

The Easter Festival.

Even those denominations who do not deem it necessary to commemorate them by special observance, sympathize more or less with the sentiment that characterizes the celebration of Christmas and Easter by the Roman Catholic and Episcopalian churches. This feeling becomes more and more marked as the years go on, and is indicative of a commendable decrease of that **sectarian prejudice** which forbids the adherents of one creed from seeing anything beautiful or noble in another. If, as St. Augustine is accredited with saying, there is nowhere so much error but that some truth is intermingled, certainly each form of belief that claims to have its origin in the same divine source, must contain an untold amount of the true, the beautiful, and the good, that might with advantage be admired and imitated by the rest.

Time was, however, when the dissenting denominations utterly repudiated as savoring of the most unworthy superstition, all approach to the use of the emblems or observance of the festivals of the churches referred to, but now the cross is no longer a strange ornament on the "meeting houses" of the most iconoclastic Puritans, while greens at Christmas, and flowers at Easter are found even in the places of worship of that denomination whose extreme members do not acknowledge the Divine birth, and hardly the resurrection, of the Redeemer.

The festival which is celebrated to-day is in some respects more joyous, and announces gladder tidings than its counterpart of Christmas. Men as a rule bear the consciousness of their sins so lightly that the announcement they are to be forgiven does not particularly affect them, but the horror of death and the grave is so deeply implanted in every human breast that the story of the triumph over both, of Him who was man as well as God, is always listened to with heartfelt joy and gratitude. And the old superstition of the sun dancing on Easter Day shows that so general is the feeling that it would make all nature participate in the universal joy.

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