

Easter in Athens

An American Woman Describes Impressive Greek Rite Religious Ceremonies and Gay Carnival of People.

By Mabel Gray

SOMETHING was going to happen in Athens; this we knew by the spirit of unusual activity on the streets and in the shops, where everyone seemed preparing for some festivity. That the event was connected with the church was indicated by the many temporary stands, decorated with colored tissue paper, which ornamented the street corners, where were sold candles of every size—larger and hollow at the end to fit over a metal point—of a many-pronged church candelabrum, and tapering to a sharp point at the other end, where they were tied in bunches by their wicks, and hung in the booths alternating, yellow and white. At the corners, bunches of these should be there to join in their most unique celebration.

Light flashed upon us, however, when we discovered in the hallway of the hotel a calendar, in large Greek type, which read as follows: "March 26, Thursday," and underneath in small type in French: "April 8, Holy Thursday," showing that the Greek celebration is thirteen days behind the rest of Europe, therefore for them Easter had not yet arrived.

That afternoon our discovery was confirmed as we walked through the old part of town, where the shops are. The counter of the public baker, whose shop opened to the street, was lined with rows of round loaves of bread awaiting the ordeal of the fiery furnace. Each contained five brightly-baked eggs pressed halfway into the soft dough in the shape of a Greek cross; all exactly alike, but each distinguished from its neighbors by a slip of paper sticking in the dough, which bore the name of the housewife who had kneaded it.

On Good Friday we directed our course by the dome-crowned spires of the Russian church, where the golden, the silver and the Russian minister, occupied opposite boxes.

At the close of the beautiful service, the responses of which were sung by a marvelous choir of unaccompanied male voices, the priests brought to the front a representation of a tomb, having a half-draped figure of Christ painted on the top, and the sides covered with rich embroidery of white and gold.

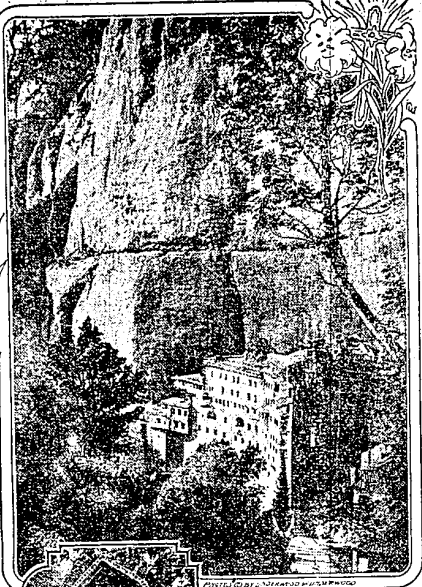
The queen advanced, kissed the representation of the dead body, and then the hand of the officiating priest, from whom she received a stalk of white gladiolus, and with the Russian minister, who followed her, she left the church. The others of the audience concluded their worship in the same manner, each bearing away a floral reminder of the coming resurrection.

That night these representatives of the entombed Christ were borne in solemn procession from the five principal churches, attended by the priests in gorgeous robes, acolytes bearing banners and colored lanterns, and followed by the members of the parish, each carrying a lighted candle.

At intervals, the procession halted and a service was held; then each congregation returned to its own church, and long after all was still, in Athens the flickering lights of the priests of the Church of St. George could be seen winding up the zigzag path to their sanctuary on the top of Lykabettos, the pointed hill which rises abruptly from the heart of Athens.

With the enshrining of Christ's body in the tomb on Friday a fast was begun, lasting until the morning of his resurrection. Therefore Saturday was a quiet day, when at hour or so before midnight, when streams of people, each person bearing a lighted candle, poured through the streets leading into the great square before the church of the metropolis.

The great edifice, illumined by thousands of huge candles in chandeliers and candelabra, was packed to the doors, and the square was filled to



only we viewed the procession and attendant crowds. At the door of the palace across the square the king and queen stepped into their carriage. They were followed in the procession by the Crown Prince Constantine and his wife, the sister of the Kaiser, then by Prince George and his bride, the Bonaparte princess, whom the Greeks welcomed with open arms, as the only member of the royal family who is Greek, since the Bonaparte family were residents of Corsica while it was Greek territory, Napoleon being born only a few days after its transfer to France.

The procession, accompanied by bands of music and a brilliant array of mounted soldiers, proceeded to the church of the metropolis where mass was held. On the afternoon of Easter Tuesday all eyes were turned toward Megara, distant from Athens two hours by train, where the far-famed peasant dances take place.

In the large public square of the little town the women, dressed in holiday attire, joined hands alternately across each other, forming long straight lines, and danced, first in one direction and then in the opposite, a performance of no special grace or beauty, but made attractive by their pretty faces and curious costumes, and the great numbers of lines, tripping the ground and then the other.

Beneath the black skirts bordered with a broad, red band hung several inches of hand-made tassel lace. From the white petticoats, the pride of the peasant, and then in the opposite, a performance of no special grace or beauty, but made attractive by their pretty faces and curious costumes, and the great numbers of lines, tripping the ground and then the other.

The king and queen and other members of the royal family, also government officials and noted guests, sat upon the edge of the platform erected in the center of the square. At length, the choir boys emerged from the doors of the cathedral, followed by the chanting priests, and finally by the metropolis himself, arrayed in gorgeous robes, with a mitre on his head and a bishop's crook in his hand.

The procession ascended the platform where the venerable, kind-hearted man, with flowing white beard, raised his fingers in blessing over the waiting worshippers, and the beautiful music of the mass floated out on the silent air.

Beside our breakfast plates, on Sunday morning, lay a bright red Easter egg, an emblematic gift—freely exchanged in Greece—but the chief event of this day of rejoicing was the dancing of the soldiers and of the bodyguard of the king.

The latter took place in the courtyard of the royal palace, and the members of the guard were attired, as always, in the costume of Thessaly, their native province. As we were surprised for the sight which met our eyes, our first impression was that an automaton ballet chorus was running down.

They were very full-palated skirts of starched white linen—stopping several inches above the knee—white woolen tights, black garters, with cords and tassels and red pointed shoes with huge pom-poms on the tip of the toes. A white linen skirt, a zouave jacket with long flowing sleeves of white wool embroidered with black, and a red cap with a long black tassel reaching below the shoulder completed this very unwarlike costume.

Monday was a quiet day, distinguished only by doubled carriages and the presence of numerous peasants from surrounding districts, wearing attractive provincial costumes.

The national independence day fell on Holy Thursday, and being therefore postponed was celebrated on Tuesday morning. From our hotel balcony we saw the

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THE ETERNAL YEARS



TRANSCENDENT light, with Easter born, fill with thy glow the battle-torn; "Seek the living among the dead;" Awaken those whose blood was shed; Dim with thy glory canon's flame, cleanse humankind of all its shame Ere day is done.

—T. Elliott Hines in New York Saturday Evening Mail.

AWAKE, O nations of the earth! Comes morn of hope, of life, new birth. Heed ye the Resurrection call, Rulers of kingdoms, farmers—all; Let strife be o'er, the tumult cease, Crown Him anew the Prince of Peace Ere day is done.

SACRIFICE MUST PRECEDE SOUL'S EASTER TRIUMPH

H. C. TOLLMAN, D. D., LL. D.

A DIVINE Father near to each human soul, acting in and through the events of daily life, and a risen Christ revealing God's nature to us through our personal communion with him! This is the Easter triumph.

Modern Christian criticism may discuss, as it is now doing, the historical and quasi-physiological problems as to whether the risen Christ had a "material body spiritualized" or a "spiritual body materialized," whether his actual flesh and blood came forth from the grave, as the Gospel narrative most distinctly gives us to understand, or whether he bore that celestial and incorruptible body which St. Paul declares is the body of the resurrection. Yet we need have no fear that the conclusion—if one be ever reached in the future—will affect that vital truth on which our Christian faith has been grounded for nineteen centuries.

The lesson of the Resurrection is purely a personal and individual one. We do well to ask ourselves soberly and seriously what that lesson is. Like all divine truths, it is wondrously simple, yet deeply significant and full of transcendent responsibility. It means nothing less than such life as participation with Christ as to effect in us a participation in his immortal and divine character—assuredly no easy process, but the struggle and achievement of a life in constant touch and fellowship with him.

The lesson of Easter plainly tells us that we must die to our selfish selves, to our littleness, narrowness, pride and hate, and rise to the eternal life of service.

No Easter triumph can come to any soul without first a Golgotha of individual sacrifice and self-surrender. Heaven is no fit place or condition for

Easter Bells
Ring happy bell of Easter time!
The world takes up your chant sublime:
"The Lord has risen!" The night of fear has passed away, and heaven draws near; We breathe the air of that best time At Easter time.

Ring, happy bell of Easter time!
Our happy hearts give back your chime:
"The Lord is risen!" We die no more!
He opens wide the heavenly door; He meets us, while to Him we climb At Easter time.

—Lucy Larson

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Acting Director of Sunday School Course of the Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.)
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LESSON FOR APRIL 23

EASTER LESSON.

LESSON TEXT—1 Cor. 15:20. GOLDEN TEXT—Now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first fruits of them that are asleep—1 Cor. 15:20.

If teachers can impress indelibly upon the minds of their scholars the fact that Jesus rose from the dead and is as truly alive today as when walking the hills of Galilee this repetition of the Easter story will not be in vain. For the pupils to take notes of the points of the argument and to recite upon those notes at the end of the class hour would greatly help to fix the facts in their minds. This account considered today is perhaps the oldest written record we have of this great fact, written about 56 A. D., hence the significance of verse six.

1. The Triumphant Fact (vs. 1-4). If Christian workers would be more familiar with this passage they would more intelligently understand what the term "Gospel" means. The fact of the resurrection loomed larger in Paul's mind than the virgin birth; the former was and is the greater miracle. This, one of the supreme chapters of the Bible, tells us what the Gospel is, and what its results are to be. (1) What it is. Not a new cure for tuberculosis, nor a new social environment, but the good news of one who was God incarnate (Paul does not use his earthly name Jesus), Christ the Anointed One, who died for our sins just as the Scriptures had foretold, and was buried.

On the third day, "according to the Scriptures," He arose again and is now and ever shall be alive. Any God that ignores the incarnation, passion, and resurrection of Jesus is false to the Scriptures and a lie. (2) The result of preaching or testifying to this great program is twofold: first, salvation, "saved, restored to right relations with God;" and second, peace, "wherein ye stand." The "God-story," good news, evangel or gospel—they are all the same—is "the power of God unto salvation," and a strong doctrine of the resurrection will cause men to walk straight, to stand upright. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (Isa. 53:10).

2. Witnesses to the Fact (vs. 5-12). Paul (7) 3 received the resurrection truth from many witnesses, whom he proceeds to enumerate, for it was not a matter of his own invention. The credibility of the disciples at the first is frankly recorded (Luke 24:12). Jesus did not appear first to John, Pilate or the Sanhedrin, but to a woman, and the change of the apostles from a spirit of despair to that of confident joyous certainty was most astonishing. There are eleven recorded appearances of Jesus after his resurrection, not one of them was made to his enemies. Paul does not mention all of the appearances. He is probably naming only those persons, witnesses of his appearances, with whom he had conferred, or at least a few from each group. (1) Peter, referred to indirectly in Luke 24:34; (2) the apostles, to be exact, the first ten, Judas being dead and Thomas absent; (3) the sister with Thomas present; (4) five hundred, the only record of this great company, though perhaps implied in the "brethren" of Matt. 28:10. "Half a thousand witnesses can establish any case." Of these the greater number were alive twenty-five years after the event; (5) James, probably our Lord's brother, the honored head of the Jerusalem church; (6) "Then all the apostles," a larger circle than the twelve (see Luke 24:48, Acts 1:6-8). This may have been the appearance in the morn at the Sea of Galilee; (7) "no also."

3. The Fact Applied. (vs. 13-20). The Corinthians, to whom Paul was writing, did not deny Christ's immortality, but seemed to deny that the same could be applied to us who are only human. Paul answers this by presenting four arguments:

(1) The resurrection of Christ proves the reality of the resurrection from the dead, if only of Jesus. The Stoics taught that the dead were reabsorbed in God. To say Christ is not risen is to say that Jesus is dead, to destroy faith in Jesus (v. 14) and to impugn the testimony of those who had seen him (v. 15). A dead Christ means dead Christians (v. 17) and our heaviest sorrow will be to find the grave (v. 18).

(2) The Christian is "in Christ," and his resurrection carries ours with it. Paul's emphasis upon this term "in Christ" (vs. 18, 19, 22, 23 and elsewhere) is important to note.

(3) Christ, the second Adam, brings life; our common human nature dies like as the first Adam, but our second Adam rose and "in him" we live.

(4) If Christ conquered death only for himself it was no real victory, nor could he give back to the Father a redeemed world.

Death is the last "encasement," for until sin is banished it will be present. (Rom. 6:23)

EASTER MILLINERY



The Fried Egg The Lily.



The Hen Coop The Egg Shell.

Great Mystery is His.

All the mysteries of land, and water, and air are best solved only by one; but the mystery of life and death are his. Know that, of a surety, had he wished us to break the seal which binds them in his grasp, he would have made us way clear. Heaven is with him. Let that suffice, until God's time to make it plain.

MEN AND MATTERS

Vincent Astor will build a clubhouse for nurses in New York city. The Cossak population of Russia amounts to roughly 2,500,000 men and women, and they collectively own some 145,500,000 acres of Russian territory.

Scalper George, a member of the Pawnee Indian tribe, located in Oklahoma, has received over a million dollars in royalties from the oil lands which he owns in that state.

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If Roumania is drawn into the present war its army will be commanded by the crown prince.

Secretary of the Interior Lane worked as a newspaper reporter to secure funds to buy a law.

A rabbit-canning factory has been started in Argentina in the hope of ridding some portions of the country of a pest in a profitable way.

Operated by an alarm clock, a poultry feeder patented by a Californian opens doors at a set time and permits grain to fall into a trough.