

EASTER—A Day of Many Meanings



By ELMO SCOTT WATSON



IT'S an "early Easter" this year, for Easter Sunday falls on March 27. Last year it came on April 3 and next year it will come on April 16. For all the red letter days on our calendar Easter is the most variable. The only thing certain about it is that it always comes on a Sunday and it is limited to either one of two months, March and April. Then there are other limits, too, that is, it cannot come earlier than March 22 nor later than April 25.

Why all this variation in such an important annual festival? The reasons go back into ancient history. The festival now known as Easter was celebrated by ancient Israel as the Passover for many centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ. It was based upon the events which took place when the Hebrews were saved from the destruction which was visited upon the Egyptians, as given in Exodus 12:27. The first Christians, being in the main Jews, continued for a long time to observe the Passover as well as other ancient ceremonies. But gradually these early followers of the Cross began to substitute the Christ for the paschal lamb of Israel in the Passover ceremonies.

Eventually there arose a difference of opinion between the Christians of Hebrew descent and those of Gentile descent as to the time when these ceremonies should be celebrated. Those of Hebrew descent declared that the day of the death of Jesus should be the date of the ending of the paschal fast, which in Hebrew rites, always was on the fourteenth day of the moon in the evening. Therefore the Easter festival, which followed, might fall on any day of the week. Those of Gentile descent, however, wanted the first day of the week, Sunday, to be the first day of the resurrection festival. Thus the Friday preceding would be observed as the date of the crucifixion without paying any attention to the day of the month, the fast continuing until midnight of Saturday.

The dispute over this point was complicated by the irregularities of the time of full moon in relation to the year. The Hebrew sacred year began at the instant of the vernal equinox, but this time is subject to slight changes due to the astronomical fact of perturbation of the motion of all bodies in the solar system. The Hebrews based their years on lunar changes, whereas we now determine the exact length of a year by the sun and stars, which is more accurate. It is notable that the ancient Hebrews always had trouble with their chronology because they based the beginning of each month on the first sight of the new moon.

The trouble was principally due to the fact that the moon revolves around the earth in 27 days, 7 hours, 43 minutes and 11½ seconds, and the earth around the sun in 31,558,149 seconds. Therefore the moon makes 13,3687 revolutions to the earth's one. Full moon times are also out of harmony with the spring equinox, and this fact caused trouble in determining time in ancient times. The result of all these complications was that by applying the Jewish rules to Easter, the dates of the crucifixion and the resurrection, two days which were supposed to be fixed for all time, varied constantly.

For 325 years the difficulty between the Christians of Jewish descent and those of Gentile descent continued. Not being able to decide the recurrence of Easter, the council of the early Christian church finally appealed to the astronomers in Alexandria, Egypt, for aid. However, the scientists were not of much assistance, for they had no lunar tables such as we now have, computed by master mathematicians. They attempted to make rules, but the variations of the full moon in reference to the year would not cause Easter to fall on Sunday any more than on any other day. All wanted it to come on Sunday, so each nation celebrated to suit itself so that it would come on that day. Thus in A. D. 387 the Gauls celebrated Easter on March 21, in Italy it fell on April 18, and in Egypt it fell on April 25.

Eventually the selection of a certain Sunday was definitely fixed during the Sixth century A. D. It was designated as the Sunday between the fifteenth and twenty-first days of the moon in the first month of the Jewish lunar years. It was directed that the computation should be made according to the tables of Victorius of Aquitaine, introduced in 457 A. D. Because of the fact that Britain had ceased to be a part of the Roman empire, the Sixth century decree did not affect the British church at first, and it continued to calculate Easter on a basis previously approved at Rome. The matter was finally

1. President Hoover greeting the crowd gathered for the annual "Easter egg rolling" on the lawn of the White House.
2. Sunrise services on Easter morning in the Garden of the Gods, near Colorado Springs, Colo.
3. The Easter lily, one of the loveliest of all Easter symbols.
4. The Hollywood Bowl, Hollywood, Calif., where an impressive Easter morning service is held every year.

posed of at a synod held at Whitby in Yorkshire in 664 A. D., after which the clergy of the British Isles conformed to the general practice of the western church.

Accordingly Easter is now observed by both the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches on the first Sunday after the full moon (or fourteenth day of the moon) on or next after March 21. So it cannot be earlier than March 22 nor later than April 25. Thus it is possible for the astronomers and mathematicians to tell in advance on what dates Easter will come each year, and they are now known for more than a century in advance.

That, of course, is based upon the assumption that our calendar will continue unchanged. But there is a possibility that some time within the next few years a new calendar system will be adopted and in that case Easter Sunday will be a fixed date instead of a variable one.

So, in case you're interested in knowing what will be the Easter dates for the next few years, here they are:

1933	.....	April 16
1934	.....	April 1
1935	.....	April 21
1936	.....	April 12
1937	.....	March 28
1938	.....	April 17
1939	.....	April 9
1940	.....	March 24
1941	.....	April 13
1942	.....	April 5
1943	.....	April 25
1944	.....	April 9
1945	.....	April 1
1946	.....	April 21
1947	.....	April 6
1948	.....	March 28
1949	.....	April 17
1950	.....	April 9

Just as Easter is now a variable date, so has it a variable meaning to many different people. To the child, who cannot grasp its religious significance, it means a day whose symbols are rabbits, little chickens and Easter eggs. To those children, too, who like to think of any festival time in terms of something good to eat, Easter time means candy eggs, candy rabbits and other candy symbols of the day, not to mention those fragrant, sugary piles of the mystically marked confection, known as hot cross buns.

How did a bakery product come to be associated with Easter anyway? It goes back to the days of the ancient Saxons who worshipped Easter as goddess of the dawn and benign giver of new life with the coming of the vernal equinox. That was long before they had ever heard of Christianity and the Resurrection. In their joy at the return of new life in the springtime they brought the Easter goddess their sweetest cakes, at the same time eating great numbers of them themselves.

They clung to this custom even after they had embraced Christianity. Some of the early Christian leaders were a bit dubious of preserving such a relic of a heathen religion but some tolerant person who was also a genius for compromise, suggested to the priests that they bless the pagan cakes, marking them with the cross. Thus the Saxon Easter biscuit was made fit for

Christian consumption and for centuries afterwards it was felt that they were endowed with some special spiritual qualities. A few cross-buns baked on Good Friday not only would not mold, as would other bread, but if kept throughout the year they would be an efficient medicine for various ills when crumbled in a cup of water and thus taken into the body.

To most people Easter means a time for coming forth in new clothes and although some of our philosophers have bewailed the extravagance of the "Easter style parade" as a sign that we have lost the spiritual significance of the day in reality it is in keeping with the essential spirit of Easter, which is shared by Christian and pagan alike. It is the idea of "resurrection," of revived life after apparent death. It marks the climax of the year when all nature awakes from sleep, throws off the death-like chill of winter and begins to live anew. With all nature pointing the way by bedecking herself in new raiment, it is only natural that mankind should celebrate the surge of new life by putting on new apparel.

So when midday appears at church on Easter Sunday in a new frock and a new hat, it is not mere human vanity expressing itself. She puts them on because she must! She has responded to the fundamental instinct by responding thus to the call of spring, to the message of renewed life. There is an old British tradition that it is "good luck to wear something new on Easter day," but that is a mere outgrowth of the essential idea of the Eastertide.

Far as some of the symbols of Easter and their meanings for different people may seem to be removed from the essential spirit of Easter, they are in reality not so far removed. For all of them are based upon the idea of "resurrection" and if "resurrection" is the spirit and the message of Easter, then the inmost essence of that spirit can be summed up in the one word "immortality." If man can find an answer to the old, old question that has troubled him through the ages, the question "Does death end all?" he can find it in the message of Easter. It is resurrection that he does not face a hopeless task. Even if he did not have the comfort of his religion to help him arrive at that belief, he finds it in the mere fact of living.

Each day, each year and each lifetime he sees the cycle repeated. The sun comes up in the morning and goes down into darkness at night. But he knows that it will come up again the next morning. Each 24 hours he sees the miracle of resurrection. New life is manifest in the animal and vegetable kingdoms with each recurring spring. It ripens in the heat of summertime and mellow into maturity in the autumn, only to die in the cold of winter. But he knows that life will begin again next year. Each 12 months he sees the miracle of resurrection. A baby is born, passes through childhood, grown into youth, reaches man's estate and then declines into old age. What if the darkness of death is only a matter of a few years away? He has seen the recurring miracle of resurrection every 24 hours and every 12 months. Why should not man, reasoning logically from this evidence of which he is aware every day of his life, believe that the cycle of a lifetime includes a resurrection just as does the daily cycle and the yearly cycle? He does so believe and from that belief comes his belief in the life everlasting, in immortality.

Perhaps it would be more accurate to say he chooses to believe. For few men, of any, have ever solved the riddle of life to their utter satisfaction. They constantly grope for the truth, seeking, always seeking, the answer to the unsolved problems of life. They have the never-ending longing in their hearts for everlasting life and they choose to believe, and take comfort from the belief, that they shall have it.

So whether he be primitive man or modern, civilized man, whether he be Christian or heathen, the essential spirit of Easter, the message of Easter is the same—it is a message of hope, a message of joy and a promise and a fulfillment in one.

(© by Western Newspaper Union.)

"SICK HEADACHE?"

It is not necessary to give in to headaches. It is just a bit old-fashioned! The modern woman who feels a headache coming on at any time, takes some tablets of Bayer Aspirin and heads it off.

Keep Bayer Aspirin handy, and keep your engagements. Headaches, systemic pains, come at inconvenient times. So do colds. You can end them before they're fairly started if you'll only remember this handy, harmless form of relief. Carry it in your purse and insure your comfort while shopping; your evening's pleasure at the theatre. Those little nagging aches that bring a case of "nerves" by day are ended in a jiffy. Pains that once kept people home are forgotten half an hour after taking Bayer Aspirin! You'll find these tablets always help. If



you get real aspirin, you'll get real relief. In every package of genuine Bayer tablets are proven directions which cover headaches, colds, sore throat, toothache, neuralgia, neuritis, sciatica, rheumatism, etc. The tablets stamped Bayer won't fail you, and can't harm you. They don't depress the heart. They don't upset the stomach. So take them whenever you need them, and take enough to end the pain.



A Rare Creature Maise—So you married Harold? Sally—Yes; after all, he was the only man who never understood me.

No Doubt About It "Is she upset about her broken engagement?" "Completely unmanned!"

CUTICURA SOAP
Used in Every Country in the World for More than Three Generations

FROZEN NORTH TO SUNNY SOUTH

When as a visitor you are asked to take sides in a family jar, it is time to quit calling there. Corned beef is something else that helps harden the arteries; cabbage may be the antidote.

Young BODIES DEMAND it!

The bodies of all growing children require certain essential vitamins. Important among these are Vitamins A and D, both of which are found abundantly in Scott's Emulsion of Cod Liver Oil. "A" helps youngsters—and their parents, as well—resist common colds-in-the-head. "D" aids children in growth and in the development of bones and teeth. In this emulsified form, cod liver oil is easy and pleasant for young and old to take. Scott & Bowne, Bloomfield, N. J., Sales Representative, Harold F. Ritchie & Co., Inc., New York.

Listen to the Scott of Bowne radio program, "Adventuring with Count von Luckner," on Sunday night at 9:30 p. m. (E. S. T.) over the Columbia Coast-to-Coast Network.

Scott's Emulsion OF NORWEGIAN COD LIVER OIL

Some flats seem roomy if all the First, the broken heart, then fast-growing anger and a damage suit for it.

WORLD'S LOWEST PRICED WALL PAPERS

IT'S FREE for ASKING—This Big Catalogue of Wall Paper Samples GET THIS BOOK! See and feel the actual samples—see the season's latest and most beautiful designs—wonderful, non-fading wall papers for all rooms—smart, washable papers—heavy embossed designs easy to clean and reclean. Priced to save you about one-half. Seeing is believing—let us show you. Write today for this money saving catalogue. Postage paid on all orders. In 1932 Robinson's are giving away \$500.00 in cash prizes to its customers.

ROBINSON'S Box 439 TITUSVILLE, PENN.



THE HOTEL MONTCLAIR
LEXINGTON AVE., 49th to 50th STS., NEW YORK

Directly Opposite the Waldorf-Astoria

800 ROOMS
EVERY ROOM WITH BATH
From \$3.00 per day
A RADIO IN EVERY ROOM
Short walking distance from Grand Central Terminal and B. & O. Motor Coach Station. Ten minutes by taxi from Pennsylvania Sta.
American Home Cooking Served in a Notable Restaurant
OSCAR W. RICHARDS, Manager