

### FIXING OF EASTER Presented a VEXING PROBLEM

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HAT Easter Sunday is what is known in ecclesiastical circles as a "movable feast," falling now upon one calendar date and again upon another, yet always at present upon a Sunday, is a fact casually accepted without doubt or inquiry practically the world

over. Something of mystery, however, attaches to this chronological paradox that now and then perplexes the curious and the inquisitorial, declares a writer in the Kansas City Star. The time of the Crucifixion is fixed

as coincident with the Jewish passover, or paschal feast, in the Jewish calendar month "Nisan," the month of the vernal equinox. The first obscurity in regard to the day arose from the Christian Gospels themselves. The Synoptic Gospels seemed to favor the day as the fifteenth of Nisan, that of St. John, the fourteenth. This established, by the preponderance of evidence, that the Crucifixion occurred on Friday, the day before the Jewish Sabbath, According to Matthew, the resurrection occurred "in the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week."

Ecclesiastical history preserves three distinct phases relating to the subsequent commemorative day which came to be known as Easter. Although the observance of Easter was at a very early period the practice of the Christian church, a serious difference as to the day for its observance soon arose between the Christians of Jewish and those of Gentile descent. With the Jewish Christians, who associated the death of Christ with the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb at the Passover, which ended "on the fourteenth day of the moon at evening," the Easter festival followed the paschal tradition, no matter what day of the lunar month it chanced to fall upon. The Gentile Christians, on the other hand, following the Synoptic Gospels, identified the first day of the week, Sunday, as the day of Resurrection, and kept the preceding Friday as the anniversary of the Crucifixion. This was the phase of the controversy that characterized the first centuries of Christianity.

The second stage in the Easter controversy centers around the Council of Nice, A. D. 325, where so many doctrinal points were given authenic sanction. This council was summoned by Emperor Constantine. The decision of the council was that Easter was to be kept on Sunday throughout the Christian world. It was at this point that astronomical science entered into the controversy. The correct date of the Easter festival was to be calculated at Alexandria, the then home of astronomical science, and the Roman pontiff was to communicate the date to the churches. This arrangement fixed the date of Easter Sunday as the Sunday "following the fourteenth day of the paschal moon," and



1 sing again Of love's redeeming grace That opened wide the heavenly gates To make for me a place; And may I ever faithful be Until I see His face. Tis Easter time!

I pray again To know His blessed will, And in my heart I hear egain His voice say, "Peace, be still"; For all the emptiness of life He comes from heav'n to fill. Tis Easter time!

I live again-The stone is rolled away From every tomb of doubt and grief-My night is turned to day; And in my heart Christ reigns as king This resurrection day!

Frank Chemer Charges in St. Louis Clobe-Demo

defined the paschal moon as "the moon whose fourteenth day followed the spring equinox." But this ruling did not settle all difficulties. The third phase of the controversy arose from the divergent calendars and cycles in vogue in the Eastern and Western church centers. St. Augustine tells us that in the year 387 the churches of Gaul kept Easter on March 21, those of Italy on April 18, while the Egyptian Christians celebrated April 25 as Easter day. The British and Irish churches for a long time adhered to an ancient system of computation, though they observed Sunday as the Easter day.

With the adoption of the Metonic cycle as a guide, the formula for fixing the Easter date was determined as "the first Sunday which occurs after the first full moon, or, more accurately, after the first fourteenth day of the moon, following the 21st of March, which is the vernal equinox." As a result, the earliest possible date of Easter is March 22, the latest April 25.

Observance of Lent

THE observance of Lent began within 150 years after Christ's time, but there was no specified number of days of fasting. It was extended to about 40 days by the Fourth century and in the Eighth or Ninth century it was fixed to commence with Ash Wednesday and end with Easter Sunday, Forty days are thus observed, since fasting is not observed on the intervening Sundays.

## **EASTER RABBITS** AND EGGS HAD PAGAN ORIGIN

ASTER, commemorating to Christian believers the resurrection of the Savior of Mankind, is almost universally observed as a time for joy and feasting. On Easter Sunday morning thousands of boys and girls will return home from Sunday school and church to hunt for Easter rabbits and

The origin of egg-rolling which most youngsters enjoy so much, says Pathfinder Magazine, is supposed to have begun centuries ago from the practice of farmers rolling eggs over their land to be sure of abundant yields at harvest time. This was because the egg was pagan emblem of the germinating of life of early spring. The children are told that the rabbits lay the eggs, and for that reason the latter are nearly always bidden away in nests or in flower beds in the yard and garden. The rabbit is another pagan symbol and has always been an emblem of



A Duet With Bunny Orchestra.

fertility. Modern people have lost knowledge of what these symbols mean, yet they have continued these old pagan customs,

As to the coloring of Easter eggs a religious encyclopedia says: "Because the use of eggs was forbidden during Lent, they were brought to the table on Easter day colored red to symbolize the Easter joy. This custom is found not only in the Latin, but also in the Oriental churches. Christians are supposed to have adopted the egg-rolling custom to symbolize the resurrection and the eggs were colored red in al-

lusion to the blood of redemption." Easter Monday is always a gala day for the kiddles, if they have any unbroken eggs left, especially is this so for those youngsters in Washington. On that day thousands of them go to the White House and Capitol lawns to roll their vari-colored eggs,

#### MEMORY'S PART IN THE RECORDS OF EVERYDAY LIFE

Unpleasant things may be pleasantly remembered and, in a sense, gloried in. Among these are hardships overcome, dangers survived and sacrifices that bear fruit. So it was held by Aeneas, who assured his comrades that in days to come they would rejoice to recall their trials and tribulations. One can readily enough understand this. It is only the treasons that it is unpleasant to recall. There can be nothing painful in the recollection of difficulties mastered. An old philosopher was convinced that the gods rejoiced to see a good man in difficulties, for that involved a conflict in which it is possible for a strong character to triumph. What is pleasant to remember is loyalty to truth and right. Browning makes this very clear in one of his poems. The thing that stings is the recollection of failure and cowardice, falseness and pettiness. Shakespeare's counsel "to thine own self be true" cannot be improved on. A man's future, the point from which he looks back on his journey through life, is determined by what he does and thinks every day. If he would have happy recollections, he can have them, but only by filling his life with things which he would rejoice and be proud to remember. Memory may be one of life's blessings or one of its greatest curses. To return to the gloomy phase of the subject, Lady Macbeth suffered from and because of things "rooted in the memory," which is a very solemn thought. If evil is rooted in the memory it is very difficult to get rid of .- Indianapolis News.

Not an Easy Mark Even if it ends in nothing more than target practice, an idea is some- ed as a great thinker is that you thing at which to shoot.-Toledo have to be dead too long.-Los An-Blade.

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SHREW'S GOOD WORK

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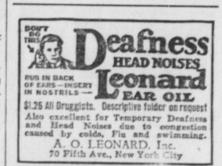
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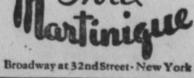
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# The Deeper Note in Easter Joy

ASTER lies beyond Calvary. Eliminate the cross, and the morning of faith and hope that came to a little group of men and women in Jerusalem has no meaning. Out of the experience of tragedy is developed the strength of confidence. Life grows in power through surviving catastrophe, declares S. J. Duncan Clark, in the Chicago Daily News. The true spirit of Easter is less a light-hearted happiness than a resolute joy. It sings, but not with carefree abandon. There is a deeper note—a note that in some way transmutes pain and fear into glad triumph without wholly losing the

memory of what lies behind or ignoring the road of struggle which lies before. For Easter did not mean the end of conflict for those to whom it brought its quickening message. It meant rather an assurance of strength for whatever battles remained to be fought, whatever tasks had yet to be performed. It meant that the life and faith which had met the test of Calvary were equal to any other test that might have to be faced. Difficulties and hardships must still be encountered. The agony of martyrdom awaited many. Easter conveyed to them no promise of escape

from these. Easter banished doubt, put an end to questioning about the outcome. That is the assurance men need today. They want to know that endurance has justifying purpose; that the struggle is not jatile; that there is possibility for the fruition of life's high and holy and immortal hopes. They want to know that when they hurl themselves against the battlements of some hideous wrong in human society, or wrestle with some dark evil in their own lives; when they choose the way of sacrifice rather than of selfish advantage, and set the high values of the spirit above material gain, they are putting a significance into life that is worth what it costs.

And the Easter story is the reassuring answer.