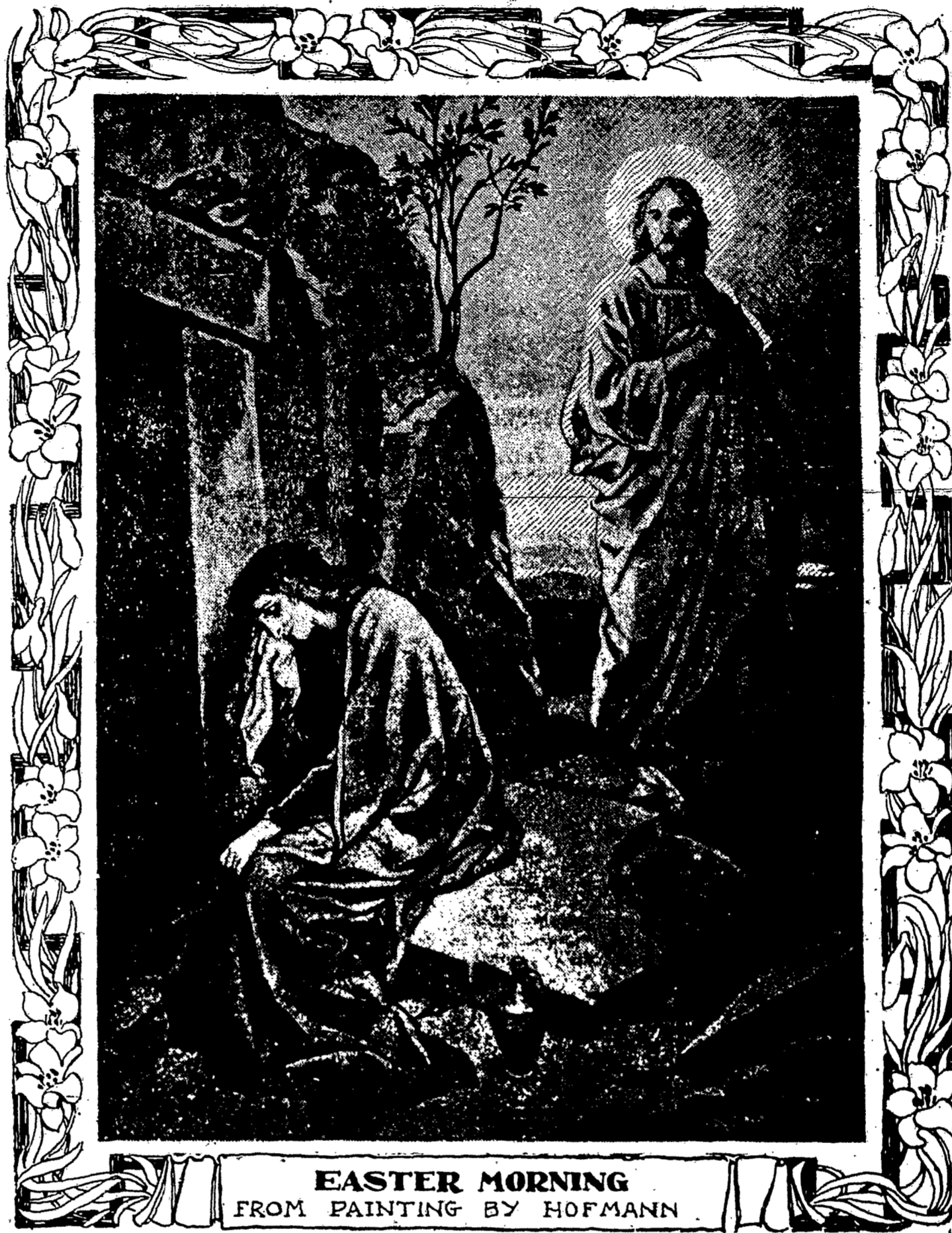


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EASTER MORNING
FROM PAINTING BY HOFMANN

The Legend of Easter Eggs



Trinity bells with their hollow tings,
And their vibrant lips and their brazen
tongues,
Over the roofs of the city pour
Their Easter music with joyous roar.
Till the soaring notes to the Sun are rolled
As he swings along in his path of gold.

"Dearest papa," says my boy to me,
As he merrily climbs on his mother's knees,
"Why are these eggs that you see me hold
Colored so finely with blue and gold?
And what is the wonderful bird that lays
Such beautiful eggs upon Easter days?"

Tenderly shine the April skies,
Like laughter and tears in my child's blue
eyes,
And every face in the street is gay,—
Why cloud this youngster's by saying nay?
So I cudgel my brains for the tale he begs,
And tell him this story of Easter eggs:

You have heard, my boy, of the Man who
died,
Crowned with keen thorns and crucified;
And how Joseph the wealthy—whom God
reward!—
Cared for the corpse of his martyred Lord,
And piously tombed it within the rock,
And closed the gate with a mighty block.

Now, close by the tomb a fair tree grew,
With pendulous leaves and blossoms of
blue;
And deep in the green tree's shadowy
bosom
A beautiful singing bird sat on her nest,
Which was bordered with mosses like

And held four eggs of an ivory white.
Now, when the bird from her dim recess
Beheld the Lord in His burial dress,
And looked on the heavenly face so pale,
And the dear hands pierced with the cruel
nail,
Her heart nigh broke with a sudden pang,
And out of the depth of her sorrow she
sang.

All night long till the moon was up
She sat and sang in her moss-wreathed
cup:
A song of sorrow as wild and shrill
As the homeless wind when it roams the
hill;
So full of tears, so loud and long,
That the grief of the world seemed turned
to song.

But soon there came through the weeping
night
A glittering Angel clothed in white;
And he rolled the stone from the tomb
away,
Where the Lord of the earth and the
heavens lay;
And Christ arose in the cavern's gloom,
And in living luster came from the tomb.

Now, the bird that sat in the heart of the
tree
Beheld this celestial mystery,
And its heart was filled with a sweet de-
light,
And it poured a song on the throbbing
night—
Notes climbing notes, till higher, higher,
They shot to Heaven like spears of fire.

When the glittering, white-robed Angel
heard
The sorrowing song of the grieving bird,
And, after the jubilant pean of mirth
That hailed Christ risen again on earth,
He said: "Sweet bird, be forever blest,
Thyself, thy eggs, and thy moss-wreathed
nest!"

And ever, my child, since that blessed
night,
When Death bowed down to the Lord of
Light,
The eggs of that sweet bird change their
hue,
And burn with red and gold and blue;
Reminding mankind in their simple way
Of the holy marvel of Easter Day.

Joy Supreme.

And, in the glory of the
lilies, in the great joy of the
glad morning, there should be
no heart that any fate can rob
of its serenity, no soul that the
powers of evil can successfully
assault.

EASTER AT ST. MARK'S

Pretty Custom of Feeding the Pigeons in Great Square of Old Venice.



Centuries ago the
Italians were wont to
celebrate Easter day
by casting from the
steeple of churches
manna in various
forms. In Rome cakes
were tossed down in
this way to the multi-
tudes and as they neared the ground
a scramble took place to see who
among the populace would be lucky
enough to catch them and thus
partake of St. Peter's blessing, which
the cakes were supposed to bring to
the winner.

An interesting tale is related about
the pigeons of San Marco. On a Palm
Sunday years and years ago, the great
doge, attended by his official suite
and all the foreign ambassadors re-
siding in Venice, paid a ceremonious
visit to the Pinza San Marco. The
doge had with him a number of
pigeons, each incumbered by a piece
of paper tied to its leg. These pigeons
he ordered released from the gallery
of San Marco, above the great bronze,
plunging horses and, hampered thus
in their flight, the birds fell an easy
prey into the hands of the throng
gathered in the plaza. Those who had
the good fortune to capture a pigeon
took it home to fatten for Easter, but
a few of the fowls escaped and sought
refuge far up in the cathedral domes.

The fact that the pigeons found
shelter here where St. Mark is sup-
posed to be buried rendered them sac-
red to the populace and from that
time on it has been the custom to
feed and pet their progeny, especially
on Easter Sunday, when at 2 o'clock
in the afternoon an extra supply is
cast to them, everybody contributing
to their seemingly insatiable ap-
petites. Each year this pigeon-feeding
time is anticipated joyously by the
nature lovers of Venice. During the
war, because of scarcity of food in
Venice, it was proposed to kill these
sacred birds. With their extinction,
would have passed one of the prettiest
historic practices in the kingdom.

