EASTER LILIES.

My Easter-lilies, pure and fair and sweet,
I know that hidden in your hearts of gold
Still lies the secret you each year repeat—
An oft-told story that can ne'er grow old—
Of birds that sing,
Of bells that ring,
As o'er the earth now steals the Spring.

I know not why it is, but every year
The story seems more wondrous strange and new;
I bend above my lily-buds to hear
Them whisper softly what I know is true;—
That Winter's past;
That Spring comes fast;
That life and joy are here at last!

The story that the Easter-lilies tell
Brings light and peace to the whole world to-day;
And hearts bowed down by grief and sadness swell
In songs of praise, and even doubters pray.
Men can be brave,
For, strong to save,
Our King has triumphed o'er the grave!

Ring out, O lily-bells! Gone is all gloom!
All nature sings at this glad Eastertide.
We see no more the shadow of the tomb;
To us the pearly gates swing open wide!
Past is the pain;
Death is in vain;
He who was dead now lives again!

"Hoke Day."

A custom that has existed for several centuries is still maintained in some towns on the Lower Rhine. On Easter Monday the Town Crier calls all the young people together, and to the highest bidder sells the privilege of dancing with a chosen girl, and her only, during the entire year that follows. The fees flow into the public poor-box. In many country districts of England the second day after Easter is known as Hoke Day, and is noticeable for a curious custom which existed in some villages until comparatively recently, and was certainly practiced as far back as the thirteenth century. This practice, known as hoking or hocking, consisted in lifting a person off the ground. It was usual for the men to lift the women on the Monday, and the women to return the compliment on the following day.

Sun Dance on Easter Morn.

There were formerly numerous rites and ceremonies connected with Easter eve, which was sometimes called Holy Saturday, but these have nearly all passed away. In some parts of Ireland, however, the finishing of Lent is still celebrated by a huge feast. At midnight the air is filled with the cry "Out with the Lent." Then there are feasting and merrymaking for a couple of hours, and the people retire to bed in order to rise early and see the sun dance on Easter morning, this being a common superstition among the Irish peasantry. This is a very ancient belief, a poet of the Elizabethan period writing:

"And, oh! she dances such a way
No sun upon an Easter Day
Is half so fine a sight!"

Eastertide.

Tell the joyful tidings:
Christ the Lord is risen.
Garden chamber, rock hewn,
Could not be His prison—
But a quiet dwelling
Where He, sleeping, lay
Waiting for the dawning
Of the Easter Day.

HISTORY OF EASTER.

Features of Festival and What it Brings to All.

Of all the festivals celebrated by the Christian Church none is more joyful than that commemorating the resurrection of the Son of Man, Easter! That means light out of darkness; civilization over barbarism. It is significant of the triumph of humanity, of the new world of brighter sunshine and happier lives, which began upon the message and meaning of the first Easter morning, sweeping away the old world—the world of Pagan gods, of darkness, of hopeless sin. Above all it means Christ; the resurrection and the life.

The history of the observance of Easter is in a measure the history of the Church.

Among the early Christians the resurrection was an idea for which men and women gave up their bodies, but the sanctity of special places or seasons was wholly alien to their lives and methods of thought. In the writings of the New Testament or of the Apostolic fathers there is to be found no trace of the celebration of Easter as a Christian festival. Early in the second century the observance of the period began among the Christians. The diversity of usage between the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians was gradually brought to an end by the Church of Rome, and the point was finally settled at the Council of Nice in 325.

Discrepancies in the time of observing Easter existed, however, until the eighth century. During the latter part of the fourth century the churches of Gaul kept Easter on March 21, those of Italy four weeks later, on April 18, while those of Egypt did not celebrate the festival until April 25. In the ancient church the celebration of Easter lasted eight days. After the eleventh century, however, it was limited to three days and afterward to two.

The origin of the Easter egg, one of the most delightful of the customs of the season, is of great antiquity. It is supposed to typify the bursting of the spring into life. A peculiar custom, for many years in vogue in certain rural districts of Scotland, was that of seeking the eggs of wild fowl on Eastern morning. Success in the search was a good omen.

Spring is bursting into life. There is an added blueness to the ether; a greener tint to the grass.

The cold earth is thawing under the hot glare of the midday sun. And this is another of the numberless meanings of the Eastertide. Easter is the Resurrection; and the Resurrection is life. And she who above all others is guilty of Easter bonnets is Dame Nature. The mountain freshets, far from the throngs of men, are breaking forth. The early flowers are raising their heads. The branches of the trees are taking on a tint of freshness and vigor.

The poetry of Easter: "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house there are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

From the mystery of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection the greatest painters and musicians of all times have drawn their loftiest inspirations. Blot out from art and music all pertaining to the divine significance of the Eastertide and the highest works of human genius will be lost to the world. Easter is music. But in the solemn chants of the earlier centuries there was something incongruous.

The strains which issued from within the gray cold walls of the monastery to greet the world, and to rouse it to thoughts of the Resurrection were at best ill-fitting. They loved well and worshiped well, no doubt those early zealots. But men behind gray walls cannot well know the real significance of the Eastertide. For it is a message of great joy.

See, the chains of death are broken
Earth below and Heaven above,
Joy in each amazing token
Of his rising, Lord of love.

A Pointed Question.

Dolly—I have a changeable silk dress to wear on Easter Sunday.

Polly—Why, ain't your other dresses changeable?

Ancient English Observances.

Some of the most curious English observances connected with Eastertide are those relating to the old tenures by which certain landed property is held throughout the country. Thus for many years the Manor of Hallaton, in Leicestershire, was distinguished by a singular and whimsical custom. A piece of land was bequeathed to the use of the rector for the time being, who in return was enjoined to provide "two hare pies, a quantity of ale, and two dozen of penny loaves, to be scrambled for on Easter Monday annually." The custom is still continued, but instead of hare the rector provides two large pies made of veal and bacon.

April girl with April eyes,
Gleaming with a shy surprise,
We assert
When you pass us laughing by,
Since you smile and since you sigh,
You're a flirt!

Lady herald of the spring,
Buds and bees and birds you bring,
Promise, too,
Of the shining summer hours;
April girl of sun and showers,
Hail to you!

OSTARA, GODDESS OF EASTER.

She Has Given Her Name to One of the Greatest Events in the Christian Year.

Ostara, the Goddess of Easter and of Spring, is one of the most attractive personages in German mythology, which is also the mythology of what we are in the habit of calling the Anglo-Saxon race.

This heathen goddess has given her name to one of the greatest events in the Christian year. The name is a form of the modern German "Ostern" and of the English "Easter." The early Church found it wise to adapt to Christian purposes many institutions and customs of a pagan nature which had become established in the affections of

THE HEATHEN GODDESS.

the people. So the observances which in heathen times honored the advent of Ostara, the Goddess of Spring, survive to a certain extent in the Christian celebration of the Resurrection.

Apart from the religious services, however, those observances with which the heathen Teutons honored Ostara still linger in their primitive form in many parts of Germany and possibly of England. In New York and other centres of Anglo-Saxon civilization they have assumed a more complex character.

The German rustic's feasting at Easter time, according to a German mythologist, represents the ancient sacrifice to the goddess. That sacrifice is offered by the urban American in the form of fine raiment and a bonnet, which his wife wears. When he has to pay the bill for these things he may console himself by remembering that he is helping to perpetuate an observance of primeval antiquity.

New clothes, however, are not appropriate for woman alone at Easter time. Man also at this season begins to notice that his winter garments are shabby and, if he can afford it, replaces them in honor of Ostara.

Ostara is represented in mythological art as a dazzling maiden, simply but beautifully clad. She is surrounded by winged babies, birds, flowers, rabbits and other things emblematical of Easter and the springtime. The sun, it is reported, used to take three jumps for joy at the appearance of Ostara on Easter Day.

Easter eggs are supposed to be laid by no common hens, but by Easter hens. The goddess Ostara was especially favorable to hens, which are usually to be seen with many eggs in her pictures. Easter eggs should be red, because red was the favorite color of the Thunder God, and the first thunder storm of Spring was sacred to Ostara.

The Easter fire which German peasants make is the funeral pyre of the Winter God. Into it they sometimes throw a stuffed figure containing snow shovels and sleds. That once represented the [illegible] giant of winter, but the Church substituted Judas Iscariot.

Curious Feature of Easter.

A curious feature in the services of the Roman Catholic Church on Easter Sunday is the paschal candle, a huge wax candle, richly painted and decorated with flowers. It has, moreover, five spikes inserted in it, which are filled with spice. They represent the wounds of Christ, and the candle itself when lighted signifies His resurrection. In the Greek and Armenian churches the paschal candle is divided into three branches, to represent the Trinity.

The Roman Easter.

In Rome Easter Day is observed with much pomp and ceremony. The day is ushered in by the firing of cannon from the Castle of St. Angelo, and in the evening the dome of St. Peter's is illuminated. After morning mass the Pope appears on the balcony in front of the Cathedral and bestows his benediction on the crowds assembled below.

Doctor Straightlace (reprovingly)—I always thought you were one of my most devout parishioners, and had no doubt but that you would give up all pleasure during Lent. Now I hear that you gave a euchre party last week.

Miss De Style—Goodness me, Doctor Do you call "giving" a euchre party pleasure! It is simply hard work, worry and vexation of spirit.

The Kidneys

are the seat or the starting point of many maladies, all of them serious, all more or less painful, and all of them tending, unless cured, to a fatal end. No organs of the body are more delicate or more sensitive than the kidneys. When symptoms of disease appear in them not a moment is to be lost if health is to be restored. The best way to treat the kidneys is through the blood, cleansing it from the poisonous matter which is usually at the bottom of kidney complaints. For this purpose there is no remedy equal to

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