

# *Easter Customs of Lancaster County*

By ELIZABETH CLARKE KIEFFER

IF YOU ask any of the students from Baghdad, of whom there are usually two or three at Franklin and Marshall College, if they are familiar with Easter eggs, you will receive an enthusiastic response in the affirmative. You will find that not only are colored eggs exchanged and eaten as a symbol of the resurrection, in Iraq; but that little boys on the banks of the Tigris "pick" eggs at Easter time with the same formalities and rules observed on the banks of the Rhine, and those of the Susquehanna. They know that a "point" can usually break a "butt;" they test the thickness of shells with their teeth; they consider it unfair to protect too much of the surface with encircling fingers, but foolhardy to neglect this precaution entirely. These Iraqi boys even know that a guinea egg is the best "picker," and if you are astonished to learn that they have guinea-keets in Mesopotamian chicken-yards, you will find them equally surprised to learn that we have this African bird in America.

The egg, indeed, is the universal Easter symbol, whether it be the hand-colored egg, common to peasants of all countries and all creeds; the elaborately decorated chocolate egg, and the hollow sugar egg with pictures inside, that grace our luxurious American Easter; the painted glass darning egg, that children gave their mothers in the nineties; the cardboard egg filled with candy or gifts; or the marvelous jewelled eggs, worth a considerable fortune, which Russian princesses gave to one another in the days of the czars, and which now are found exclusively in American museums. Some say that the Easter egg is the Egg of Life of Persian mythology out of which Ormazd and Ahriman hatched the universe, and that it was brought to Europe by returning

crusaders. Others say, with greater probability, that the egg is so obviously a symbol of new life, of fertility, and springtime, that it was so used in many lands at the same time.

If, however, you go on to ask the boys from Iraq whether the Easter bunny brings their eggs, you may, by this time, be surprised in another way; for little boys in Baghdad never heard of the Easter bunny. Nor, when you begin to inquire further, is the Easter bunny known anywhere in Asia. Hares and rabbits were unclean animals to the Jews, and early Eastern Christians would no more have connected them with the Resurrection than they would the pig. Go on inquiring and you will find many countries in which the bunny is unknown. The Latin countries know nothing of it. In Catholic sections of Germany, the Easter eggs are brought back from Rome, by the Easter bells, which go to the Holy City for a long vacation during Lent, when they do not ring. Scandinavian and Dutch friends assure me that they never heard of the animal until they came to America. Chambers' *Book of Days* and Walsh's *Curiosities of Popular Customs* do not mention it, which is pretty sure proof that it is not an English idea. The Oxford English dictionary does not define it, although it gives *Easter egg*, *Easter fire*, *Easter lily*, etc.

More surprising, still, a number of books on Easter, published in the United States, such as Schauffler's *Easter*, and Glover's *The Easter Radiance*, do not mention the rabbit. The *Dictionary of American English* does not define it, and older persons who grew up in New England and many western states, in the days before the commercial interests seized upon the legend as a good sales idea, were as ignorant of the bunny as the boys from Iraq.

Then you turn to the German authorities, and you find ample evidence of the bunny's nationality. He is known throughout western Germany, but his true home is the upper Rhine Valley, Switzerland, and the Palatinate — in other words, the homeland of the Pennsylvania-Germans. The *Gross-Brockhaus* encyclopedia finds the belief that the rabbit lays the eggs to be at least as early as 1682. Grimm's *Gross-Deutsches Worterbuch* quotes a Westphalian children's rhyme of unknown antiquity:

“O Osterhaas! O Osterhaas!

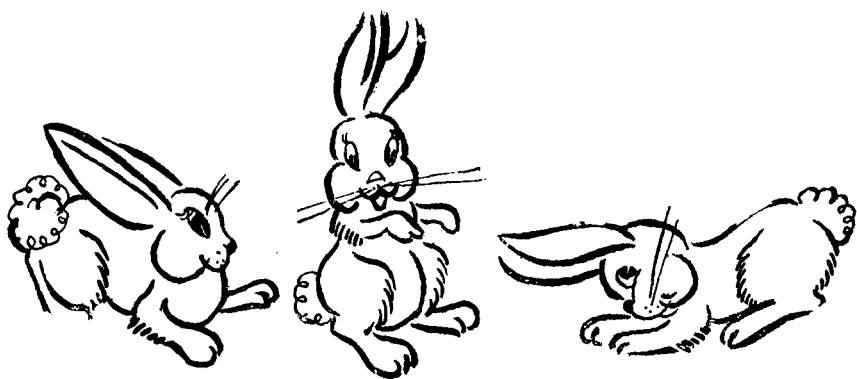
Leg dyni Eier bald in's Gras!”

Such authorities on German folklore as Jakob Grimm, E. H.

Meyer, J. H. Schlender, and Otto von Reinsberg—Duringsfeld (see bibliography) agree that the legend is most probably of pre-Christian origin, and definitely connected with the ancient Teutonic fertility-festival which ushered in the spring.

It is not the function of this paper to trace the history of the Easter festival. There are problems connected with it that seem insoluble to such scholars as Sir James Fraser, and the Brothers Grimm — all the more so to me. Was there, for instance, a Goddess Ostara (Austra, Eostre) who was worshipped by the Germanic tribes before Christ? The venerable Bede says so. Some modern scholars say, just as positively, that Ostara simply means the East, the Sunrise, or, by transfer of ideas, the Spring-time. In between are the vast majority of scholars who say that the Germans probably personified spring as a maiden, and so referred to her in the Ostarafest, whether they worshipped her or not. Two thousand years from now, folklorists will be squabbling as to whether the twentieth century Americans really believed in Santa Claus.

The conclusion of the matter is that the Easter which we know in Lancaster County is essentially the Easter of the Rhine Valley, and that it, in turn, is an inextricable mingling of Christian beliefs with customs dating far back of the Christian era, and borrowed from a pagan festival whose chief importance was the welcoming of spring, and the insurance of good crops for the summer. Grimm says, with some plausibility, that we can almost outline the district where this festival was celebrated by noting



the lands in which the name of the feast is still *Oster*, or *Easter*, and those which use some form of the Jewish *Pascha* (Pacques, Pascua, Pask, Paschen). One of the practices undoubtedly observed in it was a sunrise ceremony, beginning with bonfires before dawn, and the rolling of flaming hoops down the mountain side, to encourage the sun to rise earlier. It is supposed that this celebration took place on May Eve or Walpurgnis Nacht, and that with the coming of Christianity the most harmless of its observances were transferred to the nearby Feast of the Resurrection, while its more evil aspects gathered around the terrible Witches' Sabbath which retained its ancient date.

What part the rabbit took in these festivals is largely a matter of conjecture, except for the obvious fact that he is a symbol of fertility. Those who believe in the Goddess Ostara say that he was her sacred animal. One even claims that she rode in a chariot drawn by rabbits. Reinsberg-Duringsfeld thinks that the fox of winter was burned in the Ostara fire to save the life of Ostara's rabbit. He finds a relic of this custom in the fact that in some parts of the Rhineland, it is customary to burn a puppet representing Judas in the Easter fire, and that he is always represented as having red hair, like a fox. This author believes that, in the same way, an effort was made to substitute a lamb for the rabbit in the Christian Easter, but that it never succeeded.

Some writers feel that there is a connection between the facts that the animal is in many mythologies connected with the moon, and that Easter is a lunar festival. Sir James Fraser is one of these. This, however, seems inconsistent with the fact that the lunar character of the holiday derives from the Jewish calendar, while the rabbit belongs to the German festival which was a sunrise celebration. Schlender brings thunderstorms into the picture. She thinks the hammer of Donar (Thor) was thought of as driving away the wolf of winter, personified by the storm cloud, and that the lightning flashes were thought of as the Ostara rabbit running away from the wolf. She quotes Felix Dahn (who was, however, more romancer than scientist), "In the clouds which brought the springtime thunderstorm, men saw rabbit forms. The lightning flashes reminded them of rabbit leaps. Thunderstorms brought fertility, and the Easter rabbit brought the symbol of fertility, the egg."

A charming little children's story, popular locally in the last century, gives an origin for the rabbit-egg legend which is at least as good as any of these guesses. It tells of a medieval princess, who in a period of famine wished to give food to the children of her village. Willing to give pleasure, as well, she colored the eggs with brilliant dyes, and hid them in the cottage gardens for the children to find. The astonished children could not believe that a hen had laid these wonderful eggs, and as, just then, a rabbit ran out of the bushes, they made up their minds that he had brought them the gift. For our purposes, this will do as well as lightning-flashes.

In his important book on Pennsylvania-German superstitions, Dr. E. M. Fogel lists a number of local beliefs having to do with the Easter season. There is the belief in the efficacy of Easter water (or March snow water, or Ascension day rain, or April dew). It will cure sore eyes (or make good soap). The house should be cleaned on Ash Wednesday, and the sweepings thrown on someone else's property to get rid of lice (or mice, or roaches, or other vermin). This seems rather un-neighborly. No work at all should be done on Shrove Tuesday, but fastnachts should be eaten. On Ash Wednesday the ashes of the fastnacht fire should be sprinkled on the cattle and horses to rid them of lice. Mrs. Gibbons tells of a friend who visited a cattle auction on Ash Wednesday in Lancaster County and noticed that all the cattle offered for sale had been liberally "ashed." The Amish, says Fogel, eat no breakfast on Good Friday. This is of course a relic of their days in the Catholic Church, when one fasted before taking communion. On Maundy or "Green" Thursday, we should eat greens to prevent fever. This is the purest type of sympathetic magic, as the "Green" in the name refers to the ecclesiastical color, but is here transferred to the diet. A child born on Good Friday can see ghosts. One born on Easter Sunday will always be happy. Benjamin Bausman, in an article in *The Guardian* (1872) tells us that on Good Friday the cattle and horses can speak Pennsylvania Dutch, and that the reason our farmers are so good to their beasts is for fear they will tell the neighbors if they are abused.

A letter from Henry Harbaugh to his friend Perry West, in New York State in 1839, says: "Easter Monday is a holly-day among the Germans. We never worked on that day at home. I



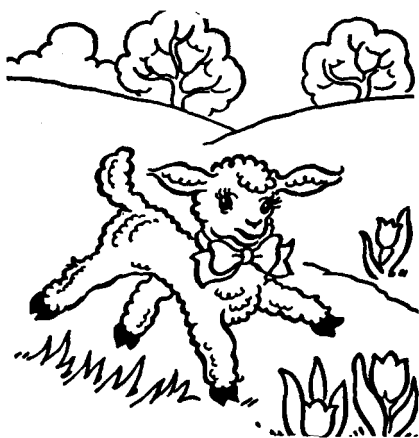
suppose the Yankees know nothing of it." Dr. Bachman in his "Old Order Amish of Lancaster County" calls attention to this celebration of "second" days: "Second Christmas," "Easter Monday, Whitmonday, by which the Pennsylvania Germans separate the religious from the frivolous parts of the holiday. Grimm explains that the reason the Germans seldom use the word *Oster* in the singular, but say *Die Ostern* (the Easters) is because they think of the holiday as several days. Reinsberg-Duringsfeld says:

"Easter Monday is the real day of joy, and of social pleasures." This was the day of the Easter walks, and Easter rides which we, of a less reverent generation have transferred to the Sunday. People who thought of the Easter service as a solemn, if joyous, occasion, considered it quite improper to display one's new spring clothes in church. The early churches frowned upon the secularization of any part of the season. The prayer books of both Lutheran and Reformed churches give services for Easter Monday. Henry M. Muhlenberg regularly held service on Second and sometimes even on Third Easter.

All of the German churches stressed Easter. The Marburg and Lobwasser hymnals, used respectively by the Lutheran and Reformed churches of colonial days are full of Easter hymns. In the Marburg appears one arranged in dramatic form like a cantata, with different stanzas to be sung by the Marys, the disciples, the Roman soldiers, the angel, etc. This is very like the Easter miracle plays celebrated as part of the service in medieval churches, one of which, the *Quem Quaeritis*, is usually called the first modern drama.

The Moravians from their earliest origin, made Easter as well as Christmas one of their holiest days. Their first Easter dawn service was celebrated at Herrnhut in 1732. The custom was brought with them to America, and is the probable original of all the dawn services so popular throughout America today. Benjamin Bausman described the service as he saw it at Lititz when a boy. The trombone choir went through the streets from about 3 A. M. playing Easter carols to rouse the sleepers. The people gathered in the streets, and went on together to the cemetery, where they gathered in a place surrounded by trees, and set aside for this purpose. Here the trombone choir and the singing choir joined the preacher in the solemn liturgy of the morning, in the course of which were named over the names of those who had died in the Lord, during the past year, and "who now live and reign with him forevermore."

To the Moravians, we also owe another lovely custom of the Easter season, now regularly observed by many of us who are not of that faith. This is the daily reading of the *Passion Week Manual*, a synoptic compilation of the day-by-day events of the last week of Our Lord's life. This has been published through



many editions by the Moravian Publication Office at Bethlehem.

Although the Germans so loved the celebration of Easter, they found, when they came to Pennsylvania that their neighbors, the English Quakers and Methodists, and the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, were all strongly opposed to such observances, which they considered "papistical." Dr. Muhlenberg lamented, in 1765, that English employers in Philadelphia would not allow their German servants to attend church on Good Friday, so that he had to hold a special "confession" for them before the Easter morning service, that they might be properly prepared for the communion. A search of Philadelphia newspapers of the colonial period reveals no reference to the holiday, except a poem on the Resurrection published in the *Pennsylvania Packet* on Easter Monday, 1790. The earliest German almanacs, however, invariably list all the days of the Lenten season, usually in red, mixing the Latin names with the German ones in comfortable communion ("Sun. Invocavit, Tues. Fastnacht, Wed. Quatember.")

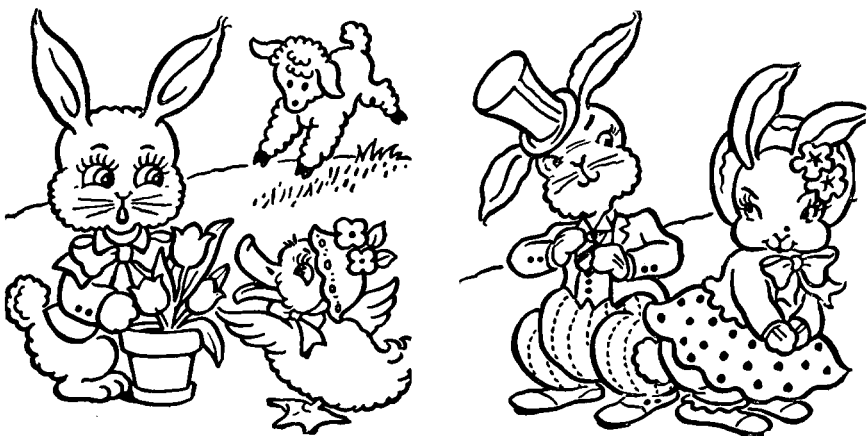
In Lancaster, too, the press ignored the holiday season until 1870 — unless, indeed, an occasional reference to the price of eggs could be so construed. Now and then, one of them published a religious story during Holy Week, but the general feeling seems to have been that any attention paid to the subject would offend most of the subscribers. *The Guardian*, which was edited in Lancaster for most of its existence, says in 1878: "Twenty-five years



ago the observance of Good Friday and Easter was denounced by the majority of our people as papistical and superstitious," and as late as 1874 the *Lancaster Inquirer* carried as its leading Easter article an account of the most fanatical of the medieval Easter customs, so worded as to make the whole festival seem absurd and undignified.

In face of such general public opinion, the Germans confined their celebration to their own families and their churches. Nonetheless, they celebrated. Dr. J. H. Dubbs, in an autobiographical sketch in *The College Student* (F. and M., 1908) wrote: "Easter [in the 1840's] was the time for colored eggs, and children were told that the rabbit laid them. Though I was present when the eggs were colored, and had no faith in the rabbit, I always insisted on preparing a nest in the garden among the currant bushes; and when I went there next morning I was sure to find what I expected. I always insisted on having at least one duck-egg, which had a hard shell and was useful in 'picking.'

"Boys sometimes hid away eggs, in order that they might have a large number to bring into the house on Easter morning. Aided by a hired man, I was once engaged in an affair of this kind, and was sorry for it afterward. For weeks we hid eggs in a safe place on the haymow, taking one or two to the house occasionally to keep up appearances. At that time eggs were scarce, and those we hid could have been sold at a high price; but when, on Easter morning, we brought in a large basketful,



they had become a drug on the market. My mother was naturally displeased, and I determined never to play such a trick again."

In the 1882 edition of *Pennsylvania Dutch and Other Essays* Mrs. Gibbons says that when she first came to Lancaster County in 1849, she did not find the Easter rabbit so well known as in the eastern counties. She gives examples of the legend from Reading, Allentown, Easton, and the Lehigh Valley (where the nests were made of flax). She also says that the custom of making nests was most common among the Moravians — which might account for the usage in Dr. Dubbs' home, for his mother grew up in a Moravian household. Mrs. Gibbons, however, being a Quaker, was astonished at the loyalty of the German Lutheran and Reformed people to their Easter services. "You may hear of churches in country localities having as high as six hundred communicants."

Yet on Easter Eve, 1862, the Lancaster *Daily Evening Express* which headlined the news of the Battle of Manassas, and carried an advertisement by J. B. Markley of 41 North Queen Street of a soda fountain for sale cheap, gave no indication that it was aware of the season.

It is in the *Inquirer* of April 8, 1871, that I find the first serious discussion of the Easter season in a local newspaper. This says that Easter and Good Friday are now usually observed in most local churches, but that the celebration of Lent, as a whole is still not common. "It is the great influx of foreigners that has led to a greater celebration of this season." From this date forward the interest in Easter becomes more and more evident. Easter stories, Easter poems, articles on popular customs, etc., appeared in local papers and magazines, and were reprinted in others (usually without credit) in ever-increasing numbers.

In 1877 an article seemed to catch the public fancy, for it was printed in *The Guardian*, *The Inquirer* and (in German) in Baer's Almanac. It tells the origin of the Easter *Simnel cake*. I can find no local person who has ever heard of a Simnel cake, but it seems then to have been a known Easter delicacy. It was made of a soft inside of plums, raisins, and other fruits, covered with an outer crust of hard unleavened dough, and a shiny coating of egg-yolk. The story ascribed its origin to two children named Simon and Nelly, who made it of the remains of the Christmas

plum pudding, and the unleavened bread of Lent. It was first boiled and then baked.

On March 27, 1880, the *New Era* had at last caught the holiday spirit. A full column on the front page was devoted to the local observances: "Never in all our history has there been so marked an observance of Easter as during the present season. The confectionery windows are filled with eggs of every description, many of them of rich and costly design, as well as the mythical rabbits that laid the eggs, and the nests to lay them in.



Bookstores have large assortments of Easter cards, carrying with them instruction as well as beauty, and on market this morning the florists and country folks who happened to bring flowers quickly sold their entire stock, people buying them with the greatest avidity for home and church decorations. The religious festivals tomorrow will be unusually interesting." Then follows half a column of church announcements with details of sermon subjects, anthems to be sung, floral decorations, etc. all tending to show that Easter had suddenly become one of Lancaster's most popular holidays.

On an inside page there is an announcement that St. Luke's Reformed Sunday School, recently organized, will hold an entertainment on Easter Monday evening, with carols, recitations, and exercises, for the benefit of its building fund. On this page is an acknowledgement: ". . . As usual our friend, D. W. Miesse, has remembered the printer with an Easter offering of several beautiful Easter eggs." Close to this is Miesse's own advertisement: "Have you seen the real rabbits, and all the beautiful designs in Easter eggs at Miesse's store?" On the back appeared an article on a local artist, Abe Miller, who carved Easter eggs from wood, bone and ivory. He specialized in portraits of the recipients, pictures of their homes, their gardens, favorite horses and dogs, and had large orders from Philadelphia and New York as well as locally.

A local lady who was a child in this period recalls the Easters of her childhood. At the breakfast table, on Easter morning, each child of the family found a nest made of colored paper in a soup-plate. The eggs in it had been dyed in the kitchen by various traditional methods. Some were wrapped in colored calico, and boiled. Others took on a beautiful shade of glossy brown from onion peel. I have found no one locally who used an old German method of wrapping the eggs in green leaves before dyeing them. Some of the eggs had designs drawn on them in wax before dyeing, so that the pictures showed up white in the colored background. On others, designs were etched with a needle after the eggs were dyed. A well-known expert in this lovely folk art, Mr. B. Elmer Leaman, of Bird-in-Hand, died last month (February 6, 1948) at the age of eighty-five. Many of his eggs and those of other artists are treasured in local families to this day.

If the children were very lucky they received a chocolate egg apiece. These were not the elaborately decorated ones advertised by the confectioners, but small chocolate-cream ones with, perhaps, a yellow center to represent a yolk. These were usually hidden away for slow consumption, a thin slice being whittled off each day, to make the pleasure last as long as possible. The one who first reached his yellow yolk was looked upon as something of a glutton.

It was more likely, however, that instead of the expensive chocolate egg, the child of the seventies or eighties would receive

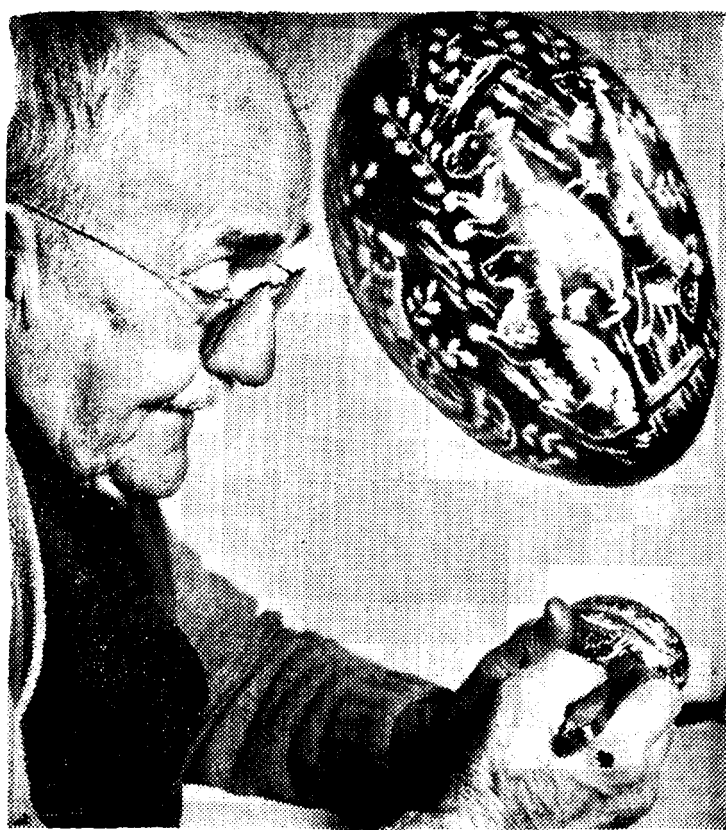
a rabbit made of gingercake or cookie dough. These were made by the farmers' wives and sold in large quantities on the market. Often the rabbit was represented as in the act of laying the egg — a real colored egg being inserted in the dough in the appropriated position, thus proving to most local boys and girls that the eggs really came from this source. Mrs. Gibbons knew of these in Allentown, and Frances Lichten describes them in her *Folk Art of Rural Pennsylvania*. The ones she knew were made of bread dough molded by hand, but the local variety were definitely cake. As Miss Lichten points out, this earthy conception was a little too strong for the more refined taste of the city-dwellers, and gradually the egg was omitted.

In 1885, Reist's grocery offered for sale "the finest Easter hams in the county." Our local custom of eating ham and bacon at Easter is the last remaining relic of the cruel medieval custom of insulting the Jews at Easter. Fortunately none of us, today, do this with any such intention. At the same date, Bursk's announced that with every pound of coffee they would give away an Easter card. Easter cards seem to have been a favorite advertising method at this date, and many such cards appear in local scrapbooks, and collections.

On Easter Monday (April 6) the *New Era* devoted its entire front page to a description of the local celebration. "There is gloom over the nation because of General Grant's illness. Save for this all had been joy and gladness." The weather had been beautiful. "It was too cool for new spring suits, but no one could suppress the Easter bonnet." Streets were thronged. Churches reported the largest congregations ever seen. Sunday Schools gave out eggs, candy, and Easter cards. The interior of Trinity Lutheran Church was decorated with a large floral design bearing the words: "Risen with Christ." "No more death." "Dead unto sin — Alive unto God."

On the commercial side. "Never has there been so large and varied and beautiful a stock to select from. Stores dealing in Easter souvenirs had empty shelves on Saturday night. The florists were overtaxed."

The skating rink at Columbia was advertising an Easter masquerade party for Monday evening. Prizes for the best costumes, and Easter gifts for everyone.



B. E. Leaman, of Bird-in-Hand, was noted for his beautifully carved Easter eggs, one of which is illustrated above. The former Justice of the Peace, who died February 6, 1948, had been decorating eggs for sixty years.

According to an article by Dr. B. F. Witmer in the *Sunday News*, Easter 1934, the molded chocolate rabbit was first invented in Lancaster by Joseph Royer, confectioner, and Joseph Huber, brass-founder. They made plaster of paris molds from clear-toy rabbits, and cast the chocolate from these molds. They were first sold at Royer's confectionery, 50-52 West King Street, and Anderson's on East King Street, next to the Farmer's bank. If this is so, the invention must have been made in the last part of the 1880's for in 1885 no chocolate rabbits were offered for sale, while in 1890 almost every advertiser, including the two stores above-mentioned, had these novelties for sale.

In 1890 the *New Era* for the first time described the egg-rolling party at the White House. It also gave a column to the local celebration, headed:

### "HAPPY EASTER

#### Nature Joins with Humanity in the Celebration of the Resurrection of the Lord."

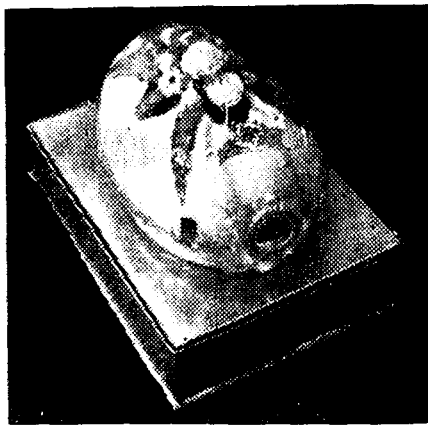
The tone of the description, however, was much less exuberant than the reports in the eighties. Easter had already become a commonplace. It was no longer news.

In 1895 the big advertisements had to do with clothes. Hagers' were stressing the new "Crepons," and The Bon Ton had "new Easter bonnets." The A & P Store was giving away a souvenir entitled "Look Mama!" which depicted a little girl with a basket of bunnies. "Charley's Aunt" was to open at the Fulton Theater on Easter Monday. The inside columns of the paper were full of Easter poems sent in by local versifiers. The Easter Monday paper carried a report of special services at the county home. The Sunday School children of Bethel Church of God had carried eggs to the children's home.

I am not sure at what date there first appeared in Lancaster the hollow sugar eggs with an isinglass window, and scrap-picture scenes inside. I only know that they were most popular in the 1890's. They are perhaps the prettiest of the Easter toys, and most of us have treasured and perhaps still treasure lovely examples of this art.

We have now, indeed, entered a period well within the recollection of many of our members, and I am hoping that the discussion which follows may bring out many things which I have

neglected to mention. Our own lives are as much history as those of our ancestors, and as worthy of preservation. In my own childhood, the Easter nests were almost always in colored straw baskets, and were seldom hidden in the garden, but were delivered to the door, sometimes in person by the donor, sometimes by messenger. Children sometimes placed them on the door-step, rang the bell, and ran away to hide. Very small children who received baskets in this fashion, were quite sure the bunny had been there. These baskets contained, in a nest of colored paper, or excelsior, a vast variety of gifts. There were eggs, of course, both real and artificial, ranging in size from the tiniest jelly eggs, to mammoth chocolates large enough to crowd everything else out of the basket. There were hollow rabbits with eggs inside them, and hollow eggs



Panorama Egg  
With Pictured Interior.

with rabbits inside them. There were chocolate rabbits, gingerbread rabbits, papier-maché rabbits, velvet rabbits, tin rabbits, and even real rabbits. I remember a fuzzy rabbit that hopped when you pressed a rubber bulb, and a jointed velour rabbit made on the same principle as a teddy-bear.

In addition to the rabbits, there were chocolate pigs, chickens and other poultry. There were little yellow peepies made of marshmallow, and others made of balls of cotton, sometimes with quite unrealistic feathers pasted on. One Easter, about 1905, real ducklings were stuffed and placed in Easter baskets, but they were



such tragic little figures, that many children cried over them; and a rumor started that they had died of disease, and that they were still probably full of germs. I never saw them after the one year.

All of us can remember the courthouse steps aflame with flowers, in the days before the new wings cut off the full lovely sweep of their expanse. The flowers of today may be even lovelier, but the mass of color will never again be so breath-takingly beautiful. By Sunday morning most of these flowers had been transferred to the cemeteries, and the graves seemed to break forth in blossom as they do today. To visit our local cemeteries on Easter morning is to be reminded of the scene in the *Bluebird* where the children seek the lost bird among the dead, and find only perfume and flowers. Says Myltyl, "But where are the dead?" and Tyltyl replies, "There are no dead."

In such surroundings, the sunrise services which grow ever more popular, are particularly impressive. The most recent of these held at the Riverview Memorial Park draws larger and larger crowds each year.

The favorite Easter parade of our childhood, was out East King Street to the reservoir. This is still a tradition with many people. A statement in "The Romance of Greeting Cards," that Easter cards were not published until 1909, is flatly contradicted by the statement in the 1880 *New Era*, already quoted. We wish we could as flatly contradict the author's further statement that any reference to the religious significance of Easter is avoided by the manufacturers of greeting cards because such cards will not sell. Bunnies, eggs, and especially flowers are the best sellers.

During the 1930's a pleasant local custom flourished, and had to be regretfully abandoned because of administrative difficulties. This was the distribution of Easter baskets by the Lancaster Police Department. Miss Agnes Ferriter inaugurated the custom early in her term as policewoman, and it was one of the best means ever devised of creating a friendly feeling between the police and the children of the community. Unfortunately the idea became too popular. Too many individuals and organizations wished to have a share in it, until at Easter time the entire force seemed to be needed to do the rabbit's work, while the normal tasks of the department waited. Therefore Miss Ferriter had eventually to give up the work.



Mr. and Mrs. John McQuate, of R. 2, Denver, Pa., shown with their "Easter egg tree," which they have been decorating for years.

The newer Easter toys which have come upon the market in recent years include eggs with painted faces and crepe paper bonnets and ruffles, representing characters in fiction and song, or merely pretty maidens. Some of the most artistic of these are made by our country people, and are sold on the Easter market, where they add a pleasant decorative touch to the pre-Easter displays of dressed chickens, rosy hams, dandelion greens, and yellow daffodils. There are also for sale, nowadays, unhappy peepies tinted in all the hues of the painter's palette. We are told that the coloring matter used is non-poisonous, and will not harm the little birds, but, somehow, the custom seems all wrong to some of us.

Easter is still preeminently a religious festival, and although, as we have shown, its commercialization has been rapid, it is still, most of all, a matter of the soul. Dr. Dubbs in an editorial in *The Guardian* for 1882, speaking in favor of retaining the old secular Easter customs says: "A child may be too young to grasp the meaning of the Resurrection, but when he receives an egg on Easter morning, he makes a beginning in understanding that this is, indeed, a blessed day."

The custom of decorating a tree with Easter-egg shells, from which the contents have been blown out, has been practiced in many countries, and is described in English as well as German sources. Such a tree plays an important part in a recent novel, "River of Earth" by James Still, laid in the Kentucky mine-fields. Mr. and Mrs. John McQuate of R. 2, Denver, Pa., have kept up this custom for a number of years, and it is also being revived this year by the Berks County Historical Society at Reading, where a ten-foot sassafras tree was decorated with fourteen hundred colored Easter eggs.

To the hymnals of the church, Lancaster has contributed one particularly lovely Easter offering. The words, translated from the German of J. P. Lange by Henry Harbaugh during his pastorate at First Reformed Church in this city, were set to music by Miss Alice Nevin (daughter of John Williamson Nevin, president of Franklin and Marshall College), who was for some years organist of the same church. The result is the ringing carol:

“The Lord of Life is risen,  
 Sing, Easter heralds, sing!  
 He bursts his rocky prison,  
 Wide let the choral ring!  
 In death no longer lying,  
 He rose, the Prince, today.  
 Life of the dead and dying,  
 He triumphs o’er decay!”

At Miss Nevin’s funeral in the college chapel, in 1925, this hymn was sung, and those who knew her best felt, as they heard its triumphant notes ringing from the old organ which had often responded to her own fingers, that its words were very true:

“The Lord of Life is risen,  
 And love no longer grieves.”

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