

eternity. From him came the first light; and from this light came two brothers—Ormuzd and Ahrimann. Ahrimann grew jealous of his elder brother, and was condemned by the great spirit to pass three thousand years in utter darkness. On his return from the lower regions, he created a number of evil spirits to oppose the good spirits created by Ormuzd; and when the latter made an egg containing good genii, Ahrimann made another full of demons and broke the two together, so that the good and the evil became mixed in the new creation. In commemoration of this legend, the Persians, even at the present day, send and receive colored eggs. Whatever we may think of this legendary origin of the "Easter Egg," it is evident that the egg-giving custom is a very ancient institution. The custom of egg-giving has now become very general; but the eggs are sometimes as ancient as the custom!

Within recent years a new industry has had great vogue — the manufacture of bonbons in the form of eggs. It began in Paris, and thence spread to the other large cities in Europe; and even in Canadian cities the bonbon egg is quite common. Russia, where Easter is kept most religiously, inaugurated another fashion in the egg line a few years ago — the manufacture of Easter eggs of glass. So great is the demand for these newest creations that nearly all the glass factories of Russia begin immediately after New Year, each season, to manufacture eggs for the Easter trade. Most costly specimens are prepared for the Czar and the Russian nobility.

In mediæval times Easter eggs were blessed by the priest; and a special form of blessing was authorized by Pope Paul V. The red dye used in the coloring of these eggs was supposed to symbolize the Blood of the Redemption. Another custom of those days was what was termed the *Oragium*, which in reality was the payment of tithes to the priest, by gifts of eggs.

In addition to the customs attending the Easter celebration of former times, there were certain sports and pastimes which were performed under the patronage of the Ecclesiastical authorities. The most singular of these was the playing of hand-ball in church. The church dignitaries participated in these games with the common folk. This game is said to be symbolic of the Sun which is supposed to give three leaps on Easter morning to make atonement for its darkening during the days of the Lord's entombment. Hand-ball playing was the special amusement in France; in Spain there was an Easter dance, known as the *bergeretta*, which is, so it is asserted, still in vogue among the