

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 all 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 fret
 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
 (Unmindful of their morning ease),
 Through tragic darkness, murk 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 had suffered;
 Their spices have been bruised for Christ.

A Word on Easter Eggs.

THE Pashka, or paste egg, is literally an egg used at the Passover, and was very likely an idea borrowed from the Egyptians, who, in common with other nations of antiquity, regarded the egg as an emblem of creative power.

There is no difficulty either in tracing the hold the Jewish name for the Easter eggs has obtained through so many centuries in our common English tongue. Passover and Easter occur about the same time of year. Formerly the two feasts began on the same day, and when there was an alteration made in the dates there were a number of Christians strong enough to form a sect known as Paschites, who held fixedly to the opinion that Easter should be kept on the fourteenth day of the moon, no matter what day of the week that might be.

The position taken by the Paschites gave rise to long disputes. One of the popes, about the end of the second century, tried to settle the affair by excommunicating all who celebrated Easter on any other day than Sunday. But papal anathemas were of no avail, and it was not until the decree of the Nicene Council that the matter was settled by the acceptance of Sunday, and the additional arrangement that when the fourteenth day of the moon fell on the first day of the week, Easter was not to be observed until the following week.

These decrees did not affect the question of eggs, however. They had been used by European nations in connection with the new year, as symbolizing a fresh start in life, and when the date of the new year was put back from the vernal equinox to the winter solstice, the Feast of Eggs was not shifted with it, but remained a part of the unwritten rites of Easter.

The Greek Church attaches a great deal of meaning to the egg at Easter-tide. The custom in Russia has varied very little from what is said of it in a book published in London, in 1589, where it stated that the Russians, "Every yeere, against Easter, die or colour red with Brazzel (Bazil wood) a great number of Eggs, of which every man and woman giveth one unto the priest of the parish upon Easter Day in the morning. And moreover, the common people carry in their hands one of these red eggs, not only upon Easter Day, but also three or four days after, and gentlemen and gentlewomen have gilded eggs, which they carry in like manner. They use this custom, they say, for a great lore and in token of the resurrection, whereof they rejoice. For when two friends meete during the Easter Holydays they take one another by the hand; the one of them saith, 'The Lord is risen,' and the other answereth, 'It is so of a truth'; and then they kiss and exchange eggs, both men and women continuing kissing for four days."

Kissing in the Russian dominions is not so general now as three hundred years ago, but the eggs are still handed about and the words of greeting are unaltered—"Christ is risen," being met with the response, "It is so of a truth."

Eggs are also exchanged ceremoniously in Greece at Easter and throughout Germany, where, however, Easter cards are more used among grown up folk, the hunting of eggs through house and garden being a delight specially reserved for children. These cards have been in use among the Germans for a long time. There is one in the British Museum which represents a basket in which are three eggs decorated with pictures illustrative of the resurrection, all being upheld by three hens. Over the centre egg is the *Agnus Dei*, with a chalice, representing faith; over the others are emblems of hope and charity. Beneath is a legend,

"All good things are three,
 Therefore I present you three Easter eggs—
 Faith and Hope, together with Charity.
 Never lose from the heart
 Faith to the Church; Hope in God,
 And love him to thy death."

The precise date the Easter egg found its way into England cannot be determined, but certainly before the time of Edward I., for in the household expense book of that monarch there is this item in Latin for Easter Sunday: "Four hundred and a half of eggs, eighteen pence"—cheap enough certainly, and a contrast to the price at the present time.

Some of the superstitious rites pertaining to the egg at this season are retained in various parts of the country, but divested, of course, of the peculiar significance which we attached to them in the days of compulsory education. Egg rolling, which was formerly indulged in under the notion that the farm lands on which it was practised would be sure to yield abundantly at harvest time, has now become a sport.

The very colouring of the eggs has now an artistic meaning only; formerly it was a sacred sign. Easter eggs are no longer thought to be good for ailments; nobody preserves them as charms; it is no longer supposed that eggs laid on Easter Day will keep fresh longer or will result in fowls of the choicest kind. Yet it cannot be said that the interest has diminished with the more practical view we now take of old customs.

Eggs continue to be stained very much as they were centuries ago, and the gilding, which is as ancient, at least, as Greek mythology, is also kept up, while, though the sacred and mysterious meaning which formerly invested them belongs to an age when the common people had no literature, and a peasant who could read was a prodigy, yet the Christian must ever feel a fresh springing of the heart with the coming of that day of days which commemorates the resurrection of the Lord of lords and King of kings.—
L. P. L., in Demorest Monthly.

The Message.

BY A. L. B.

SO READ the page of sacred meaning
 To one who sought with prayerful gleaming
 The guidance of the Spirit;
 Whose gentle touch, like angels' wings,
 Woke in her heart the song that sings
 To all who list to hear it.

The song whose ringing echoes sound
 Down all the ages circling round
 The Star of Bethlehem;
 The peace on earth, to men good-will,
 Which shepherds heard, give to us still
 A Saviour, as to them.

Now, for the sake of him who died,
 Whose bleeding hands and pierced side
 Point out the way for me;
 "I fain would give my life," she said,
 Walk in the path his footsteps led,
 Up rugged Calvary.

"Bear with my cross the balm and spice
 Which faithful love and sacrifice
 Shed round each earthly tomb;
 Led through the dark by faith alone,
 Not knowing who shall roll the stone
 In the morning's cold gray gloom.

"Content if it is mine to hear
 My Master's voice in accents clear
 Say to me, 'Go and tell,'
 Though the 'brethren' dwell beyond the sea,
 And kindred, friends and home must be
 Left with a long farewell."

You never get to the end of Christ's words. They pass into proverbs, they pass into laws, they pass into doctrines, they pass into consolations, but they never pass away; and after all the use that is made of them they are still not exhausted.—*Dean Stanley.*

Easter.

BY REV. MARK TRAFFON.

THERE is silence in the city, while the mid-
 night hours roll by;
 The deed was done which shook the earth,
 and darkened all the sky;
 The Victim, bruised and mangled, sleeping
 calmly in the gloom;
 The sentry slowly treads his beat before the
 sealed tomb.

Along the east a line of light prophetic softly
 lay;
 Night plumes her sable wings for flight, before
 the coming day,
 When suddenly a blinding flash burst on the
 gloom profound,
 And down the smitten sentries sank, as dead
 men, to the ground.

The ponderous stone, with life instinct, before
 its Maker's nod
 Moved back, and on it sat a form in brightness
 as a god;
 Forth walked the pierced and crucified in
 majesty divine,
 On his marred countenance in full the God-
 head's glories shine.

In a lone upper chamber a sad band vigil
 kept,
 And slowly passed the weary hours, as still
 they mourned and wept;
 "We trusted it were he," they sighed, "but
 ah! our dreams are fled;
 The cherished hopes of kingly reign are
 slumbering with the dead."

List! to those hurrying footsteps along the
 silent street,
 And up the darkened stairway a rush of flying
 feet,
 And Mary bursts into the room, and on their
 startled ears
 The cry is flung, "He's risen!" and her voice
 is choked with tears.

O earth! so filled with sorrow, with wrong,
 and crime, and sin,
 Shut in the tomb of ignorance, with guilt and
 dead within,
 Down through revolving ages echoes that
 woman's cry,—
 "He's risen!" Ho, ye sleepers, wake! in
 death no longer lie!

WE have already temperance text-
 books for schools intended to impress
 fundamental temperance doctrines
 upon the youth in attendance, and now
 the Women's Christian Temperance
 Union in California publishes a series
 of arithmetical questions for a similar
 purpose. The examples deal with
 temperance statistics. We have often
 thought that temperance copy-books
 would be a valuable acquisition in the
 same line. Thus the scholars might
 be taught to write the strongest kind
 of temperance sentiments, such as
 "Alcohol destroys both body and soul;"
 "Beer contains only — per cent. of
 nourishment;" "Look not upon the
 wine when it is red;" "Wine is a
 mocker, strong drink is raging." The
 alphabet would soon be exhausted.

A MAN once took a piece of white
 cloth to a dyer, to have it dyed black.
 He was so pleased with the result that,
 after a time, he went back to the dyer
 with a piece of black cloth, and asked
 to have it dyed white. But the dyer
 answered, "A piece of cloth is like a
 man's reputation; it can be dyed black,
 but it cannot be made white again."