

in the forenoon there is a small but significant procession of two from the college kitchen. The front man is a vergier of the Abl, gowned and carrying a baton of silver. After him walks the cook, who appears in white apron, jacket, and cap. The cook bears an object of more interest to schoolboys than the dignified baton of the vergier, it is a pancake. This small procession goes to the schoolroom door. "The Cook" is announced by the pancake-bearer. What a commotion in the school must follow the advent of this humble personage in white! He moves forward to the bar separating the so-called upper school from the lower one, and then flings the pancake out of his pan! Down among the upper schoolboys tumbles the cake, and what a scramble there is!

To pick it up unbroken—that soft mass of baked dough—will gain for any successful boy a handsome prize, while the lord of the pan will have two guineas. This memorable day, though, passes away. Pan and pancake go to their respective places. Merriment ceases. Shrove Tuesday lights fade out and die. The cities, the towns, the little hamlets, the dark, open country, are still. The wind goes wailing from chimney-top to chimney-top, from grove to grove. Perhaps clouds spread their sackcloth over the sky. The rains may drip, and nature, in sympathy with the day, weeps on Ash Wednesday morning. Lent has begun. The idea that dominates in Lent, is that of commemoration of the Saviour's isolation in the wilderness, and some measure of fasting has been practised in the Church. Back in the second century, we have evidence that there was fasting before Easter, but it was not so protracted as subsequently. For a long time fasting was voluntary. In the sixth century, a council decreed that those not practising the abstinence enjoined at stated times should be treated as transgressors. By degrees the screws were tightened. In the seventh century, a council scowled at any eater of flesh during Lent, and declared that offenders should go without it the rest of the year. In the eighth century, the neglecter of abstinence was in danger of excommunication. Still later, some unfortunate flesh-eaters were deprived of their teeth! The forceps, though, did not seem to do the work desired, and the screws were loosened again. Instead of bread, salt and water—the fast-day diet—any food save flesh, eggs, cheese and wine could be used. Then flesh alone was forbidden. The relaxing of the screws, though, was not acceptable to the Eastern Church, and there was a war of words about it between the East and the West. And as men who scorn to use the sword can yet handle effectively that sharp weapon of flesh between their teeth, the war doubtless was a lively one. The Eastern Church to-day exacts rigorous fasts. Even Sunday, which is a day of quiet joy, and while in Lent is not of it, is only conceded in part as a feast-day, if in Lent, to those of the Eastern communion. The Church of England, and its branches, refer to the individual conscience and judgment the question of fasting, and this is the attitude of Protestantism. If one go hungry, bearing in mind that sorrowful Master who, tempted in the wilderness, "afterward hungered," the motive should be respected. If one go hungry in the spirit and strive after that fuller

communion with Christ, satisfying the hunger, unto himself he is a law that should be respected also.—*Rev. Edward A. Rand.*

MYRRH BEARERS.

BY MARGARET J. PRESTON.

THREE women crept, at break of day,
Agroped along the shadowy way
Where Joseph's tomb and garden lay.
Each in her throbbing bosom bore
A burden of such fragrant store,
As never there had laid before:
Spices, the purest, richest, best,
That e'er the musky East possessed,
From Ind to Araby the Blest.

Had they, with sorrow riven hearts,
Searched Jerusalem's costliest marts
In quest of nards, whose pungent arts
Should the dead sepulchre imbue
With vital odours through and through.
'Twas all their love had leave to do!
Christ did not need their gifts, and yet
Did either Mary once regret
Her offering! Did Salome frot
Over those unused aloes! Nay!
They did not count as waste that day
What they had brought their Lord. The
way
Home seemed the path to heaven. They bear
Thenceforth about the robes they wear
The clinging perfume everywhere.

So ministering, as erst did these,
Go women forth by twos and threes
(Unminded of their morning ease),
Through tragic darkness, dark and dim,
Where'er they see the faintest rim
Of promise—all for sake of Him
Who rose from Joseph's tomb. They hold
It just such joy as those of old,
To tell the tale the Marys told.

Myrrh bearers still—at home, abroad,
What paths have holy women trod,
Burdened with votive gifts for God—
Rare gifts, whose chiefest worth was priced
By this one thought, that all sufficed—
Their spices have been bruised for Christ.

WHAT THE EASTER ANGELS SAW.

BY JOHN T. MERCHISTOUN.



THE Easter angels flew to the rock-hewn grave on the eve before the resurrection, they passed over a broad and godly land whose name has come down to us as the Land of Fair-Seeming. You will not find this name on your school maps, and indeed some who are skilled in the olden tongues have told me that the real name of the land was Panthanasia, and that it meant the Land of All Death. Whether that be so or not, I know that the angels paused for a moment in their flight to look at the scene below, and that no one since has seen what the angels saw on the first eve of Easter.

It was a fair land which the angels looked down upon. The light had not yet faded away, and the twilight fell softly on pleasant meadows and quiet rivers, and now and then a stray sunbeam sparkled in the water of the fountains as it broke murmuring and splashing on the rocks below. It was not often that such a hush came upon this land, for this was the dwelling-place of the pagan gods, and they were wont to hold high revel by day and by night in its beautiful groves and in its fair palaces. But to day there had been no revelling and no joy. Suddenly, on the afternoon of the day before, an awful fear had fallen upon the gods; and to-day though none of them knew why, they were waiting with pain and terror for some great evil which they felt was coming upon them.

If you could have looked with the angels into the meeting place of the false gods, you would have seen a strange sight. All the pagan gods were there of whom you read in your books at school, and some of whom the Bible speaks. I do not dare to tell you all that you would have seen, for the false gods were also wicked gods, and when the people who lived there wished for an excuse to do evil, they said to themselves: "The gods whom we worship do these things, and why should we be better than they?" But you would also have seen many beautiful faces; for some of the gods who dwelt in the Land of Fair-Seeming hid their evil behind masks that looked well outside, and you would never have guessed what was hidden behind them, if you had not looked closely into them, and seen, looking out through them, the eyes of the same old Serpent who tempted Eve in the garden. Jupiter, who often came to the earth to deceive men and women, was there; and so also were Mercury, who tempted men to the love of gain; and Bacchus, who made them destroy their souls and their bodies with wine; and Minerva, who tempted the wise to be proud of their knowledge; and Venus, who made great promises to all, and who led them down to the gates of hell. And among these were gods who did not hide their coarseness and wickedness so cleverly: Baal, to whom human sacrifices were offered up; and Moloch, who delighted in the blood of little children; and Bast, the horrible cat-headed goddess of Egypt; and crowds of satyrs, half-goat, half-man, who mocked and jeered at all that was good and pure. And besides all these there were thousands whom no man could name; monstrous forms that looked like demons, whose malicious faces would have frozen the blood in your veins, and whose eyes, if you had but once looked at them, would have made you feel as if you had been changed into stone. All these were gathered together in one place, and their faces were all turned in one direction.

As the two angels, who were soaring above, paused in their flight, the one touched the other and pointed to the false gods below, and said: "Brother, the time of the overthrow of this evil is nigh." He called him, Brother; for you remember that the angels of the Bible are always men, or youths, perhaps, because so many of God's messages to this wicked world must be borne by strong soldiers, rather than by meek and gentle women.

And the other angel looked down and said: "Yea, brother, before the dawn."

As the angels spoke these words, a great and bitter cry went up from the false gods below; for they heard what the angels said, and knew that the time of their fall was near. For although they knew before that Jesus, the Son of God, had been taken by wicked men, and slain, they did not know what all that meant, and they had not looked for his resurrection. But now, when they saw the two angels speeding their way eastward, they felt that, in some way which they could not understand, the secret of their fate was hidden in the grave which the Roman soldiers were guarding at Jerusalem. And a great, shuddering silence fell upon them, as the darkness came down and the angels melted away into the distance.

But the angels did not slacken in their course, until, looking away before them, they could see three crosses standing out against the sky. Nor did they wait then, nor did they bend their course thither; but they flew, instead, to a rock-tomb, which was closed by a great stone, and before which the soldiers were keeping guard. But the soldiers were asleep, and did not waken; and the angels hovered unseen over the great stone.

"We are in time," said one; and the other smiled and said gently:

"God's messengers are always in time."

And just then a great wonder happened, for the Lord rose unseen of any mortal eye; but the angels bowed down before him, and the angel who had last spoken suddenly flew down and rolled away the stone; and all the earth round about was shaken as by an earthquake. And when the soldiers, startled out of their sleep by a sudden glare of light, looked up, they saw a terrible angel sitting on the stone, and straightway they became as dead men. But the eyes of the angel who sat upon the stone, and of the other who stood by his side, glowed like coals of fire, for they were looking far, far into the night, into the Land of Fair-Seeming. And they saw a great change pass over that land, but a greater change pass over the gods who dwelt in it. For all the beautiful masks fell away; and the face of each was seen in its ugliness, and the gods cursed each other, and fled howling away to the rocks and the caves. And no man, since that day, has seen the Land of Fair-Seeming, nor has looked in upon the revels of the false gods, with all their wickedness and uncleanness and cruelty. So it happens that a Christian child, in these European and American lands of ours, can go into the fields and woods without fear of meeting these cruel gods and the hateful satyre.

Years after, when two of our Lord's servants were carrying his message to a little town in Asia Minor, the people thought that two of their gods had come down to earth again, and they came before them with garlands and offerings. You can read how they found out their mistake in the Acts of the Apostles.

In Germany there is a lonely hill called the Venus Mountain, and the country people will tell you that heathen gods still dwell in it, and that sometimes they lure some careless huntsman into the mountain, to his infinite shame and ruin. This is only a peasant superstition, but it has a terrible truth for Christian folk who fall back into the wickedness which belongs to heathendom.

What I have told you is a parable; partly true, and partly a fable. But the truth which you may learn from it, and which every Easter-day should remind you of, is that it is through the resurrection of Jesus that we, in Europe and America at least, have been delivered from the fear of the false gods. So, besides being a reminder of the resurrection, which we expect for ourselves and for our loved ones, Easter should also be a memorial of the resurrection of the world itself from darkness into light.

GRACE seeing her aunt write a message on a postal-card, called for an envelope, saying, "I'm going to write a letter, too, Aunt Jane; but I don't want it to go bareheaded like yours."