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Superstitions of Easter

Throughout all ages superstition has swayed the world. In antiquity a few of these prophetic beliefs crystalized around the Easter period, leaving so deep an impress upon susceptible minds as to cause the legends to be passed down through centuries with the greatest care. Even now there is scarcely a nation that does not put faith in Easter omens.

Some of these attach to Good Friday. In the time of Catholic England there was a superstition which the king publicly honored with his trust. It was the ceremony of blessing the rings. This was done to preserve their wearers from "the falling sickness," a trouble commonly known to us as cramps. The cramp ring service was of exceptional originality. Walsh gives a vivid description of it.

"The king and his suite," he tell us, "would proceed in state of the palace chapel, upon the floor of which rested a crucifix upon a silken cushion and in front of which was spread a rich carpet. The king would creep along the carpet to the crucifix—as a token of absolute humility—his 'almoner' creeping after him. Having reaching the crucifix, he

would there bless the cramp rings, which were deposited in a silver basin. After this was done, the queen and her ladies in waiting entered the chapel and also crept to the cross. This completed the ceremony, and the rings had been transformed into the most potent remedial agents."

Who has not heard of the English "hot cross bun?" On the morning of Good Tidings throughout England the street bun venders usher in the universal cry of "Hot cross buns," and no family, as a precautionary, if not for their tooth-someness alone, would dare run the risk of not purchasing some of the buns. Even kings would not miss eating them for whoever eats a bun need have no fear of having his home destroyed by fire during the ensuing year.

Good Friday morning large numbers of men, women and children start out in quest of customers for their fresh, hot buns, which they guard from the cold with a flannel covering. And the shops as well are festive with supplies of it. The peculiarity of the hot cross bun lies in its being highly spiced and bearing on its brown, sugary surface the mark of a cross.

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