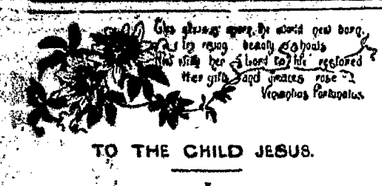


TO THE CHILD JESUS.

I

The Nativity.

Could every time-worn heart but see
Thee once again,
A happy human child, among the
homes of men,
The age of doubt would pass—the vision of Thy face
Would silently restore the childhood of the race.

II.

The Flight into Egypt.

Thou wayfaring Jesus, a pilgrim, a stranger,
Exiled from heaven by love at Thy birth,
Exiled again from thy nest in the manger,
A fugitive child 'mid the perils of earth,—
Cheer with Thy fellowship all who are weary,
Wandering far from the land that they love;
Guide every heart that is homeless and dreary,
Safe to its home in thy presence above.

—The Rev. Dr. Henry Van Dyke in "The Builders, and Other Poems."

Lizotte?

Yes, that Agenaise lassie, half peasant, half worldling, who revealed the sweetness of woman's presence to the little thinker and dreamer that I then was.

I must tell you that they are good to look upon our girls of the Gascon country. They have not the rather hard type, the accentuated Greek type, of the Arlesiennes but their tall figures are less supple, less stocky, their more humid eyes have more sweetness.

Lizotte was an incarnation of this charming and piquant type.

When I became her friend I was 15 years old. I lived in Fontgrane. Every day I went to the parsonage to take a lesson in Latin from the Abbe Destourbes. The Abbe was a kindly teacher, a lover of Virgil, whom he recited with devout intonations, like a prayer.

But what was best in the parsonage was Lizotte—Lizotte Destourbes—the little niece of the abbe, the daughter of the Destourbes of Agen—he who kept at the corner an important establishment of fruits and candies. Lizotte was some months older than I. She loved fun like a child, and none the less did not disdain from time to time to play the lady, as she paced along the sidewalk on Sundays, attracting much attention from the young fellows.

Unforgetable days, those Easter holidays in the parsonage at Fontgrane. Never since have I made such tremendous journeys nor such curious ones as those which I then undertook with Lizotte in the attic of the parsonage—a real wilderness of entangled beams. Further, it was the season of approaching Easter.

I recall above all others a certain evening of April, at the commencement of Holy Week.

Lizotte and I were enjoying a holiday on the plea that we had to attend to decorating the church. I dined pleasantly enough at the parsonage between the Abbe Destourbes and the little minx, who amused herself by kicking me on the shins under the table. We had finished the frugal repast that was served up for the Lenten period, and had already left the table when a messenger came to call away Abbe Destourbes to a very old lady who was very sick and wished to make her confession.

He instantly donned his overcoat, took his hat and stick, and sallied out with the final instruction that I was not to leave Lizotte alone in the parsonage, for, the night being dark, Irma, the housekeeper, accompanied her master, lantern in hand.

The charge gave me great pride, but at bottom I was forced to own to myself that she had in me a rather poor defender. She was at that time far braver than I. Taking me by the hand, she drew me into the interminable, winding corridors of the house, then into the cool solitude of the nave. She whispered into my ear at the same time awful stories of ghosts, whose favorite season, as is well known, is Holy Week, for enjoying themselves in consecrated spots. Suddenly she burst out into a song, her fresh young voice accentuating the vowels in the Languedoc fashion.

Come, divine Messiah,
Bless our unfortunate days!
Come, source of life,
Come, come, come!

But when she ceased the church answered to her voice in such horrible reverberatory echoes that we madly fled back through the sacristry and the long winding corridors to the dining room of the parsonage, where we fell into chairs, affrighted and laughing at our fright.

Then as the Abbe Destourbes did not return, Lizotte enumerated to me all the presents she had received on her birthday, which fell that year on Palm Sunday. At last, my little friend rose from her chair and went on tiptoe to open the buffet at the dining room, whence she drew from it a box of white wood, which she laid cautiously on the table.

This box was a present which Lizotte had brought from Destourbes d'Agen to his brother, the cure. A hundred of the finest prunes were arranged side by side in layers of twenty, upon beds of laced paper. The prunes which Lizotte had brought were phenomenal ones, large, meaty bursting with juice and luscious and perfumed. The girl was right in the pride with which she displayed these products of the paternal business. As to me, I should have wished to compare their taste at once with their fine appearance. But alas! the slightest theft would be easy to discover. The prunes fitted in one against the other like stones in a mosaic, and (doubtless because such luxuries were interdicted in Holy Week) the abbe had not yet touched them.

After a long and contemplative silence Lizotte said:

"If I let you taste one of these prunes what would you say?"

I readily acknowledged that the experiment would be very agreeable to me.

The little minx made that gesture which signifies in every language, "Wait a moment, don't stir." She delicately lifted out of the box first the upper layer of prunes then the second, each in its bed of paper took a prune from the third, carefully replaced the two layers that she had taken out, then closed the box and put it back in the buffet.

All these maneuvers were executed with an ease, a perfect mastery, which filled me with admiration

But now Lizotte had returned to me, holding between two fingers the stolen prune. She began by appropriating to herself at one bite exactly half of the prune. This seemed to me entirely equitable. Then, just as people offer sugar to a lapdog, she tendered me the other half in her red finger tips, amusing herself by withdrawing it as soon as I approached my mouth to the morsel.

A pretty game! My lips caught without retaining sometimes her nails, sometimes her brown fingers and sometimes the fist of my little friend. Then I seized Lizotte's arm, I snapped the prune, but when I had swallowed it I still held imprisoned the slim little hand with my lips above it.

Oh, that exquisite hour of innocent caresses! All who have known such an hour know also, I think, how to love most delicately. Almost swooning away, I murmured.

"Oh! Lizotte! I love you, I love you!"

Suddenly Lizotte thrust me away from her. She turned a little, hiding her head with her arm. Astonished, I raised my eyes. I saw the Abbe Destourbes standing in the frame of the doorway. He was looking straight at us. He was very red. The scene of which he had been a witness had undoubtedly disturbed him violently, for his breviary was hanging from the end of the little piece of cloth in which he usually carried it, and the devotional pictures, sliding out of the pages, were whirling around the floor like choristers escaped from a sacristy

He said severely

"Pick those up!"

Lizotte did not stir ... turning her back, her head slightly bent, she was nervously playing with her fingers on the strings of her apron. I noticed that her shoulders and her chignon shook.

"She is weeping," I thought. At present, having deeper thought on this matter, it is my opinion that she was laughing.

Sheepishly, I picked up the sacred objects and replaced them in the breviary. The abbe did not scold me. He contented himself with saying

"Go home to your parents. It is time for you to be in bed."

After this event I was no longer allowed to play with Lizotte. That was an awful grief to me, but you may be sure I spoke of it to no one, and so I began to know, before love itself, the delicious suffering of love.

At the Easter season, when the holidays arrived, I still saw at the church and afar off the pure profile, the supple figure, the knotted kerchief of Lizotte.

But, alas! never more did she laugh at me or box my ears. Never more did my lips touch her brown hands.

All this happened long ago. Nevertheless, when I visit Gascony, when I walk in Agen, I sometimes meet Lizotte.

Only Lizotte is a woman. She has married a notary. She wears a hat And she is no longer Lizotte.

No Pleasure.

Doctor Straightlace (reprovingly)—I always thought you were one of my most devout parishioners, and had no doubt but that you would give up all pleasure during Lent. Now I hear that you gave a euchre party last week.

Miss De Style—Goodness me, Doctor! Do you call "giving" a euchre party pleasure! It is simply hard work, worry and vexation of spirit.

April girl with April eyes,
Gleaming with a shy surprise,
We assert
When you pass us laughing by,
Since you smile and since you sigh,
You're a flirt!

Lady herald of the spring,
Buds and bees and birds you bring,
Promise, too,
Of the shining summer hours;
April girl of sun and showers,
Hail to you!

OSTARA, GODDESS OF EASTER.

She Has Given Her Name to One of the Greatest Events in the Christian Year.

Ostara, the Goddess of Easter and of Spring, is one of the most attractive personages in German mythology, which is also the mythology of what we are in the habit of calling the Anglo-Saxon race

This heathen goddess has given her name to one of the greatest events in the Christian year The name is a form of the modern German "Ostern" and of the English "Easter" The early Church found it wise to adapt to Christian purposes many institutions and customs of a pagan nature which had become established in the affections of

THE HEATHEN GODDESS.

the people. So the observances which in heathen times honored the advent of Ostara, the Goddess of Spring, survive to a certain extent in the Christian celebration of the Resurrection.

Apart from the religious services however, those observances with which the heathen Teutons honored Ostara still linger in their primitive form in many parts of Germany and possibly of England. In New York and other centres of Anglo-Saxon civilization they have assumed a more complex character

The German rustic's feasting at Easter time, according to a German mythologist, represents the ancient sacrifice to the goddess That sacrifice is offered by the urban American in the form of fine raiment and a bonnet, which his wife wears When he has to pay the bill for these things he may console himself by remembering that he is helping to perpetuate an observance of primeval antiquity.

New clothes, however, are not appropriate for woman alone at Easter time. Man also at this season begins to notice that his winter garments are shabby and, if he can afford it, replaces them in honor of Ostara.

Ostara is represented in mythological art as a dazzling maiden, simply but beautifully clad. She is surrounded by winged babies, birds, flowers, rabbits and other things emblematical of Easter and the springtime. The sun, it is reported, used to take three jumps for joy at the appearance of Ostara on Easter Day.

Easter eggs are supposed to be laid by no common hens, but by Easter hens. The goddess Ostara was especially favorable to hens, which are usually to be seen with many eggs in her pictures. Easter eggs should be red, because red was the favorite color of the Thunder God, and the first thunder storm of Spring was sacred to Ostara.

The Easter fire which German peasants make is the funeral pyre of the Winter God. Into it they sometimes throw a stuffed figure containing snow shovels and sleds. That once represented the defeated giant of winter, but the Church substituted Judas Iscariot.

Curious Feature of Easter.

A curious feature in the services of the Roman Catholic Church on Easter Sunday is the paschal candle, a huge wax candle, richly painted and decorated with flowers. It has, moreover, five spikes inserted in it, which are filled with spice. They represent the wounds of Christ, and the candle itself when lighted signifies His resurrection. In the Greek and Armenian churches the paschal candle is divided into three branches, to represent the Trinity.

The Roman Easter.

In Rome Easter Day is observed with much pomp and ceremony. The day is ushered in by the firing of cannon from the Castle of St. Angelo, and in the evening the dome of St. Peter's is illuminated. After morning mass the Pope appears on the balcony in front of the Cathedral and bestows his benediction on the crowds assembled below.

EGGS FOR EASTER.

Even More Popular Now Than When We Boiled Them in Calico.

Notwithstanding the advent of the rabbit, the egg continues in undiminished popularity as the emblem of Easter. The crude, homely practice of coloring hen's eggs in the country districts at Eastertide is increasing, rather than losing its vogue, and in our cities Easter times see the development of all sorts of expensive and extravagant novelties, in which eggs, real or simulated, figure extensively. Our shops are full of these novelties, and one can find value for any amount of money, small or large, that he wishes to expend for them. They appear extensively, this time in the jewellers' shops, both in this country and England

Eggs, in which costly presents are placed, are mere papier mache shells, covered with hand painted satin. Frequently, however, a lady will order a plain white satin egg, to be painted upon by herself, and then return for filling and dispatching Returned travellers will bring in ostrich eggs to be painted and filled, and an egg of the extinct great auk is described by the Strand Magazine as having passed through the hands of a big London dealer in such novelties

The record egg, as far as size is concerned, was recently manufactured by a London firm Its shell was entirely of chocolate, nine feet high and eighteen feet in circumference It held about a ton of superfine confectionery besides the whole expensive trousseau of a South African millionaire's bride A great number of the wedding presents were also packed in the egg The sweetmeat part of the order, including the elaborate external decoration, cost £500. The packing of the filled egg was a work of art, and the whole was insured for many thousands of pounds before being delivered on board a Castle liner at Southampton docks

Easter eggs worth $100,000 have been sent out by the same house, but the value, of course, lay chiefly in their costly contents.

Of course, to some extent, topical events affect the designs of Easter novelties; but the craze must be something which can be fashioned into the shape of an egg Thus, a bicycle wouldn't do But a motor car has been produced The motor car is one mass of chocolate, weighing eighteen pounds.

I have seen in Paris Easter eggs as big as an ordinary door. Not all sweet stuff, however. One, I remember, was merely a huge shell of interlaced cane or wicker, which was to be filled with moss and stuck all over with fresh flowers—a costly and beautiful ornament for a lady's boudoir. It cost 1,500f.

A very funny Easter conceit is produced by an American designer in this way —

About a gross of hen's eggs are bought and blown, the contents of the eggs, by the way are sold very cheaply, at so much per quart. The blown shells are next taken to the drying room and left there a few days, before being weighted or balanced This is done by pouring in through the hole a little fine shot, on top of which is poured melted wax

The eggs are then stood on a perfectly level surface and allowed to settle Then they are placed in the hands of an artist, who judges from the shape of the egg (and the shapes vary) what character shall be imparted to it by means of oil paint.

Some Ancient Easter Customs.

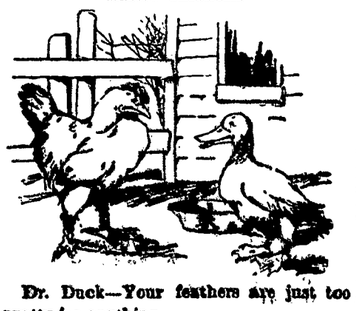
Years ago the celebration of Easter was invariably accompanied by many very quaint and interesting observances, but few of these customs have been brought down unimpaired to the close of the essentially practical nineteenth century, and are, therefore, little known to the present generation. The sending of Easter eggs still remains in vogue, but this custom, too, is slowly but surely dying, being probably killed by the more popular and less expensive Easter card.

The exchange of eggs at Easter was formerly a religious observance, the custom dating back to the very earliest days of the Christian Church. In many European countries, notably France and Russia, it is still religiously observed. Among the Russian peasantry the exchange of visits and eggs on Easter Day is very common, being accompanied by the salutation "Christ is risen!" the usual response being "He is, indeed!" In France, begging for eggs on the part of the village children is very popular, while in Italy hundreds and thousands of eggs are blessed by the clergy, previously to being distributed among the people as charms against many spiritual and bodily ills.

Polyglot Menus.

No restaurant in St. Petersburg will be allowed hereafter to have its bill of fare exclusively in a foreign language. By a recent edict a Russian version must always be added.

Easter Chickens.



Dr. Duck—Your feathers are just too pretty for anything.

Henrietta—Yes; you see I was hatched from a dyed egg.