

Easter.

'Questioning with one another what the rising from the dead should mean.'

(Anna D. Walker.)

It is to us the token
That Death hath lost its power.
That Christ its spell has broken,
Oh, hail the glorious hour!

It shows to us the glory
Around the op'ning tomb,
It tells to us the story,
Dispels the night of gloom.

Our eyes behold the Saviour
Arising in His might,
To bring to us His favor,
Oh, sacred Easter bright!

It means the open portal,
The riven, empty grave,
The blessed life immortal,
The Saviour's power to save.

It is a revelation
That nothing can exceed,
It means to us salvation,
The Lord has risen indeed!

Oh, spread the tidings glorious,
Oh, spread them far and wide;
Oh, sing, ye saints, victorious,
All hail the Easter Tide.

Easter Customs.

The custom of sending presents of eggs at Easter is a very primitive one. From the earliest ages eggs have been regarded not only as the type, but as the origin of life. It was, therefore, natural that at this season of the year, when Christ's resurrection life was commemorated, our fathers should have embodied that idea in the sending of presents of eggs to their friends. In the book that records the household expenses of Edward I. one of the items of expenditure for Easter is '450 eggs stained and covered with gold leaf.' One of the popes sent Henry VIII. an egg in a silver case. As early as 1589 eggs were in Russia the most treasured of exchanges at Easter. People went about with their pockets filled with colored eggs, and exchanged them with their friends. The Druids regarded the eggs as the symbol of the sun, and believed it hatched from itself the earth and all other planets. The Chinese, the Burmese, the Syrians, and some other ancient and modern nations believed that all things sprang mysteriously from an egg. They do not seem to have troubled themselves much with the question, 'Where did the egg come from?' To them this was a small matter, but the idea that the egg was the origin of life probably accounted for the custom of making presents of eggs at Easter—the time of the year at which new life begins, and at which people are more particularly reminded that the life they now possess need never perish. The legend about the bird hatching her eggs in a tree overlooking the sepulchre in which Christ was buried, and singing hopeless dirges until she saw the angels come and roll away the stone and saw Christ come forth, is well known; but it is not so well known that the very early Christians neither observed Easter nor Christmas, nor any other festival, but only endeavored to promote a life of piety and blamelessness.

In former times, and even yet in some places on the continent, passion plays, in which all the events of Christ's trial, death and resurrection were acted before immense audiences, were carried out, and must have done much, at a time when all books were scarce and learning was rare, to keep before the minds of the people the principal circumstances in the gospel story with regard to the life of Christ. The effect of Easter upon art is well known. Since the days of Giotto and Rembrandt the resurrection of Christ has been a subject on which the most eminent painters have bestowed their attention, and which they endeavored to interpret. To ourselves Easter is not less interesting because it commemorates an event in the life of Jesus Christ, which is one of the best attested miracles in his history, and which confirms us in the belief of his divine character and mission. Thus Easter has not only remarkable historical association but a sociable as well as religious influence on the community which will prevent it from soon dying, and which will tend to perpetuate its observance in some form or other among us, and cause it to become increasingly popular as the years go by, and as Christianity becomes more and more the religion of the human race.—Selected.

The Corn of Wheat.

Let me say to you that the whole of the Christian religion is based on the death of Christ and his resurrection following. You have often read the biography of some one that has been distinguished in our days. While you read that book you will notice that there is an account in that man's life of what he has done; what he did to make himself famous. It traces it to the hour when he sinks and dies and the curtain falls. He is one of the past. Now, our Lord Jesus Christ's history is wholly different. It is not so much what he did in this life as what he did in his death. I take this and ask you to take notice carefully of the language of St. John. It is the language of inspiration, the language of our Lord, 'Verily, verily'; the double verily implies a very solemn statement, 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone.' If you take the corn of wheat and put it away in a dry cellar, our Lord says, it abideth alone. Our Lord says that, in order to make that corn of wheat produce results, it must be buried in the earth and die. Now the corn of wheat of which we speak was himself, Jesus Christ. He was placed upon the cross and he died, but was not left alone, for that death has caused the harvest of the world. When the Lord Jesus Christ said, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' the answer comes to-day that over four hundred millions of people bow the knee to him and call him Christ the Lord. The death of that corn of wheat was that which resulted in the harvest of the great company of the redeemed.—Bishop Baldwin.

Life From the Dead.

(The Rev. C. A. S. Dwight.)

The lesson of Easter is the declaration of victorious life. It is a time for paeans and jubulations—a season of fair blossoms, splendid music, bright faces, when the funereal and the melancholy have little

place, and glad praise seems the one thing fitting.

Physical life is then triumphing over a natural death. Nature is waking up from one more winter's sleep. City streets, indeed, afford little evidence of incipient bloom; but how blessed to keep Easter in the country, where Nature, with its reviving glories seems but a 'schoolmaster' to bring the soul to the risen Christ!

Many even of the habitual residents of the cities can recall at Easter-tide happy boyhood or girlhood rambles over mountain crags, adown shady dells, or over the fertile meadows—then, after the icy death of winter, looking with keen eye for this or that floral evidence of returning spring, mayhap an arbutus-spray, or a pretty fern or just a bud or two. How simply natural and delightfully free it all was! Then you were young, and the world seemed fair, and you believed in everybody, (for none had yet deceived you,) and 'death' had really no place in your vocabulary, for all things seemed instinct with life, and there was a spring to your step and a laugh in your eye, as after a day in forest or on hill-top you bounded back through the gloaming to find the dear old mother on the home-porch waiting to receive with sweet kiss your gleeful greeting.

You never thought of 'resurrection' then—you had no need of one; sorrow had not pierced you with its poignant dart, disease had not weakened you with incessant attacks, disappointment had not chilled the genial currents of your soul; death, though it hath passed upon all men had not yet consciously passed upon you.

But now? Has there not come to you with the passage of the years a certain hungry yearning for a thing called 'life,' which is the eternal opposite of all this death of hope and of feeling which you have experienced; and if so, how can you win it? Is this life-principle marketable, buyable? Is its value quoted on 'Change'? No! Is it obtainable? Yes! If so, where, how? It is Christ's gift—it comes of the life of Jesus in the soul.

Look not, then, wistfully or hopelessly backward—the old experience returns not. Look expectantly onward and upward and seek that life from the dead—'out of' or 'away from' the dead—which is the free gift of him who hath in his Gospel brought to light, and to human use and enjoyment, life and immortality.

Such is the real Easter lesson. Its logic is as blessed as it is simple: 'Christ rose—we, too, shall rise.' Christ is victor, and we are already conquerors through him. Wealth of Easter decoration and beauty of feast-day music emphasize this thought. If they do not, they are spiritless and all vain. But true hearts and humble read in the flowers and hearken in the chorals to the announcement of the glad spiritual message of life from the dead.

Mail Bag.

John Dougall & Son:

Dear Sirs,—We did not get our last week's 'Northern Messenger,' and we would like if you would kindly send us one, if you have one left, as we are keeping the story of 'Daph; or Saved in a Basket,' for our little boy's scrap-book, so we would not like to miss a paper. I took the paper when I was a little girl, but the story seems new to me, although I read it in the 'Messenger' then. We all think of your paper as if some of the family were missing; we were really lonesome for it.

Wishing you success in your work of good, we remain, yours truly,

MR. AND MRS. WM. CORNEIL,

Havelock, Ont.

P.S.—The paper missing is dated Mar. 18.

BOYS AND GIRLS.

BOYS AND GIRLS ALL OVER CANADA can make money easily. See money-making prize winning Owl and Monkey competition picture elsewhere in this paper.