

A Most Unique and Impressive Service in Greek Church in Cairo

It was shortly after 11 o'clock one Easter eve that a small party of us took our way through the narrow overhanging streets of old Cairo in search of the little church where the Greeks of that city worship.

At last, through various winding ways, we entered into an open court, on one side of which stood the church. The courtyard was bare of ornamentation, save one great tree with out-reaching branches. On three sides dead blank walls enclosed the court and gave it a barren and desolate appearance.

Two reading desks had been erected near the church door, and these were set with many lighted tapers. In all probability the number and arrangement of these had, to the initiate, some special significance, but to us they spoke no language whatever.

We luckily were among the earliest arrivals, and thus had an opportunity to walk about the church, looking at the pictures and scan the rapidly arriving audience. It was not long until every foot of standing room was occupied, and we were obliged to take refuge in the deacon's pew.

The church is in the old style of Byzantine architecture and decorations, with a high gallery on the two sides, the altar at the farther end, and the four pews for the deacons near the door. There is a row of benches set against the wall on either side. Here those who are not strong enough to stand during the service may sit. This custom is said to be the origin of that old saying, "The weak may go to the wall."

On ordinary occasions the women sit in the galleries and the men occupy the body of the church, but this evening the question of sex was utterly ignored; men were in the gynaeceum and women occupied a space wherever they could plant their feet.

Across the church at the farther end extends a screen or iconostasis and the holy gates. One of these leads into the sacristy or dressing room, one into the credence table room, where the bread and wine for the sacrament are prepared for use, while the third opens into the altar. The screen is decorated in a most ornate manner with a mass of intricate and beautiful niches, statues, pinnacles and pictures.

A goodly portion of the early service was conducted from the farther depths of the altar, behind the iconostasis. There was nothing in sight but the magnificent screen, but we could hear voices that seemed to come from the recesses of a cavern, alternately chanting and intoning in strange, unfamiliar accents.

During this part of the service the church was dimly lighted and the curiously carved figures moving through the gloom in the body of the church seemed singularly weird and uncanny. At a given moment the lights were turned up and each person in the audience lighted his candle. The great dome reflected the myriads of lights until our eyes were almost blinded by the sudden glare.

At this point the golden door in the centre of the iconostasis opened, and there came forth from the Holy of Holies into which no layman may enter—a radiant of semi-barbaric splendor. A herald wearing the dress of the native Greek, with staff in hand, cleared the way. His short white kilt stood out like the gauzy skirts of a ballet dancer; he wore coarse white stockings, carried a long staff, and a richly embroidered zoukave jacket.

Boys carrying incense burners preceded the patriarch, who was followed by bishops, priests, acolytes and other ecclesiastical dignitaries, all in full canonicals, each carrying a lighted candle. The vestments of the venerable patriarch were gorgeous with gold embroidery.

AN EASTER SURPRISE

There is a little town called Feldkirch on the frontier of Austria, on the Ill, an affluent of the Rhine. It numbers under three thousand inhabitants. In the year 1799, when the armies of Napoleon were sweeping over the continent, Messena, one of his generals, suddenly appeared on the heights above the town at the head of eighteen thousand men.

It was Easter Day, and the morning sun as it rose glittered upon the weapons of the French, at the top of the range of hills west of Feldkirch. The town council hastily assembled to consider what was to be done. Defence was impossible.

Should a deputation be sent to Messena with the keys of the town, with an entreaty that he should treat the place with mercy? Then the old dean of the church stood up. "It is Easter Day," he said. "We have been reckoning on our own strength, and that has failed. It is the day of the Lord's resurrection. Let us ring the bells and have services as usual, and leave the matter in God's hands. We know only our weakness and not the power of God."

His word prevailed. Then all at once, from the three or four church towers in Feldkirch, the bells began to clang joyous peals in honor of the resurrection, and the streets were filled with worshippers hastening to the house of God. The French heard with surprise and alarm the sudden clamor of the joy-bells, and concluding that the Austrian army had arrived in the night to relieve the place, Messena suddenly broke up his camp, and before the bells had ceased ringing not a Frenchman was to be seen.

ATTRACTIVE EASTER BRIDE

Will not sit up until "any hour of the night" the evening before the wedding. She will go to bed in really good time, so that she may be as rested as possible in the morning.

Will not be in the hurry and rush of the preparations the day before neglect to eat proper meals. She knows that the result of such foolishness is usually a headache.

Will not persuade herself beforehand that she is going to look her plainest. She realizes there is something in one's mental attitude, and to look one's best self-confidence is needed.

Will not arrange her veil so that it drags the hair, but will wear her hair over a small crepe, and thus avoid the flattened coiffure that afflicts so many brides.

and precious stones. Some of the dignitaries carried palm branches in their hands. Two who were near the end of the procession carried, one an icon—sacred pictures—the frame richly set with jewels, which he turned to the audience for its veneration as he walked; his companion held in his hands a large Bible set with precious stones.

Forth from the "royal door" they came through the centre of the church, and, with slow and measured step, made their way into the courtyard, a magnificent spectacle. The dignitaries gathered about the reading desk, while the patriarch recited the liturgy under the starlit sky.

The courtyard was packed and the roofs of the adjoining building covered with spectators. Others found a resting place among the branches of the trees, and, as each one held a lighted candle, the old sycamore seemed to bear a crop of curious fruit.

When the service in the court was finished, the procession returned in the same manner as it had come out. The patriarch stopped at a line of gold-encrusted candle half way down the aisle, and there were more prayers and chanting.

From our vantage we looked into a sea of upturned Oriental faces, tawny with the warmth of a tropical sky. Each face mirrored the same immobile, impressive expression which the people of the East consider the proper look with which to meet all the changes of life. They pride themselves upon accepting whatever good or evil comes to them with the same dignified solemnity.

It was a noisy crowd, there were men in turbans, others in turbans, and still others in the orthodox headgear of Europe. The Greek women are not obliged to go veiled, still there was a goodly number wearing the yashmak, which showed either that they were men in turbans, or that they were out of curiosity or that the Greek women had learned to use the face veil as a protection.

The service was read in Greek and Arabic at the same time, but it might as well have been in Choctaw for all that our ears heard of it. For the audience was never still a moment, and there was from the outside a constant fusillade of firecrackers and guns which nearly deafened one.

At the conclusion of the ceremonies great baskets of Easter eggs were brought in and held up for the patriarch to bless, and then one was given to each person in the audience. The eggs were colored and decorated much the same as we do ours; mine had a chocolate ground with a pair of plump white angels stretched upon it.

When the eggs had been distributed the entire congregation poured forth into the streets, each one offering his friend and neighbor an Easter salutation, and crying aloud in glad accents: "Christ is risen! Christ is risen! It is considered a sign of good luck to be the first to say it.

The Greeks are superstitious about their tapers; they guard their lights with the greatest care as they thread their way through the dark streets, for they believe that if they succeed in reaching their homes before the candle is burned or the light goes out they will be sure to have a lucky year.

The Greeks make Easter a great day of celebration; the houses are fragrant with the odor of pies and baked meats; the table is spread, and everybody calls upon everybody else, all wearing their best or new clothes. One hears congratulations on every side. As two men meet they kiss each other, first on one cheek, and then on the other, and repeat the words "Christ is risen." Lambs and goats are killed, and the byways rock with blood as in the ancient day of sacrifices.

The Russian seasons are not unlike the Canadian, for at Easter the long, cold winter months have passed or are about to pass, and for weeks previously the hearts of all have been turning with eager anticipation to the coming of this festive season. Should it happen that the feast occurs in the midst of frost and snow, it matters not. Spring will soon be there, and the magic transformation scene that we shall soon witness will occur there, too, with the same marvellous rapidity. The green blades of the grass, the early spring flowers, will soon appear, and nature generally will speak of a joyful resurrection.

After the long fast which in Russia marks the Lenten season, the pleasures of the coming Easter can be appreciated. No other country keeps a fast more severely. Not only is all meat forbidden, but even milk, eggs, cheese, butter and fish. Caviare, dried fish and shell-fish are allowed on Saturdays and Sundays the rule is not so strictly enforced.

Palm Sunday, or Willow Sunday, as it is known in Russia, is the only real break in the fast until Easter. Bundles of willows and palm branches are carried by the peasants, and at the church doors the peasant girls stand with baskets of artificial flowers for sale—their own production, and in the making of which they show considerable skill.

Every one must carry into the church some plant or flower to be blessed by the priest.

Next follow six days of rigorous fasting. No visits to friends, no amusements of any description may take place. The duty of confession and preparation for sharing in the solemn rites of Holy Communion occupy the attention to the exclusion of all other things.

Easter eggs of all kinds play an important part during the festive week. Every one gives and receives presents, and much time and thought are expended in the preparation and coloring of the eggs without which no Easter would be complete. The eggs are of all kinds, from a sal egg, hard boiled and colored slightly, to wooden ones made for sale by the peasants.

One of the principal sights during the festive week is the shops filled with eggs, not only the confectioners' with their chocolate and sugar wares, but the silversmiths' with little egg-shaped



THE RESURRECTION

This striking Easter picture is from the beautiful old painting by Ploekhorst.

The first day of the week, Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeing the stone taken away from the sepulchre, and as she went she stopped down and looked in the sepulchre, and seeing two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain. And they said unto her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" She saith unto them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." And when she had thus said, she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing.—From the twentieth chapter of St. John.

Easter in Russia

EASTER HYMN.

O Risen Lord, Thou once didst tread Rejection's path of scorn; But now the crown upon Thy head Thy triumph is adorning; To Thee our grateful hearts we raise, To Thee we give sincerest praise On this glad Easter morning.

To Thee our risen Lord and King, We come Thy grace declaring; We join with all the ransomed throng Who in Thy joys are sharing; For clad in resurrection light Thou dost reveal Thy matchless might, For all creation caring.

To Thee our risen Lord and King, We do ourselves surrender; To Thee our grateful love we bring; To Thee all praise we render, Thou dost possess the right to reign In everlasting splendor.

O Risen Lord, our souls to save From endless condemnation, The thorns, the scourge, the cross, the grave, Thou didst in lowly meekness know, The heirs of Thy salvation.

O Risen Lord, supremely blest, Thou art our hearts constraining; In Thee we have that glorious rest For all Thine own remaining; By Thee redeemed from death and sin We shall at length the victory win And live where Thou art reigning. —T. Watson.

cases enclosing rings and other valuable articles. Every one considers it "de rigueur" to appear in new clothes, and the millinery stores and shops are besieged by eager throngs. Scarcely a single person can be met who is not laden with parcels of various descriptions. In the house all is confusion on the Saturday preceding Easter Day. Every thing must be turned out and every corner well cleaned, the kitchen floors made as white as possible, and the tables spread.

On Friday takes place the peculiar service known as 'The Burial of Christ.' During vespers the 'tomb of Christ' is brought from the holy place and set in the centre of the church. At night a solemn service is held amidst the tolling of bells and the soft, low chanting, the body representing the body is placed in its last resting-place and left in darkness.

Easter Sunday bears many beautiful names commemorative of the event celebrated as 'Splendor Bearing Sunday,' 'The Great and Holy,' 'The Opener of the Gates of Paradise,' 'The Sanctifier of the Faithful,' and 'The passage from Darkness to Light.' The day is ushered in with a solemn midnight service. A visitor to Russia has described the service as he witnessed it. The finely-decorated chapel is

well filled. Officers in uniforms, ladies and children beautifully dressed give almost the appearance of a ball-room. The ceremony is most impressive. At a quarter to twelve the newest of all fads, and it is called the lily girl fad. The "girl," now that she has pinned the lilies to her chest, clutches them with one hand and with the other she grasps her skirt.

Then she sallies forth ready to see and be seen. If the small boy, on curiosity bent, should take it into his inquisitive round head to follow the Easter lily girl he

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Girl of the Easter Lily

And have you seen the Easter lily girl? She is out in the street these pleasant days, and by these tokens ye shall know her:

She dresses in white. Her hat is white. Her gloves are white. She is perfumed with the essence of lilies.

Her complexion is clear and lilylike, as though, like the lilies, she had grown up in the spring sunshine. She is tall and stately and her walk is graceful. She is narrow of waist, broad of shoulder, sweet of face and so charming that you turn to look at her.

When she walks it is with a long, swinging motion, as though the wind were propelling her along. And when she smiles it is with the swift, sweet smile which makes you think she would be good to talk to.

The Easter lily girl is the belle of the thoroughfare these days, and when you see her you lament that there is not more at home like her. But the beauty of the Easter lily girl, the distinctive feature of this girl, is that she carries an armful of Easter lilies and that their sweetness literally hangs about and over her.

No matter how cold the day or how scarce the lilies, the Easter lily girl is to be found, and when you see her you stop and look at her. Though she is conscious of your gaze, the Easter lily girl, she knows that no offense is intended, for your gaze is one of admiration divided between the lily and the lady, and the sensible Easter lily girl knows this very well indeed.

NEWEST OF ALL FADS. The Easter lily girl does not carry her lilies in aesthetic style. The long tall calla of English fash, which is carried by its stem, is not imitated by her. Nor are the Easter lilies, tied in a bunch like the lilies of the valley, to be pinned at the breast or at the belt.

Large, sweet, handsome, but always manageable, they are bought in the shops to be carried in the arms by the Easter lily girl. The wily maiden, doubtless, practices at home, before the looking glass, for she carries her lilies as naturally as though they were wild flowers of the kind which she plucked from the meadows fourteen years ago.

She buys her lilies by the half dozen stalks, the Easter lily girl, and, when she has purchased them, she asks for a tie-string nor pin. But, taking the lilies in her hands, she arranges them in a huge pile, one stalk on top of the other. Then she grasps the whole, taking them up in one great armful, and, clutching them to her breast, she holds them fast.

Now, if she be very anxious to please, she will attach them there so that they cannot slip. Taking three or four big stalks she thrusts them through the lily stems until her whole breast is adorned with them. The lilies protrude on every side and long stalks of lilies stand up under her chin and wave about her ears. Lilies set out on every side of her and she looks like a moving bouquet.

But that is the fad of the season. It is the newest of all fads, and it is called the lily girl fad. The "girl," now that she has pinned the lilies to her chest, clutches them with one hand and with the other she grasps her skirt.

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would find her course leading through strange ways. He would find her striking out from her home into the most fashionable thoroughfares; and he would see her walking up the finest streets, always with the long swinging gait and the lilies over her shoulder.

THE SMALL BOY'S ADMIRATION. Were the small boy to continue his investigations he would find her, still walking and walking, until at dusk he would follow her home. Here, in the light of the hall chandelier, she would disappear. And the small boy, wearing with his five-mile walk, would go home. Without knowing it he has taken a tramp on the heels of the Easter lily girl, the newest girl in the world of fads.

He has followed the Easter lily girl on her daily constitutional and each day he might do the same, for the girl goes out daily. The Easter lily girl is always pretty and she is always well dressed. Her gown of snowy white cloth makes her a pleasant figure on the thoroughfares and her pleasant face, smiling a welcome above the brightest spot one can see these days.

But the Easter lily girl has other marks than those of snow white hat, spotless gloves and lilies. She has a home, and you can easily find it without inquiring too long for it. The home of the Easter lily girl is marked by the lilies that are in her window, and if you walk up and down the best street in town you will see a window all lily dressed and by that mark, the lilies in the window, you shall know that the Easter lily girl lives there.

The Easter lily girl is very aesthetic in a way. She wears a little green to match her lily leaves and the lining of her neat jacket, as it opens in the breeze displays the bright, peculiar green of the Easter lily stem.

When the Easter lily girl goes calling she is a very pleasant sight. She seats herself in your parlor and she chats with you while in her lap there lie the lilies. The great stalks hide her pretty figure while the big white blossoms point upward at her smiling chin.

The Easter lily girl never goes calling these days without her burden of lilies and you will know her in a whole drawing-room of people by the dainty whiteness of her attire—and by her lilies.

SUCH A CHARITABLE MAID. The Easter lily girl is a charitable maid and, sometimes, instead of taking home her lilies, she takes them to the poor. The hospitals know the Easter lily girl and so does the poor settlements. She visits the needy and she visits the sick and all are cheered by the flower of Easter. The needy cannot eat the lily and the sick cannot sip it, but both can feast their eyes upon it and reflect upon the goodness which gives to the earth this precious flower to bloom for a month as a reminder of the sacred holiday.

The Easter lily girl is more popular than the chrysanthemum girl because she is more emblematic. She is also prettier and more gracious.

To know the Easter lily girl is here is enough. Look upon her and admire! Gaze at her and her lilies and reflect upon the season!

But when you look at our year gaze will be lodging, even mournful, for soon she will disappear, and with her will go the Easter lily fad, the prettiest fad of all the year!

ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

And behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus which was from Jerusalem threescore furlongs, and they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass that while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus Himself drew near and went with them, but their eyes were holden that they should not know Him.—Luke 24:13-33.

"I shall arise again," the Master said—"Arise from out the nations of the dead." Then came the Cross, the Darkness and the Cry. The Earthquake and the dead men fleeing by; And now the Third Day and the little flock Wander the roads or huddle by the rock. For rumor runs on rumor, and a tear Trembles in every hope: the Hour is here!

It is high noon, and two friends close of heart. Under the lifted Helbron Gate depart. Past red rock roses down the Jaffa road, Bearing the mighty sorrow for a load. Leaving the tumult of a crowded street, The multitude with shrouds about their feet.

They flee Jerusalem with all her ills. To ease their hearts among the quiet hills. Onward they go, two comrades close of soul. Until beyond Golgotha's bloody knoll. They turn to look a moment at the flight Of walls and arches, tremulous with light. And there toward Olivet, one golden dome Swims lightly as a bubble blown to foam; While farther yet with dying purple hue The ghostly hills of Moab break the blue.

An hour they go a barren way, and then The gray road wanders up a watered glen. And there a traveller with quickened feet Draws near them by a field of heading wheat. And finds them reasoning of their love and loss— Of Jesus who was nailed upon the cross.

He bids them peer, drawing their troubled eyes To a break of almond bloom against the skies. And with him discourse and soft rebuke The stranger talks with Cleophas and Luke; And tells their how these things had been foretold— How all was written in the books of old.

How Christ must suffer at the hands of men. Must sink to death and hell and rise again. He tells the news for which all spirits yearn. And tells he speaks their hearts do inly burn.

Passing a fir bough broken by its load— A trouble to the camels on the road— He halts to loose the bough and let it fall. Out of the way, over the rocky wall. And once within the shadow of a hill He stoops to drink with them where waters spill. Their brightness on the boulders. There a tree Blown by the winds sounds like a little sea.

At last the village at the river-head And they are saying, "Enter and break bread. This is our door; may, no not leave us yet? The doves are homing, and the meal is set. With something grave and lofty in his air, He stays his way-worn feet for brother's fare. He breaks the loaf and gives to them, when, lo! Their eyes are no more holden, and they know!"

One moment and he vanishes from sight. "Twas He, 'twas He," they cry, "the Lord of Light!" Back to the Upper Chamber where they wait— Back ere the watchman bars the Western Gate!" So with a joyous cry they take again The glad road down the April-colored glen. —Edwin Markham.