

On the Funny Side



TIME NOT WASTED

The irate parent stormed up and down the room before the nervous-looking young man.
"What, sir?" he shouted. "You have the nerve to come to my office to ask for my daughter? Well, I might as well tell you that you could have saved yourself the journey."
The suitor sighed wearily.
"Well, that's all right, sir," he said.
"You see, I had another message to deliver in the same building."

Honest, Anyway

Woman—My husband is a perfect brute, and I am going to get a divorce.
Visiting Gentleman Friend—Why, I thought he was a pretty square sort of fellow.
Woman—He may be square, but I don't want him around. He thinks it is more important to pay the grocer than to buy the clothes I want.
—Chelsea Record.

NOT TO BE EXPECTED



Playwright—Was Dezafter satisfied with the part assigned to him in my new play?
Manager—Was Dezafter ever satisfied with "part" of anything?

Clever Lad

Teacher—Why was Solomon the wisest man in the world?
Boy—He had so many wives to advise him.
Teacher (a strong minded woman)—Well, that is not the answer in the book, but you may go up to the head of the class.—Royal Arcanum Bulletin.

A Word of Apology

"Republics are ungrateful," said the readymade philosopher.
"Well," replied Farmer Cortossel, "all the governments I ever read about got imposed on so often that you couldn't blame 'em for growin' sort of cynical an' suspicious."
—Washington Star.

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Streamlined Tragedy

"Why what are you crying so for, sonny?" asked Dad of his four-year-old heir.
"I heard you say you were going to get a new baby and I suppose that means you'll trade me in on it," he sobbed.—Sam Hill in the Cincinnati Enquirer.

Profitable Play

"We're going out to play," announced the oldest boy.
"Don't go climbing trees over in Benson's orchard," said the practical housewife. "It's time enough to tear your trousers when the apples are ripe."

Favorite Actress

Catherine—What is her new play about?
Kathryn—About ten gowns in three acts.—Louisville Courier Journal.

When Easter Comes on April



By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

THIS year Young America has a real problem on its hands. For Easter comes on April 1 and, as everybody knows, April 1 is April Fools' day. So, what to do, what to do!

Shall the solemn significance of Easter Sunday as a religious festival prevail during the day, the beauty of its symbolism unmarred by any sacrilegious shouts of "April fool"? Or shall the youngsters exercise their right to "spoo" each other and their elders on this day which, by tradition and by custom, is dedicated to the practical joker? Truly, it is a perplexing problem of conduct and one wonders how they will solve it to the satisfaction of both themselves and their elders.

Fortunately, perhaps, such a situation doesn't arise very often. The rules by which the date of Easter Sunday is fixed allow this to happen only about every 11 years. Within the memory of most people now living it has happened only four times. In 1896 Easter Sunday came on April 1, again in 1877 and again in 1888. Logically it would seem that the next time would be in 1899 but, due to the vagaries of our calendar, the eleven-year-old rule didn't work. For in 1890 it was one day off that schedule and Easter Sunday in that year came on April 2. It didn't get back on the eleven-year rotation until 1923 when Easter Sunday and April Fools' day coincided. That happens again this year and will happen again 11 years from now in 1945.

Although Easter Sunday and April Fools' day seem utterly inconsistent, so far as the essential spirit of each is concerned, it is interesting to note that, historically, they trace back to similar origins—religious festivals among the ancients celebrating the coming of spring. Although we moderns have changed the form and the meaning of these festivals, we have retained some of the very same symbols which those ancients used.

The celebration of April Fools' day is usually traced back to the festal rites of the period of the vernal equinox in Persia. It was the day when the Persian New Year began and was very close to the old English New Year's day of March 25. The sun was then entering into the sign of the frisky and playful Aries, so it was appropriate that on that day the "season of rural sports and vernal delights" began. In India there was a similar celebration on March 31, called the Hull festival, which was a time for a general holiday and many jests, including the practice of sending people on long and fruitless errands.

From the Orient the custom came into western Europe many centuries ago. The ancient Romans took delight in planning all sorts of practical jokes in connection with their feast of the Saturnalia and more particularly in playing harmless, though often very humiliating jokes, on each other at the time of the athletic tournament, held in honor of Neptune, around April 1. One solemn antiquarian has declared that the first big April Fool joke in history was the time the Romans invited the Sabines to attend this Neptune celebration and then carried off by force the Sabine women.

Just as April Fools' day had its origin in pagan festivals, from which it has departed a long way, so did Easter have such an origin. The Christian peoples of the world, of course, celebrate it as the anniversary of the resurrection of Christ, but in some of its elements, including that essential one of a resurrection, it traces far back beyond the beginning of the Christian era to the religious rites of several different ancient peoples. It is associated with the worship of Astarte, a goddess of the Phoenicians, Isis of the Egyptians, Diana of the Greeks and Romans and Eostre of the Teutons.

In fact, there are some who say that we get the name of Easter from this Teutonic goddess, Eostre, who was worshipped in the spring, although others claim that it is derived from the word "east," one of the four cardinal points. It is also the cardinal point which has always been most important in all religious ceremonies of all races and creeds. This is because it is the part of the heavens where the sun is seen to rise—the sun, bringer of light and heat, the very giver of life itself. The most primitive intelligence of the most primitive man recognized the fact that the sun and life were inseparably associated and it was only natural that when he came to worship the thing which was greater than he, he should turn to the East whence came that greater and higher thing which he recognized as being the life-giving power.

The symbols which we have retained from these pagan festivals to associate with our celebration of Easter include the white lily, the rabbit and the egg. The Greeks and Romans prized the white lily above all other flowers and in their earlier civilizations it had already come to symbolize purity and virtue, hence an appropriate symbol for a festival celebrating renewed life.

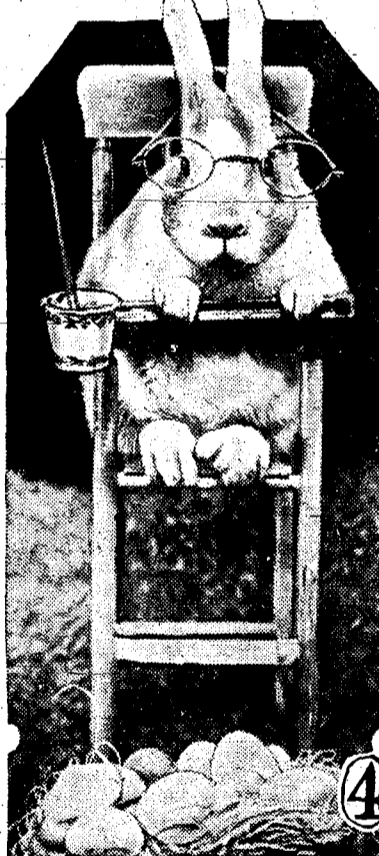
1. These youngsters aren't likely to be taking part in any April Fool pranks on Easter day. They're having fun of a different kind at the annual Easter egg-rolling on the lawn of the White House.



2. This could be either an April Fool joke or an Easter symbol. It would be a better Easter symbol if it looked more like an Easter lily than a calla lily. But it isn't either. It's a Hollywood star-wearing a strikingly original costume, so if you think it's a real lily, the joke's on you.

3. Can rabbits lay Easter eggs and, if so, is that little bunny responsible for such a big egg? Or is it just another April Fool joke? The young lady in the picture is wondering!

4. Don't be deceived by the wise look on the face of this Easter rabbit! He's probably thinking up a joke to play on Easter day which is also April Fools' day this year.



The association of the rabbit or hare with Easter has its foundations in the ancient belief in European and Asiatic countries that the hare is the symbol for the moon. The moon is the "open-eyed watcher of the night," and the hare is a nocturnal animal. The young of the hare are born with their eyes open and are said never to close them. Since the date of Easter is governed by the moon, it is easily seen how the rabbit, which is the symbol for the moon, came to be an Easter symbol also.

As for the egg, the Egyptians regarded it as an emblem of the recreation of things and of men's regeneration and associated it with the worship of their goddess, Isis, as did the Phoenicians, the Greeks, Romans and Teutons with their goddesses who were the objects of their veneration in spring festivals.

Then, too, the egg with its life germ destined to produce a living creature when warmed by the mother hen is easily associated with the idea of the earth blossoming forth under the warm rays of the sun in the spring, both closely akin to the general idea of resurrection. Since the resurrection of Christ occurred in the spring, it is easy to see how the symbols of the egg and all revived life in the springtime came to be associated with this event in the history of Christianity. The egg as a symbol was taken over by the Hebrews as an emblem of their delivery from bondage and next the early Christians took it over as their symbol of the resurrection.

Mention of the Hebrews makes appropriate at this point comment on the fact that the festival now known as Easter was celebrated by ancient Israel as the Passover for many centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ. It was based upon the events which took place when the Hebrews were saved from the destruction which was visited upon the Egyptians, as given in Exodus 12:27. The first Christians, being in the main Jews, continued for a long time to observe the Passover as well as other ancient ceremonies. But gradually these early followers of the cross began to substitute the Christ for the paschal lamb of Israel in the Passover ceremonies.

Eventually there arose a difference of opinion between the Christians of Hebrew descent and those of Gentile descent as to the time when these ceremonies should be celebrated. Those of Hebrew descent declared that the day of the death of Jesus should be the date of the ending of the paschal fast, which in Hebrew rites always was on the fourteenth day of the moon in the evening. Therefore the Easter festival, which followed, might fall on any day of the week. Those of Gentile descent, however, wanted the first day of the week, Sunday, to be the first day of the resurrection festival. Thus the Friday preceding would be observed as the date of the crucifixion without paying any attention to the day of the month.

For 325 years the difficulty between the Christians of Jewish descent and those of Gentile descent continued. Not being able to decide the recurrence of Easter, the council of the early Christian church finally appealed to the astronomers in Alexandria, Egypt, for aid. However, the scientists were not of much assistance, for they had no lunar tables such as we now have, computed by master mathematicians. They attempted to make rules, but the variations of the full moon in reference to the year would not cause Easter to fall on Sunday any more than any other day. All wanted it to come on Sunday, so each nation celebrated to suit itself so that it would come on that day. Thus in A. D. 387 the Gaps celebrated Easter on March 21, in Italy it fell on April 18, and in Egypt it fell on April 25.

Eventually the selection of a certain Sunday was definitely fixed in the Sixth century A. D. It was designated as the Sunday between the fifteenth and twenty-first days of the moon in the first month of the Jewish lunar years. It was directed that the computation should be made according to the tables of Victorius of Aquitaine, introduced in 457 A. D. Because of the fact that Britain had ceased to be a part of the Roman empire, the Sixth century decree did not affect the British church at first, and it continued to calculate Easter on a basis previously approved at Rome. The matter was finally disposed of at a synod held at Whitby in Yorkshire in 664 A. D., after which the clergy of the British Isles conformed to the general practice of the western church.

Accordingly Easter is now observed by both the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches on the first Sunday after the full moon (or fourteenth day of the moon) on or next after March 21. So it cannot be earlier than March 22 nor later than April 25. Thus it is possible for the astronomers and mathematicians to tell in advance on what dates Easter will come each year, and they are now known for more than a century in advance. Thus, too, we know how often it is that young America will be confronted with the problem that confronts them this year—that of celebrating on the same day two occasions which are at the opposite poles in character even though they trace back to a similar origin.

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DOCTOR'S ANSWERS To Questions

By S. C. Babcock, M. D.

Q. I am in a random condition due to frequent bad cough and stomach trouble. What can I do to help this condition?

Ans.—This is not an unusual condition. You can help yourself by a diet which should include plenty of milk, fruits and vegetables. A good medicine like Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery, which any good drug store can supply, has my greatest confidence.

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