

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

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THE EASTER KISS.

HERE is a beautiful story
Of pilgrims in the East,
Who gather, with the opening year,
To keep the Easter feast.

Stands in the holy city
A chapel fair to see,
Built where our dearest Lord was slain,
On cruel Calvary;

And in the open chapel,
Midway the marble floor,
Rises the rock where stood the cross
That Christ the Saviour bore.

All Easter-day the pilgrims
Move slowly on their knees,
With streaming eyes, across the floor,
The sacred rock to kiss.

The stone, once rough and broken,
Is now worn smooth and round,
Pressed by the lips of those who come
From earth's remotest bound.

SEALING THE SEPULCHRE.

WE see here the chief
priests sealing the
sepulchre, having roll-
ed a great stone to its
mouth to prevent the resurrection
of Jesus. How intent and eager
they seem. And notice the one
in the background who is giving
directions to the guard who come
with sword and spear to keep
watch at the tomb. But

Vain the stone, the watch, the seal,
Christ hath burst the gates of hell;
Death in vain forbids Him rise,
Christ hath opened Paradise.

The very precautions of the priests
to prevent the resurrection but
made its demonstration the more
glorious. Even the lie which they
put in the mouth of the soldiers
—"while we slept his disciples
came and stole him away"—re-
flects itself. For if they slept
how did they know that the dis-
ciples came? And would any
Roman soldier dare to sleep at
his post—much less a whole com-
pany of soldiers—when the penalty
was death? This crowning mir-
acle of our Lord's life is the best
attested of all. For forty days he
appeared over and over to his dis-
ciples, and once to five hundred
brethren at once, and proved him-
self the risen Christ, the Lord of
death and hell.

AN Irish judge had the habit of
begging pardon on every occasion.
One day as he was about to leave the
bench, the officer of the court reminded
him that he had not passed sentence
on a prisoner as he had intended.
"Dear me!" said his lordship, "I
beg his pardon—bring him up."

OLD LENTEN CUSTOMS.

A CROSS the days from Good
Friday back to Ash Wednes-
day falls the shadow of the
cross, and in the course of the
centuries how many interesting customs
have developed along the line of that

bare feet, they went before the bishop.
The Seven Penitential Psalms were
sung. Then came the bishop's part.
He laid his hands on the head of the
penitents. There was a sprinkling
with holy water. On their heads was
left a little gray ash-heap. Then came
the solemn announcement that they

priest sprinkles ashes on the heads of
his flock, crying out, "Dust thou art,
and unto dust thou shalt return!"
Those are very serious words, but if
any of those lambs have been out the
night before, keeping carnival, till
twelve o'clock, it may be doubted
whether they have any proper idea of
the significance of the little ash-
heap on their heads, and the mean-
ing of the words from Scripture.
The Mardi-Gras celebration of
New Orleans, when the city burst
into an ante-Lenten blaze, attracts
the attention of the whole country
by that sharp glare in the South-
west. People who do not keep
Lent will not be disturbed by the
dazzle huzzah of this Mardi-Gras
demonstration, and others will
reasonably wish for a quiet night
and a devout Wednesday-rising.
This Mardi-Gras is only "Fat
Tuesday" when translated, or the
"Shrove Tuesday," in other cir-
cles, when the people shrive or
confess their sins to the priest of
the Roman communion.

"Get you to the church and
shrive yourself," is a line in Besu-
mont and Fletcher. After con-
fession came a season of merrim-
ent. The pancake of England
was a favourite dish. Pancake
Tuesday can scarcely be called a
Lenten shadow, and yet a refer-
ence has been made to the Tues-
day before Lent, and not inappro-
priate will be an allusion here to
the way in which Mother England
put a preface to the thin lean
season of Lent. Taylor, the
water-poet, refers to "Shrove
Tuesday, at whose entrance in the
morning all the whole kingdom is
in quiet, but by that time the
clock strikes eleven, which (by
the help of a knavish sexton) is
commonly before nine, there is a
bell rung called Pancake Bell, the
sound whereof makes thousands
of people distracted and forgetful
either of manners or humanity.
Then there is a thing called
wheat flour, flour which the
cooks do mingle with water, eggs,
spice, and other tragical, magical
enchancements, and then they put
it by little and little into a frying-
pan of boiling suet, where it makes



SEALING THE SEPULCHRE.

shadow. Ash Wednesday itself, the
tip of this shadow, has its peculiar
memories. *Dies cinerum*—day of
ashes—was a name given to this
gateway of Lent. That penitents in
the Church should show their contrition
by wearing sackcloth and ashes, is a
very old custom. Ash Wednesday
has had its peculiar discipline for
offenders. Robed in sackcloth, with

were cast out of the Church as Adam
out of Paradise. In harmony with
this proclamation, the disgraced pen-
itents were shown the door of the
church and left without. The Thurs-
day before Easter they were back
again, the priest and deacons presenting
them at the church-porch for reconcili-
ation. At Rome, that is an impressive
custom on Ash Wednesday when the

a confused dismal hissing (like the
Lernian snakes in the reeds of Acheron)
until at last, by the skill of the cook,
it is transformed into the form of a
flipjack, called a pancake, which
ominous incantation the ignorant peo-
ple do devour very greedily."
At Westminster School, the follow-
ing custom is said to have prevailed
down to the present times. At eleven