



# SUNDAY READING

## THE DAYS OF HOLY WEEK.

Lenten Ceremonies of Old and Modern Times.

Good Friday is the most solemn period of the Lenten fast, and brings the sombre rays of mourning near their close. In times gone by, the whole of Passion-week was much more rigidly observed than now. The amonitions and humiliations were, outwardly at least, much louder and deeper, and the Easter rejoicings much more extravagant. But it may be that what the world has lost in the art of giving expression to its sorrows or its joys, it has gained in earnestness and seriousness of character. There are few days in the year when we lay aside our burden of daily toil and care, and give ourselves up to the impulse of the day and hour, whatever it may be.

Yet, as christianity rules so great a portion of the world, the days set apart for religious observance on the calendar are carefully kept and observed by many. And of these, those which witness the culminating scenes of Lent are the most important and attract the widest attention.

In this country, the ceremonies of Lent and of Easter belong to the church alone, but in most other lands these occasions have always borne both a civil and political relation to society.

In former times royalty itself led the Lenten solemnities, and we read of monarchs washing the feet of beggars, in imitation of Christ, who washed the feet of his disciples. This ceremony, which was regularly practiced by the kings and queens of England in ancient times, occurred upon Maundy Thursday. They washed and kissed the feet of as many poor people as they themselves numbered in years, and bestowed a gift, or *maundy*, upon each.

Queen Elizabeth performed this royal duty at Greenwich, when she was thirty-nine years old on which occasion the feet of thirty-nine poor persons were first washed by the yeomen of the laundry with warm water and herbs, afterwards by the sub-almoner, and lastly, by the queen herself; the person who washed making a cross upon the pauper's foot, above the toes, and kissing it. This ceremony was performed by the queen kneeling, being attended by thirty fine ladies and gentlemen. Clothes, victuals and money were then distributed among the poor.

The last of the English monarchs who performed this office in person was James II., and it was afterwards performed by the almoner. On the fifth of April, 1781, it being Maundy Thursday, and the king in his forty-eighth year, there was distributed at the banqueting house, Whitehall, to forty-eight poor men and the same number of poor women, boiled beef and shoulders of mutton, and small bowls of ale, for dinner; after that large wooden platters of fish and leaves, the fish being undressed; twelve red herrings and twelve white herrings, and four half quarter loaves. Each person had one platter of these provisions, and after that was distributed among them shoes, stockings, linen and woollen cloth, and leather bags filled with copper and silver coins, to each about four pounds in value. The washing of feet was performed by his Grace, the Lord Archbishop of York, who was also Lord High Almoner.

Cardinal Woolsey, in 1230, made his *maundy* at Peterborough Abbey, where upon Maundy Thursday, in our Lady's Chapel, he washed and kissed the feet of fifty-nine poor men, "and, after he had wiped them, he gave every one of the said poor men twelve pence in money, three ells of good canvas to make them shirts, a pair of new shoes, a cast of red herrings, and three white herrings, and one of these had two shillings."

This ancient custom is now no longer observed, except in the Royal Chapel at Whitehall, where the poor still receive their gifts from the royal bounty.

Maundy Thursday is always the Thursday before Easter, and the origin of its name is still disputed. By some *Maundy* is supposed to come from the *mandate* of Christ, when he bade his disciples break bread in remembrance of Him; or from his other *mandate*, after he had washed their feet, when he said "Love one another."

But the word is probably derived from the Saxon *maund*, which afterwards became *maund*, and signified a basket, and finally the gift in the basket.

Thus says Shakespeare, that oracle for old time words and phrases, "a thousand favours from her *maund* she drew"—and Herrick—

"Behold for us, the naked graces stay With *maunds* of roses, for to strew the way."

In another place, the latter poet also again refers to the *maund* thus: "All's gone, and death hath taken Away from us Our *maundie*, thus The widows stand forsaken."

This day is also called *Shere Thursday*, since it was at this time that the clergy were accustomed to *shere*, or shave their heads, and to trim their beards against the coming of Easter day.

Whether this practice of shearing had anything to do with sheep, it is now impossible to say; but such might be inferred since there has been handed down to us an old legend of St. Brandon, which says: "He sailed away with his monks to the island of Sheep, and on *Shere Thursday*, after supper, he wesshe theyre feet and kissed them lyke as our lord dyd in his disciples."

In Papal countries the washing of feet still forms part of the church ceremonies upon Maundy Thursday, where twelve paupers represent the apostles, and their feet are washed by the archbishop. In the great cathedral of Seville, in Spain, Maundy Thursday is celebrated by high

mass, which is intended especially to celebrate the last supper, and assumes toward the close the deep melancholy. After this, one of the public sights of the town on this day is the splendid cold dinner given to the twelve paupers by the archbishop. The dinner is to be seen laid out in two large rooms of the palace. The twelve guests are completely clothed at the expense of their host; and having partaken of a more homely dinner in the kitchen, they are furnished with large baskets to take away the splendid commons allotted to each, which they sell to the *gourmands* of the town. Each is also allowed to dispose of his napkin, which is put up in some fanciful form—as a bird or animal—and people buy these and place them in their cupboards as specimens of the skill of nuns in the art of plaiting.

About this time the processions, known as *confrairias* or confraternities, begin to move out of the churches and along the streets, which are thronged with people. The object of these processions is to represent various scenes of the Saviour's passion. There are the Jews, with their long aquiline noses; St. Peter, with his head completely bald; John in his dress of green, and Judas in the abhorred yellow, and with red hair.

All the painters of Europe seem to be agreed upon the color of Judas's hair—and Judas's hair is a common name in Spain. A similar application of the term seems to have existed in England, for Shakespeare in "As You Like It" makes *Rosalind* say, "His hair is of the dissembling color," and *Celia* replies, "Something browner than Judas's."

Upon Good Friday Judas is the particular object of execration in the Spanish and Portuguese navy. Says an eye-witness at Montevideo: "The three last days had been kept as days of sorrow; all the ships in the harbor expressed it by having their colors hoisted only half mast high as a token of mourning, and the yards crossed as much as possible, to make them resemble a crucifix, while apparent solemnity presided both on shore and in the harbor. But immediately at a signal, when the minute arrived, all being in waiting, the yards were squared, the colors hoisted wholly up, and the guns fired from all the ships in the harbor, while the bells on shore were set ringing as fast as possible; and at the bowsprit, or yard arm of the ship, was suspended an effigy of Judas, which they began to dip in the river, acting with the greatest possible enthusiasm and ridiculous madness, beating it on the shoulder, dipping it, and then renewing their former ridiculous conduct."

To Good Friday belongs the hot-cross bun, which seems to be the only relic of the Papal religion which the Reformation has left in England. The buns are usually sweeter than the ordinary bun, and flavored with allspice, and stamped with a figure of the cross. In many a poor cottage, the Good Friday bun is hung up and preserved for good luck until the next Good Friday comes round—and there are plenty of superstitious ones who aver, that no fire ever happened in a house that had one.

This resembles the vulgar notion that the straight stripe down the shoulder of an ass, intersected by the long one which extends from the head to the tail, is a cross of honor conferred by Christ, and that the animal possessed it not before Christ rode into Jerusalem upon the back of an ass.

It is a curious fact that in the ruins of Herculaneum, which was destroyed in the year 79, were found loaves of bread precisely similar to the Good Friday buns, and with the cross stamped upon them. The bread of the Greeks was stamped in the same manner from the earliest times. Sometimes the loaf had only four lines, and it was then called *quadra*, and the cross was to make it break more easily.

From the early Greeks we seem to have received both the bun and its name, for a species of sacred bread, which was called *boon*, in very ancient times was offered to the gods.

One of the most solemn ceremonials of Good Friday in the Roman catholic church is the *Tenebræ*, which signifies *darkness*, and symbolizes the darkness which fell over the crucifixion. This is partly represented by a triangular candlestick with fourteen yellow wax candles and one white one; seven of these yellow candles being on one side, seven on the other, and the white candle at the top. The fourteen yellow candles represents the eleven apostles, the Virgin Mary, and the women that were with her at the crucifixion; the white candle at the top represents Christ. Fourteen psalms are sung, and at the end of each a yellow candle is extinguished until none are left burning except the white one above. After this, and the extinction of the light upon the altar, the white candle is taken down and hid under the altar. The putting out of the yellow candles denotes the flight or grief of the apostles and women; the taking down the white candle, that Christ has descended into the sepulchre.

In St. Peter's, at Rome, a most marvellous effect is produced by putting out the hundred burning lamps upon the tomb of St. Peter, after which a stupendous illuminated cross descends from the dome of the cathedral and hangs as though self-supported.

There were consecrated rings in the olden time which belonged to Good Friday and which were believed to heal the wearer of sickness; these rings were hallowed by the kings of England. There was preserved for a long time in Westminster Abbey a ring which was said to have been brought to King Edward by pilgrims who had journeyed from Jerusalem, and which the king had himself given long before to a beggar who had asked alms of him for the love he bore to St. John the Evangelist.

There was a particular service for consecrating these rings, which were called "cramp-rings."

In 1557, in the Breviary of Health, we find Andrew Boorde speaking of the cramp, and thus: "The King's Majesty hath a great help in this matter in halowing Crampe Ringes, and so given without money or petition." And Lord Berners, when ambassador to the Emperor Charles V. wrote from Saragossa, "to my Lorde Cardinal's grace," in 1818

"for some crampe ringes," with "trust to bestowe thaym well, with God's grace." In some parts of Ireland, it is still the practice of the lower order of Irish catholics to prevent their children from having any food, even babes at the breast, from twelve at night of Thursday to twelve at night on Good Friday, and the fathers and mothers take only a bit of bread and cold water during that time. Along the roads which lead into the market towns may be seen numbers of women with dishevelled hair and ragged garments and barefooted, bewailing the martyrdom of Christ.

Holy Saturday follows Good Friday, and then great preparations are made for the near festival of Easter, and thus, amid universal rejoicings, which extend all over the civilized world, Passion week draws to its close, and the solemn period of Lent is over.

### "THE DEVIL DOCTRINES."

The Famous Letter Circulated by the Chinese Last Summer.

Commander Barber, of the U. S. N., has translated with fearless faithfulness the circular which was sent throughout China last summer, but its violence is so great and its vituperation so nasty that little of it is fit for publication. The general tenor of the document may be gathered from extracts which follow. The phrase "Devil Doctrines" is the Chinese way of referring to the Christian religion, and "devils" means, of course, Christian missionaries.

"Let every man carefully read this book. Let everyone spread its contents and talk about them. Where devils are numerous it is necessary that they should be utterly exterminated. Take vengeance for every plot. Guard against the devils and protect your families. The Chinese statesman, Chow Tung Ta (disciple of Confucius), wrote this manuscript and had it printed. The devils' doctrines ought to be killed."

"The perfect gentleman must be benevolent, the perfect statesman must be faithful. The father must be affectionate, the son must be dutiful. The husband must be kind, the wife must be submissive. Elder brothers must be amiable, younger brothers must be respectful. Friends must be faithful, and there are many more moral principles which can be deduced from the above five axioms which are most important."

"Take the book, 'The Devil's Doctrines Should Be Killed;' talk over all the details listen to it. Does it not show forth a hateful thing? From the time the devils came to our country they have gone in every large town and market place of every province and set up a number of devils' halls which they call 'churches of God.' They gather a congregation of devils, of devils' children and devils' women, and every seven days have a Sunday, when they worship the head of the devils. They have a representation of the devil, the whole body naked, with only a loin cloth, nailed on a cross. They say this head of the devils was murdered by persons who quarreled with him. So the devils, the devils' children and the devil women all compassionate him and pity him. The truth is the Chinese spirits have in sundry places descended to the earth and written by the plachette on tablets and written planchette books, clearly stating and saying that Jesus in life was exceedingly infamous, exceedingly wicked, exceedingly perverse, and because he committed great crimes was executed by the ancient devil king of the Tao Te (a kingdom). The judge of hades placed his ghost in a dark region of hell and brings the ghost out once a day to receive corporal punishment. Two thousand years have since elapsed. Never will Jesus' ghost see the day."

"When he was nailed to the cross not an atom of injustice was done. The devils, the devil's children, and the devil's women, when they die, all go to hell, and when dead will reap sorrow. While alive they dream and say Jesus, the perverse devil and all the perverse devil teachers go to heaven. Are they not more stupid than pigs?"

"These devil books are very numerous. There is not one that ought not to be destroyed. I already, by dissimulation, have some of these books; have glanced at one and condemned another. When I had read them through I burnt them. You who have not read these books, I will tell you all about them. They say the Chinese are quite wrong about the time of heaven and earth; the sun, moon and stars. That heaven, earth, the sun, moon and stars and time were made by Jesus and are his creatures. Why do you respect them?"

"The above is bad enough, doubtless, but there follows a good deal of matter that is so sacrilegious as to be intolerable to any American reader, and yet millions upon millions of copies of this circular have been scattered among the 400,000,000 people of China to prevent the growth of the christian faith. The American missionaries are accused of all manner of crimes most detestable. It is averred in this precious pamphlet that the missionaries lead immoral lives to the worst degree, and that they induce Chinese girls and wives to the worst sort of crimes. The pamphlet also accuses the missionaries of administering drugs to their converts. Imagine the lot of hundreds of American ministers who are devoting their lives to the solution of this horde. The circular says:

"The christian God, the perverse devil, has left behind him a perverse religion, the leading doctrine of which is, however great crimes or wickedness may have been committed, if the criminal only worships Jesus his crime is redeemed; so the devils, the devil's children and the devil's women have ever been like pigs and dogs. Further, the devil princes send head missionaries everywhere to seduce and excite men to follow the devils and be an internal force to cooperate with the outer force in obtaining possession of China's rivers and hills. The princes give the head missionaries large sums of money and a free hand in doing the business. It is not to be marvelled at that the missionaries do their utmost to seduce and excite the people. The natural disposition of Chinese blackguards and ruffians is to be fond of money. They stiffen their consciences, lose their reputations and naturally gladly and joyfully follow the missionaries. The people that live near the devil halls know a little about them. There are also those who are stupefied with drugs. They are stupid and ignorant who enter the devil's halls."

"There is another matter. Put aside for a moment thoughts about sages, saints, fables and Buddhas. Put aside thoughts of Chinese imperial interests. You each have a body; you each have a family. Do you

wish them to be destroyed or to preserve them? At the present time the head devil missionaries in every province of China are sending a lot of Chinese who follow the devil doctrines to all places secretly to distribute devils' books; most of them have been repressed, but still be on your guard and tell everyone you meet the same. Look out everywhere and seize him whenever you meet a devil or a devil child who says that the devil religion is good and strike him. If you see a devil book burn it. You must bear in mind the principle that if a single person listens to them and is seduced and excited to enter the devil's religion, the whole family is stupefied, and when the family is stupefied it will desire to stupefy the neighbors to the right and neighbors to the left, and numberless places will be stupefied and corrupted. "Let us take no thought of the frost on other people's roofs, but let us each sweep the snow from his own doorstep. We all help each other and at once guard ourselves. Let each city guard each city, every town, every market, guard that town and that market. Every village community, every clan, guard its community, guard its clan, and prevent a single person becoming a christian, and thus stupefy and injure the place by inviting the devil missionaries to the place to erect devil halls. "Fathers and elder brothers teach this song. By this act of virtue become happy. Lads and boys learn this song to prevent disaster and avoid disorder. When it is feared the devils are too many, then you must exterminate them."



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