "man-woman," who by the fantasy of his costume and the indecency of his conduct was a constant delight to the broad-minded Elizabethan audience. Once the morris men have done their turns the people, whose feet this rightly is, may dance to their hearts' content. Men and girls dance prettily together, doing the same steps that their fathers and mothers did before them.

The humblest of the village folk had a share in the day's merrymaking. The chimney sweeps had their own quaint dance to do. May day is the sweeps' holiday. They appear dressed in fantastic costumes, a little legend of the sweeps' dance is that once a great lady lost her baby boy, and some years later told an old sweep about her misfortune. He replied that his sweep, who was at the moment up her chimney, had been a foundling, and when the boy came down she "knawed'n be a mark or summat on 'em," and gave clothes and great cheer to all the sweeps in the town on the next May day.

Community Building

"Safety" Put First in New York Model City

Some day it may occur to the powers that approve subdivision projects to ask the seemingly obvious question: "What has been provided to make for the safety of the people who are to live here?" One suburban development has made safety a prime consideration and as a result it is being featured as a phenomenon. A writer in a current periodical says Radburn, N. J., is without doubt "the safest populated spot in America." Radburn is a suburb of New York city laid out primarily as a residential district.

These are some of the safety features: A series of courts with about 20 houses each grouped about them. Dead-end streets giving the only access for motor cars to the courts. No sidewalks along motor roads, but pedestrians must keep to pathways through the courts or gardens. Only garages and kitchens and service entrances to the houses look toward the motor roads so that only persons wishing to go to automobiles have any reason to enter the vehicle area. Children go to school by the parkway paths without crossing motor highways, subways being provided wherever necessary.

The common sense of such an arrangement is apparent. It provides quiet, seclusion and safety for the home, factors worthy of the greatest consideration.—Kansas City Times.

Maryland Plans Lining Roadside With Trees

An extensive tree-planting program along the principal highways of the state is planned by the Maryland department of forestry, according to F. W. Besley, chief forester.

A concerted effort is to be made by Mr. Besley and his assistants to obtain greater beauty along the Maryland roads.

Not only will the forestry department furnish and supervise the planting of roadside shade trees, but towns and cities of the state have the privilege of calling on the state forester for improvement in tree planting.

Mr. Besley plans to set out thousands of shade trees along roadsides and in the nurseries. Trees for planting on roadside property are furnished free from the state's nursery at the University of Maryland's college park headquarters.

The forestry department has undertaken an educational program throughout the state, as the planting of trees along the public highways is now recognized as an improvement second only in importance to the building and maintaining of the highways themselves," Mr. Besley said.

"While trees are furnished free at the College Park nursery, transportation charges must be paid by the applicant."

Applicable to All States

Florida has miles and miles of splendid roadways that can be made all the more splendid and attractive through roadside beautification, such as already has been done, or is being done, in many localities in the state. There is growing appreciation in Florida of roadside beautification. This is as it should be, for Florida extends an invitation to all the world, for its people to come here and enjoy the state's many natural beauties, not the least of which is the beauty along roadsides that has been planted with trees and shrubbery, and in many instances with flowers, all of which adds greatly to Florida's natural attractiveness.—Florida Times-Union.

Foundation of Citizenship

The solidity, contentment and close family feeling that are found to the greatest degree in owned homes, leave an inevitable stamp on the children reared under these desirable conditions. They come early into contact with the ideals of home making, of ambition, economy, pride and responsibility, which are the very foundations of our culture. They reap the moral and physical benefits of light, air and play space and almost invariably make better associations than otherwise would be possible.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Good Example to Follow

As a result of its recent clean-city campaign, Sydney, New South Wales, claims to be one of the spottless cities in the world. The change from litter-strewn streets to tidy thoroughfares was effected by a city announcement that after a certain date anyone who failed to use the receptacles provided, and threw even a street car transfer on the street, would be fined. Officials say that almost automatically the litter problem ceased to exist.

Zoning Regulations

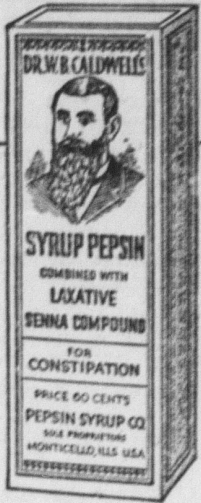
There are 754 cities, towns and villages in the United States which have zoning regulations. Of the 68 cities having populations of more than 100,000, 56 are zoned. Taking the total number, 754, it is found that 475 have comprehensive ordinances regulating the use, height and area of buildings.

A Hick Town

A hick town is a place where the merchants won't spend money to boost their community unless a stranger asks for it.—Los Angeles Times.

Would you like to try this doctor's laxative free of charge?

Every family has occasional need of a laxative, but it should be a family laxative. One that can't form a habit, but can be taken as often as needed. When breath is bad or tongue coated. Or appetite fails. Only a doctor knows the right ingredients. Dr. Caldwell discovered the correct combination years ago. Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin combines harmless herbs and pure senna. It starts muscular action and soon corrects constipation. Gently, but surely, it relieves a bilious or sluggish condition. It is mild. Delicious. Effective. All druggists keep this famous prescription ready, in big bottles. Or write Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin, Monticello, Ill., for a free trial bottle postpaid.



Cleanliness, but Hard on Kest of the Outfit

After a 12-day voyage we arrived at Brest, France, in July, 1918. We marched to the Pontanzan barracks that afternoon. Our outfit was assigned to two barracks, with a promise of a bath on Wednesday.

Water was very scarce there, and at each end of the barracks assigned to us was a barrel of water for drinking purposes.

I happened to get up about two o'clock in the morning and leave the barracks. On my return I saw Mike Connors in the barrel taking a bath. I told him that he should have known better, as the water was very scarce there. He said he knew that, but he really did need the bath and couldn't wait any longer.

"We'll drink out of the other barrel at the other end of the barracks, then," I commented.

"I got my clothes in that one," Mike assured me.—John J. Boyle in New York Telegram.

All progress is not happiness.

COLDS COST MONEY

It is estimated that a sufferer from colds loses three days' time from work in a year.

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 All Colds, Liquid or Tablets.

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Instead of dangerous heart depressants take safe, mild, purely vegetable NATURE'S REMEDY and get rid of the bowel poisons that cause the trouble. Nothing like NR for biliousness, sick headache and constipation. Acts pleasantly. Never gripes.

NR TO-NIGHT
 TOMORROW ALRIGHT

Belligerent Owl

A struggle between an owl and the engineer of an electric express train has been reported at Linköping, in southern Sweden. The bird, probably attracted by the headlights of the locomotive, burst against one cab window and broke the glass. Well inside, it sank its claws into the shoulders of the motorman and attacked him with its bill. The engineer could not leave his grip on the switch, and a fierce battle ensued while the train raced on its way. At last the motorman succeeded in strangling the bird, which was an unusually large specimen.

A torpid liver prevents proper food assimilation. Tone up your liver with Wright's Indian Vegetable Pills. 25c a box. 372 Pearl St., N. Y. Adv.

Not Homesick

Ann's parents left her at her grandmother's when they went East last summer. The little girl seemed quite contented for several days; then one evening she wouldn't eat. Her grandmother asked whether she was homesick. "No," she answered, "I'm not, but my stomach wants to go home."

Old-fashioned people now get photograph albums especially made; for they are too useful to be snubbed out of existence.

That Came Later

"How do these grouches get wives?"

"Many of them were not grouches until they did."

HEADACHES

Needless pains like headaches are immediately relieved by Bayer Aspirin as millions of people know. And no matter how suddenly a headache may come, one can at all times be prepared. Carry the pocket tin of Bayer Aspirin with you. Keep the larger size at home. Read the proven directions for pain, headaches, neuralgia, etc.



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Rain-Face, Spanish Indian Medicines: chronic diseases; and stamps for box of "Rain-Face"; describe troubles. Dr. E. G. Woodward Indian Medical Co., 7 W. Washington St., Bradford, Pa.

Wanted—Local representative whole or part time; financial institution; exceptional opportunity; wonderful future; write Allied Securities Co., 150 Central Ave., Newark, N.J.

One Drop

Bourbon Poultry Medicine for each chick daily in drink or feed stimulates appetite, aids digestion, regulates bowels, promotes health, prevents disease infection. On market for 25 years. Small size 50c, half pint \$1.00. At druggists, or sent by mail. Bourbon Remedy Co., Box 7, Lexington, Ky.

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Glenn's Sulphur Soap

Contains 84% Pure Sulphur. At Druggists.

Ungallant

There are some persons, nearly all of the female sex, who suffer from a chronic rush of words to the mouth.—Dean Inge.

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Quickly with Boschee's Syrup

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