

# Easter Rites and Customs

### There are Many Extremely Strange and Very Extraordinary Methods of Observing This Universal Festival.

LIVING in the cold of Northern Europe, the Teutonic tribes, ancestors of the modern Germanic, Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon peoples, had a lively appreciation of the value of sunshine and of the milder seasons of the year.

In the court in front of the church is the market place of the Holy City, and here the worshippers of the Easter ceremonies, on the same spot on which the multitude of old gathered during the trial and crucifixion, and marvelled at the open tomb on the first Easter morning. All the narrow streets about the church are crowded with peasants in gayly colored oriental clothing, holding candles and roses of olive wood.

The ceremonies of the few days preceding Easter Sunday are greater and more solemn than the Sabbath offices. They begin with the institution of the washing of the feet of 12 his disciples by the Patriarch, the head of the church in Palestine and Arabia. This occurring after the mass on Holy Thursday symbolizes the washing of the feet of his disciples by Christ, taking place out in the open space in front of the church. The ceremony is interesting in detail, the robes worn are of the greatest splendor, and basins of gold contain the holy water. When the 12th bishop is approached by the Patriarch, he kneels, and the Patriarch, who is impersonating Peter, who murmured at the idea of this being done for him by his disciples, says: "Thou art Peter, and upon thee I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against thee."

The Russian Easter, with its festival joy, concludes with the burning of the nut of the poorest peasant, simply because they are the only nut which grows in the soil of that land of the far north. Easter in Europe corresponds with the Easter of the nations of the west. A movement is on foot to provide an entirely new calendar, which the Russian mathematicians and astronomers guarantee will be far more accurate than the Gregorian, and which will be based on the sun and not on the moon. Catholic sources, they will have none of that. But something must be done; otherwise, say the progressive scientists who favor the change, Easter will eventually fall in July, Christmas in the spring and so on. The conservative, especially among the ecclesiastics, oppose it.

Easter is the grand festival of the Russian year; therefore, for weeks beforehand everyone is busy with the preparations which people in America make before Christmas. A gift, so it only a gaily colored egg, is almost obligatory, too all gifts are known as "eggs." The grand feature of the day is of course, the church service. In fact, the church festivals are also the national festivals of Russia (the emperor is not as foreigners imagine, the head of the church), and almost every "function," in court or private, begins with a religious service of some sort. About the only exceptions to this rule are balls and theatrical spectacles. The matins service begins at midnight, and is followed by the usual service in the middle of the morning is omitted and most people are in their beds, recovering from the open-eyed night. Naturally, the most magnificent celebration is at the Cathedral of the Winter Palace, in St. Petersburg, where the presence of the emperor, empress and all the members of the imperial family adds to the magnificence of the service as a spectacle.

Unique in character and remote from the magnificence of religious demonstration is the ancient and picturesque custom which still prevails in the villages of the Tyrol mountains. In their national costume of gay-colored garments and broad-brimmed hats, trimmed with fresh, living flowers, on this occasion the Swiss peasants begin an early hour on Easter morning to go about the lanes and highways and thru the neighboring town, singing the Easter anthems, to the accompaniment of their guitars. They linger outside the houses of the people in a sort of serenade and the inmates come out to the doors and join them in singing the choruses. They are welcomed and treated with hospitality everywhere, and continue on their good journeying until far into the night, when they are accompanied by torch-bearers.

The liturgical, whose symmetrical beauty and exquisite fragrance never become tiresome, needless to say, is foreign to our ears. The tourist who knows his business and tries to get the enterprising as the Germans in casting about for market for Japanese products have discovered that during the Christian holiday of Easter thousands of painted eggs, toy rabbits, ducks, etc., are sold in the markets to children and young people, and this has led them to turn one of their ancient arts to good advantage.

The art is one among a number of singular crafts, known and practised only by the Chinese and Japs, and consists in removing the skins from ducksling only a few days old, curing them in a peculiar manner known only to themselves, and stuffing them in a way to put to shame the best modern taxidermist. These stuffed ducksling have been used by the Chinese for centuries in the celebration of one of their pagan festivals, which occurs in the spring, but in addition to this they are now preparing the ducksling for the American and European markets, shipping them from the Japanese ports by the thousand in time to reach the markets of Christendom for Easter week.

Of the many ceremonies of Easter week, the one which most excites the interest of the stranger in Mexico is that of the "Sabado de Gloria"—the Saturday before Easter. On that day the church of the Holy Sepulchre is held up to public execration by being burned in the shape of effigies by the usual mistletoe monsters, and are hawked about the streets on the days preceding the "Saturday of Gloria." The artificers give free play to their fancy, and some of the results are, to say the least, astonishing. Most of the figures have horns, and are dressed in the most grotesque and other such appendages.

On Saturday morning the largest Judas are suspended on poles stretched across the streets, and are burned amidst the wild excitement of the crowds, which gather to witness and to witness the ceremony. There are also hosts of small Judas for the children, which are burned with less formality, and consequently the day is looked forward to by them with all the joyous anticipation which the Canadian child bestows on his first of July.

No Buildings Allowed. A gentleman bought, some days ago, for a very high price, a building on the corner of King and Spadina streets, and brought him to his place in Mecklenburg.

To his great astonishment he was informed by the police that the law in Mecklenburg forbids the erection of buildings on the ground of their danger, and the gentleman in question is being obliged to return the lot to his former owner, of course with a large pecuniary loss.

# Crowds Coming to Hear "Parsifal" Sung.

### The Story as Wagner Presented It and as it Will Be Told at the Princess To-morrow Night—Given in Summarized Form.

"Parsifal" in English will be presented at the Princess Theatre for three evenings, commencing Monday, April 24, with a matinee on Wednesday.

"Parsifal" is the greatest of Mr. Savage's many undertakings, and has the greatest part of his time and thought for many months. When he announced in May of 1902 that he would present it not only in English, but in English, Mr. Rothwell arrived in this country patch. The lighting effects, of supreme importance, were taken up, and he has the greatest part of his time and thought for many months. When he announced in May of 1902 that he would present it not only in English, but in English, Mr. Rothwell arrived in this country patch.

The children are up and dressed with the dawn, when the search begins, the entire family joining in the fun. Each egg discovered has a name attached as testimony to the good behavior of "Frieda," "Paul" and "Maya," and not one is left out.

Japan is a great country for ducks. The Japs make use of few domestic animals. They consume no beef, butter, milk, cheese, mutton, veal or venison, and pigs and ducks represent their principal and only animal food. Having a damp and rainy climate, and covered everywhere with ponds, canals, streams, lakes and flooded rice fields, Japan is a veritable paradise for waterfowl of all kinds, tame as well as wild, and spring after spring ducks are hatched, not by the thousand, but by the million.

The healing of Amfortas depends upon a touch of the lance which gave the wound, and this lance can only be found by one able to withstand the sensual temptation with which King Suro has surrounded himself in his magical palace.

An oracle had proclaimed that a "guinea fowl," who should become enlightened by pity alone, would accomplish the work of salvation. It is hoped that Parsifal will ask and learn the meaning of the spectacle. He understands nothing, needs to put the question, and is driven out of the castle with contempt. Subsequently, he enters the garden surrounding King Suro's palace. He routs a number of knights sent against him, and the magician summons lovely women, dressed as flowers, to win him by their blandishments.

He rented the Murray Hill Theatre for a week, set up his scenery, and held full rehearsals daily. "Parsifal" was produced without a hitch Oct. 17, after more than a year of planning and three months of rehearsal.

To insure every advantage while traveling, a mechanical stage was goes ahead and studies every stage. When the company arrives, the local stage force is thoroughly schooled in handling the panorama and the transformation.

For an understanding of "Parsifal," its legends and its significance, the story as Wagner presents it, is told in summarized form.

The Holy Grail, which figures so extensively in the drama, is the cup from which our Lord drank at the Last Supper. It was given into the keeping of Titirel, who built a sanctuary for it in Monsalvat, in the Pyrenees of Spain, where it is guarded by a body of knights, who are pure and sinless. From the Grail, its defenders, derive all the sustenance, physical as well as spiritual, which they need. The lance with which Langinus, the Roman soldier, pierced the side of the Saviour as He hung on the cross, was also one of the sacred relics in the keeping of the knights.

The Knights of the Holy Grail are required to preserve a certain state of purity, and in the benefits which accrue from the adoration of the relic. Their King, Amfortas, has been wounded in an encounter with the magician, Klingsor, and he has been unable to enter the castle on the mountain, but now dwells in a castle at the foot of the mountainous region, where, by practice of the black art, he seeks to ruin the Knights of the Grail. He sends the sacred Lance, with which he wounded Amfortas. Parsifal has been reared by his mother in ignorance of the world, his father having died before he was born. His mother had hoped to keep him for herself, but knowledge of his knightly nature, and the sight of a cavalier or knight in their brilliant trappings, and the stirring of the spirit in the youth, and taking leave of his heartbroken mother, he sets out in quest of adventure.

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A SUMMER SCHOOL FOR NATURE STUDY. July 5th to July 29th, 1905.

The Macdonald Institute, at the Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, will provide a Summer School for teachers during the coming vacation. The term will extend from July 23rd to July 29th, inclusive, and the work will consist of practical Nature Study, suitable for the public schools. The hours will be from 9 a. m. to 12 m., and from 2 p. m. to 5 p. m., not including Saturdays.

Certificates of the Macdonald Institute will be issued to teachers who complete this course to the satisfaction of the staff, as determined by attendance, field notes, collections and general progress.

The classes will be under the direction of the Professor of Nature Study, assisted by teachers of special fitness in the various subjects of the course. The Macdonald Institute is situated on the grounds of the Ontario Agricultural College, about one mile from the City of Guelph. Good accommodation can be had in the city at from \$3.00 to \$4.00 per week, and the Institute is reached by electric cars running at intervals of twenty minutes.

Write for circular as to the above.

G. C. CREELMAN, President, O. A. C. S. B. McCREADY, Prof. of Nature Study. G. E. L. P. H. G. E. L. P. H.

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Parfais head, Parsifal seizes it, makes the sign of the cross, and the magical gardens and palace become a desert waste.

Parsifal, with the sacred lance in his keeping, starts out on a long pilgrimage. He has already passed the border of enlightenment, and after a life of five years of asceticism, he returns to the Castle of the Grail.

"Titurel is now dead, and Amfortas, hearing his son, The long-suffering hero, has suffered such excruciating agonies thru the uncovering of the Grail that he has long since ceased any ceremony. Parsifal touches his wound with the spear, then, following a part of the oracle hitherto referred to, it made King of the Grail.

Wagner's story is taken from a medieval legend, the "Quest of the Holy Grail," with which he first became acquainted in writing his "Lohengrin." The beginning of the legend is lost in antiquity. Even in its literary form it is difficult to trace its root to the twelfth century. The detail, as applied to "Parsifal," is taken mostly from an epic poem called "Parsifal," by Wolfram von Eschenbach. Von Eschenbach was Germany's greatest medieval poet, and his poem, which contained 26,000 lines, was written about the year 1200.

The drama, it will be seen, is symbolic of the agonies wrought by the conscience of a sinner, and of his redemption by the pity of a pure one who, thru compassion, resisted, understands such suffering. In regard to its entire significance, there always basis Buddhist drama.

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