

Queen of Hearts

After Easter, Eggs May Be Pickled

BY FAITH GILLESPIE

Have you been wistfully thinking, "Whatever happened to spring?" The world seems to be entombed in a New Ice Age. Our eager hopes for spring are buried under the Great Glacier, almost, and the snow is still coming down as though it were eternal. There are a few small signs and symbols, if you look for them. Brave new green spears have thrust themselves up from the snow. They will one day be daffodils, honest. Beginnings of tulips are poking out, and hyacinths.

I admit that some silly shoals of green were up in the January thaw, and they haven't grown an inch since, but as they are still standing there, I have to believe they are promising something.

So is that shivering robin at the bird feeder. One reason spring seems so late in coming is that Easter is upon us, and this year it is very early.

Easter is a moveable feast. It can come any time between March 22 and April 25, depending upon the moon, but since it is a spring festival, we expect true spring to accompany it, whenever.

We are all ready for the old dead winter to melt away. Our souls are waiting for the newness of life that we feel when the world resurrects itself.

The custom of new clothes at Easter probably reflects this wish, and so does the Easter egg.

Long before Christians adopted the egg as a resurrection symbol, the ancients dyed eggs in spring colors to give to their friends. Few customs have survived intact for such a long time.

Dyeing eggs is quite an experience at our house, where six little Christians jockey for the dye pots.

The ones the girls dye turn out to be rather delicate and pretty. Those done by the "big" boys could be described as psychotic. And Patrick's are mostly just cracked.

The package the dye comes in tells you how to do it. The instructions are precise and complete. What they don't tell you is what to do with all those colored eggs that are left on Easter Monday. In the great egg exchange, we end up with about as many as we started with.

They keep in the refrigerator (for a few days, and you can use them in sandwiches and salads, of course, but if you have lots, try pickling some.

Peel the eggs and pickle them plain, or you may dye them in the same pure food coloring you used for the shell—it is absolutely harmless. Or you may use beet juice; eggs dyed red were once the special spring token.

Put the peeled eggs in a jar with a cover, and pour pickled beet juice. Or use sweet pickle juice. Or use this pickling syrup:

SPICED EGGS

Bring to boil in sauce pan 2 cups vinegar, 3 tablespoons sugar, 1 1/2 teaspoons salt. Drop in 1 teaspoon pickling spice in a cheesecloth bag, and 1 clove of garlic. Simmer 3 minutes. Pour 12 peeled hardboiled eggs in jar. Cover jar and refrigerate for a day or two or three. The pickled eggs will keep for several weeks in the refrigerator.

One teaspoon dill seed may be substituted for the pickling spice. You may add a teaspoon of curry powder, for color and flavor, or 1/2 to 1 teaspoon turmeric.

Maybe next week when you are reading this, the world will have broken the shell of winter, and you will know things are springing. What can I say then except, "I knew it would happen all along!"

Slippery Gelatin

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