



## EASTER TIDE

### A PRAYER.

*Lord, by the stripes which wounded Thee,  
From death's dread sting Thy servants  
free,  
That we may live and sing to Thee  
Alleluia!*



## EASTER EGGS

THE origin of the practice of connecting eggs with our Easter festival is, I believe, lost in antiquity; but they are said to have been used by the Jews at the Feast of Passover. In some Eastern countries there is a very old custom, which still prevails, of presenting eggs at this season of the year—some say because the egg is an emblem of crea-

tion, or recreation, there being a tradition that the world was created in the spring. In parts of Russia people present eggs to one another on Easter day, saying, "Jesus Christ is risen," being answered, "It is so of a truth," or "Yes, He is risen." The Russians also serve red eggs on that day, symbolising at the same time the resurrection and the blood of the Saviour.

At the time of Edward the First the eggs to be given to the members of the royal household on Easter day formed an item in the expenses. Over four hundred eggs, which cost about one shilling and sixpence, were, we learn, distributed on that day. Eggs used to be blessed by the Pope for allotment throughout the Christian world, and the service of Pope Paul the Fifth contains the following curious form of consecration:—

"Bless, Lord, we beseech Thee, this Thy creature of eggs that it may become a wholesome sustenance to Thy faithful servants, eating it in thankfulness to Thee, on account of the resurrection of our Lord."

In some parts of the north of England, particularly parts of Cumberland, decorated Pasch or Pace eggs are still sent to children, so that the present fancy for ornamenting eggs is but the revival of a very old custom. Some young readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER may be disposed to try what they can do in this way. I will, therefore, tell them some of the methods employed; but first let me mention that all eggs to be decorated must be perfectly clean, for the least spot of grease where it was not wanted would spoil the effect aimed at; and they should be boiled hard.

To simply colour the eggs they need only be dipped in water, then placed in a decoction of logwood for the various shades of purple; of cochineal for red, or boiled with onion peelings, or in an onion, for amber, or coloured with spinach juice for green. But superior to these simple colourings are Judson's dyes, which may be obtained of any colour, and can be used as paints on the

shells as well as dyes.

The eggs are dipped in water before being put in the dye, to make them take the colour evenly. If it is desired to keep part of the shell white—for instance, to have a name or motto in white on a red ground—proceed thus: When the egg is warm after boiling take a small piece of mutton suet, which, being hard, you can cut to a point almost like a pencil. With this draw or write what you wish on the warm egg, which you can then place in the dye. The part greased will not take the colour, but when dry the fat is easily removed, and the white design can be left or filled in with another colour, or with a little gold or silver paint. A pretty way is to grease a delicate piece of moss, a fine fern leaf, or a skeleton leaf, to roll either round a warm egg so as to leave a greasy print on it, and then put it in the

colour; but great care must be taken in handling the work not to blur the design. An egg spotted with grease then put in a yellow dye, the grease removed, and then a pale blue dye used, produces an effect that would puzzle a naturalist. Brown and blue dyes answer, used in the same way.

Eggs may be also simply treated by having small leaves or little bits of moss bound on to them with various coloured wools, or ribbons (not fast-coloured ones), before they are boiled, the wool or ribbons being removed when they are dry again; the effect is often very good, but there is great doubt about the results in this way of colouring.

A neater and much better way than greasing the design, for those who do not mind the trouble, is to dye the egg all over, and then to scratch out the motto, or whatever is required white, with a penknife. This is, of course, a much more difficult process, and requires great care.

Eggs dyed pale blue, and a little cloud and sea with a tiny boat painted on them, or dyed yellow and turned into a little sunset picture, with a tree added, are very pretty. They can be done in oil or water colours.

I have seen cupids and like subjects painted on them, but they are quite unsuited for Easter eggs, which are not, and should not be used as, adjuncts of Valentine's day.

For more elaborate work, the eggs, having been boiled hard, can be painted over with gold size, and then covered with gold, or any metal leaf, which may be again painted on with oil paints, or by using a medium and body colours, with water colours.

A gilt egg, with a white lily on it, or a silvered one with a daffodil, looks very pretty; violets and primroses, emblems of spring, are also appropriate, while eggs with butterflies or small birds bearing mottoes painted on them, are much appreciated by children. When painted in water colours, the eggs can easily be varnished. On Easter day I once saw the breakfast eggs which the cook had boiled, some with red and some with blue dye in the water, sent to table in a nest of green moss lined with a little white wool; the eggs

were only cooked the usual time, and were greatly relished by the younger members of the family.

I would recommend the use of Easter eggs to those girls who take Sunday-school classes; they are very good mediums for giving precepts or words of advice; a judiciously chosen motto or text may often do a great deal in helping a child or person to correct a fault, and a motto is more attractive on an ornamental egg than in a book.

I remember a little German book called "Ostereier" (Easter eggs), in which a charming account is given of an Easter festival, when motto eggs were distributed to a number of children. Some of the rhymes given are very pretty; they lose in translation, but are such as "Goodness, not gold, wins love and trust," "For meat and drink the giver thank," "A good conscience makes a soft pillow."

Such sentences as these do for quite small children, but a short verse from a hymn or a text can easily be written on an egg. They look very well coloured pale blue or mottled green and blue, as directed above, and the words written on after with red, or blue ink of a darker colour, and a little ornamentation round. For school-children water colours should not be used in painting the eggs, for the warm and often moist hands

of the recipients of these little gifts would smear the paint.

We must now come to another kind of egg I have found much appreciated, as it is eatable, though imitation only. It is prepared thus: Procure some half egg shells which you can colour or not, as you please, but you must cut the edges as smooth as you can with a pair of small, sharp scissors; next take one pound of ground almonds (they can be bought ready prepared), mix with the beaten whites of three, or if small, four eggs, add a teaspoonful of orange flower water, or a little more, if needed, make into a paste, and stir in one pound of fine sifted loaf sugar, and work with a wooden spoon into a smooth paste; next shake a little icing sugar into the half shells, and fill them with the almond paste, scoop a piece out of the centre of each half, and as you put the two halves together insert a preserved apricot (dried) without a stone; if the apricots are too large use half ones, but whether large or small they must be pressed into suitable shapes before they are used, as they have to represent the yolks of the eggs.

When the parts are joined together, a strip of tissue paper should be fastened round the junction with white of egg, and then a ribbon or ornamental paper put round and the shells decorated with a little water colour paint. If preferred, the shells can be used as moulds

only, and removed as soon as the paste is dry, but if this is to be done the two edges of the almond paste must be *moistened with white of egg* before they are put together, or they would come apart when the shells were removed.

The almond eggs must be put in a warm, dry place as soon as made; a very cool oven will do to dry them.

If you remove the shells, cover the almond paste with icing sugar that has been well worked with a little white of egg and lemon juice; this is not an easy operation, but if the sugar is well worked before using, it will cover the paste more neatly than if used quickly; if sufficient smoothness is attained the sugar can be decorated afterwards with some harmless colouring, such as saffron or cochineal.

To make sugar eggs, mix one ounce of raw arrowroot with one pound of icing sugar, add the beaten whites of three or four eggs, according to size, and a teaspoonful of lemon juice; work the mixture well; use the egg shells as moulds and proceed as with almond paste, putting anything that is liked in the centre, and joining the halves together with white of egg; dry thoroughly, in some place not warm enough to melt the sugar, before you remove the shells. It is easier to take the halves off if they are slightly oiled before the sugar is sifted into them.

## NOTES FOR APRIL.

It is very interesting in the spring to watch the gradual development of a frog from the egg, through the tadpole stage of its existence, till at last it assumes its final form.

The old frogs emerge from their winter hiding places in the mud, early in the spring, and during March their eggs may be found floating on almost every stagnant pond. A group of these eggs in their early stages of development looks like a mass of clear white jelly, containing numbers of black specks, each of which is really the germ of the future tadpole.

In order to watch the development, a group of the eggs should be taken and put in a shallow vessel of water, which, if kept in the house, should have a bell-glass, or some other covering over it, to keep out the dust.

The jelly-like mass which envelops the future tadpole is so clear that all its changes can be easily watched. First the head appears, then a flat tail, and in course of time the nostrils, mouth, and large eyes, till at length the completed tadpole bursts open its gelatinous covering, and apparently not in the least embarrassed by its new surroundings, begins swimming briskly about, looking for something to eat. The time occupied in hatching varies in different countries, according to the climate, from four days to a month. In England the tadpole does not often appear till towards the end of April.

The following stages are even more interesting, especially for those who can take advantage of the transparency of the parts to watch the circulation of the blood through a microscope.

The body of the tadpole gradually gets broader, while the tail gets thinner and thinner, till it finally disappears altogether; but before that happens its place has been taken by two hind legs, which first appear under the skin and then gradually push their way through. The fore legs next appear, and so on through all the stages of development, till in a longer or shorter time, according to the amount of warmth, light, and food it can obtain, the complete frog appears.

But woe betide the unfortunate tadpole

which, first of the shoal, attains to the dignity of possessing limbs, for so ferocious are the later ones, and so jealous of their precocious little brother, that they almost always fall upon him, and, not content with killing, never rest till every morsel of him is eaten. And unless several of the tadpoles assume their final change about the same time, this proceeding is repeated till their numbers are very considerably diminished, or, as sometimes happens, till only one survivor is left, who, having helped to eat all his brethren, instead of meeting with his deserts, is allowed to live on in peace, till some day in the course of his walks abroad, he, in his turn, is snapped up as a delicate morsel by some hungry snake or waterfowl.

Insects and flowers are much more closely connected with one another than we sometimes think.

Not only do many insects depend upon flowers for their food, but many flowers also depend upon the visits of insects to carry their pollen from one flower to another and so continue the life of their species.

There are some flowers, however, whose pollen is carried by the wind instead of by insects, and which are therefore an exception to this general rule. These, not needing to attract insects, are small and insignificant, with neither scent nor honey, but with a very large quantity of pollen. They generally flower early in spring, before the leaves are out, as these would catch the pollen as it is blown along by the wind, and prevent it reaching the flowers for which it is intended. Notice, for example, the flower of the oak, elm, ash, and Scotch fir.

April is a busy month in the garden. Auriculas and polyanthus in bloom should be watered often, and shaded if the sun is very bright, and sheltered when the weather is cold; tulips also must be sheltered from severe cold, though they may safely be encouraged to grow now.

Seeds of perennials and biennials for flowering next year should be sown now, such as wallflowers, carnations, and pinks. Heartsease for autumn flowering should also be sown, and

cuttings taken from old plants. Hardy annuals should be sown not later than the middle of April. Give them good soil, and do not cover the seeds too deeply with earth (some of the smallest kinds should only be sprinkled on the top), and when they begin to shoot up thin out the young plants vigorously; amateur gardeners almost always leave them too close together, but the more room they have the better and stronger they will grow.

If there is no greenhouse, or "heat," half hardy annuals may be sown out in the open garden towards the end of April, and if diligently cared for they will grow well and thrive.

After a warm day, evergreens are benefited by syringing. Ivy that is wished to grow close should be clipped all over; and grass should be cut about once a week, and often rolled. It should not be allowed to get long before cutting the first time, or it will be troublesome to get into order again.

April is the month in which we welcome most of our spring bird visitors. The nightingale and cuckoo have already come and begun their song; the swallow and house-martin will arrive about the middle of the month, and are soon busy making new nests, or patching up old ones. The whitethroat appears towards the end of the month.

During the April showers the whole air seems full of song. Walking through woods ringing with bird music, we are once more reminded of the problem which so puzzled Daines Barrington. "Do the birds all sing in one key? And if not, why do the songs harmonise instead of producing unpleasant discords?" Perhaps it is the distance which lends enchantment and softens the discords. No doubt if all the songsters were in one room, the result would not be quite so happy.

Many eggs, larvæ and cocoons of butterflies and moths may be found this month among heaps of dry leaves, on low bushes, or trunks of trees. Grasses and rushes shelter several of the early species, which are already flying about, and some rare insects may be found now which cannot be obtained later in the season.