

# The Polk County News.

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It is still dark. The little village on the shore of the slow-flowing stream lies hidden in the shadow of the pine forest, under the starry spring night.

A light mist rises slowly from the earth, which has just awakened from its winter sleep, and it makes the shadow of the forest sharper and darker, and covers the surface of the stream with a silvery shimmer. Stillness, a brooding quiet, reigns over all. Most of the inhabitants are still sleeping. The shape of the poor little cottages is hardly distinguishable; only here and there is the faint glimmer of a light. Now and then a deer opens and one hears for a moment the bark of a watchful dog, and then the same peaceful stillness. At intervals the figure of a wanderer emerges from the dark rim of the forest, a rider, a peasant's cart with creaking wheels—they are all people of the village hastening to the church there to begin worthily the coming festival.

In the midst of the village, on a solitary hill, stands the church; the windows are bright, and the tower, gray with age, rises high into the mist. The moldering stairs creak; the old belleringer is mounting them with feeble steps, and after a little time a new star appears above, his light—the lantern in the belleringer's hand.

It is hard work for the old man to climb those steep steps; the aged limbs refuse their office; his eyes are dim; old age has done its work on him. It is time for the aged man to go to rest; but death does not come. He has seen children and grandchildren go; for how many, old and young, has he tolled the bell. Death seems to have forgotten him and life is hard.

Often has he rung the Easter peal; he knows no longer how many times he has awaited the appointed hour up here in the tower. And now it is to be done again, if God wills. With heavy step the old man reaches the railing of the tower and leans on it.

Around, in the shadows, he sees dimly the graves in the cemetery; their black crosses seeming like watchers of their dead. Here and there groups of birches, still leafless, wave their slender silvery branches in the wind. The reviving odor of the young buds on the trees, and the peace of the cemetery rise up like a breath of spring to the lonely figure on the tower.

What will this new year bring him? Will he salute next Easter with the joyful music of the bells, or will he be sleeping over there in that distant corner, and will a black cross adorn the little mound? As God will! He is ready. But now he must announce the coming great day. "To God be honor and thanksgiving," his lips murmur the words; he raises his eyes to the starry heavens and crosses himself with simple piety.

"Wassil!" an old, trembling voice calls from below.

He looks down from his post, strains his eyes, but can see nothing.

"What do you want? Here I am," he cries, as he bends over the rail. "Can you not see me?"

"No. Is it not time to ring the bells? What do you think?"

Both look up to the sky. Thousands of stars shine down on them; high in the heaven rides the "Bear." Wassil reflects, "No, not yet; I know when."

He knows well: he needs no clock; God's stars tell him when the time has come.

Heaven and earth, the white cloud that moves slowly across the face of the sky, the dark forest that moves and murmurs below, the ripple of the

invisible stream—all he knows and loves; a whole life is bound up with them. Things long forgotten arise in his memory; how he came up here for the first time with his father—dear God! how long ago that was, and yet it seems so short—he seems himself a little blue-eyed boy with fair, curling hair tossed by the wind. Far, far under him he saw the many

An Easter Greeting From Br'er Rabbit



Drawn by H. Torain. "Who Said Easter Eggs?"

little people and the cottages seemed so tiny, and the forest so far off, and the plain so large. And the father laughed and said: "Tet it is so near," as he pointed to the village below.

Such is life. As long as we are young it seems endless. Now it lies before as if it had just happened, from birth almost to the grave that he has chosen for himself over yonder. Well! thank God! it is time to rest. He has passed uprightly through a hard life; the damp earth

winging children and the loud voice of the old priest, Father Gregor, dead long, long ago. Hundreds of peasants raise and bow their heads and make the sign of the cross, all well-known faces, all dead now. There is his stern-faced father, and beside him the elder brother, zealously crossing himself and often sighing; and there he himself stands, young, gay and strong, full of unconscious hope, and ambition of happiness, and joy, and the future. And where is this happiness? The old man's thoughts flame up suddenly, like the flame of an expiring fire, and illumine every nook and corner of a past life. Measureless toil, sorrow and care—where is that expected, hoped-for happiness? Sorrowful fate furrowed that young face, bowed the straight, strong back, and taught him to sigh like the elder brother.

And there, to the left, among the women of the village, she stands with head devoutly bent in prayer. She was a faithful, loving wife to him. "God rest her soul!" And she, too, had had many troubles to bear; care and toil and woman's hard lot had aged her very early. The eyes that in youth had been so bright and clear grew dim, and the expression of fear and anxiety at the unexpected strokes of fate took the place of the earlier pride and confidence of the young wife. And her happiness, where was it? A son had been left them, the joy and pride of their age—but he, too, had been led away by the flies of men.

And there stands the rich village usurer and bows himself to the earth, and kisses it piously, and makes the sign of the cross, that by hypocritical worship he may dry the tears of wronged orphans and widows, and so he lies to his God as to men.

Wassil's heart grows hot and even the holy pictures look down in anger on human misery and human lies. All this is behind him, so far behind him. Now his only world is this old bell-tower, high up, where the wind howls and plays with the bell-ropes. "God will judge, vengeance is His," whis-

Never has the old man rung the bells so wonderfully. It seems as if some of his emotion has communicated itself to the cold metal and inspired them to sing in joy and happiness, to laugh and to weep; the living tones rise to heaven, up to the brilliant stars, which appear to shine even more brightly, as the tones peal out again and again, resounding from earth to heaven, in love, and joy, and peace, and heaven and earth re-echo "Christ is arisen."

Even the old bellry itself seems to share in the joy of mankind, and the wind which fans the cheeks of the old man sings joyously "Christ is arisen." The old heart forgets its sorrow, a life of care and toil. Wassil has forgotten that his life, his hopes of happiness have been nothing but an empty dream; that he is alone in the world, old and feeble. He hears the sounds which sing and weep rise through the gloomy space up to the starry heavens, and sink down to the poor earth. He sees himself surrounded by his children and grandchildren; hears the happy voices, voices of young and old uniting in a chorus, and singing to him of that hope, and joy, and happiness which his long, weary life has never offered him. The old man pulls the bell ropes, tears roll down his cheeks and his heart beats fast in his visionary joy.

Before the church the people are standing together and talking; never has the old sexton rung the bells so wonderfully.

Suddenly the big bell gives one mighty stroke and stops; the small bells, confused, and their play with a sharp discord, then a few vibrations and silence.

Step reverently—the old belleringer has rung his last peal.—Translated for the Springfield Republican.

## Where Easter Lilies Come From



Few people who see the multitudes of lilies that will be used on Sunday in the adornment of churches will realize what has been the labor of bringing these lovely flowers from the places where they were grown, or even what care has been necessary to force them into bloom for this time of year. America uses for all kinds of decoration, but especially for Easter, ten times as many lilies or flowers as any other country. A florist has been heard to say that this is not an imported fad, but an original one. The lilies that are peculiarly Easter lilies are in bloom in their native soil in Bermuda at this time of year, and yet there, in the land of flowers, an American woman was astonished a few years ago to find that no flowers were placed upon the altars of the churches on Easter, although the worshippers could look out through open doors and windows to whole fields white with lilies.

## Rabbit and Hare Cousins.

The Egyptians called the hare "un," which had two meanings, "open" and "period." Now the moon was the open eye of the night, hence the hare became the type of periodic occurrences. As an opener it was associated with the opening of the New Year, and also with the opening of a new life in youth. Hence it is obvious the hare should have become associated with the Easter egg.

In this country the hare is almost unknown, but its "second cousin," the rabbit, abounds. The negroes have a superstition regarding the little animal that is rather apt. They believe that the left hind foot of a rabbit that is killed in a graveyard, in the dark of the moon, possesses rare talismanic virtues.—Mrs. M. L. Bean.



The Easter Parade.—Life.

## RAGING FIRES IN FOREST

Sweep Through Forests Along Southwest Virginia

## MUCH PROPERTY IS DESTROYED

Patrick County, Va., Being Swept and Already Much Property Loss Has Resulted—Conflagration, Which Started Near Stuart, is Under No Control Whatever in Spite of Efforts to Cut Down Timber and Confine It to Certain Limits.

Danville, Va., Special.—A tremendous forest fire is sweeping the county of Patrick and heavy damage to property has already resulted and the lives of many are endangered.

The fire started Friday night, it appears, near Stuart, the county seat of Patrick, and the terminus of the Danville & Western Railroad, and has been raging ever since. Latest reports are that the conflagration is under no control whatever, though a large number of citizens and farmers engaged in an effort to cut down trees and confine the blaze to certain limits.

From Stuart the fire has spread southeast in the direction of Danville. Sunday night it had reached Critz, a distance of about 15 or 20 miles from where it originated. The width of the conflagration is about six miles. About 30 farm houses have already been burned and the occupants barely escaped with their lives. At Patrick Springs, an old established summer resort, four cottages located several hundred yards from the main hotel were burned. The main hotel is located in a valley with woods on both sides. It is in an open space and was saved only by this enclosure. The springs are located about two miles from Shuff, the railroad station, and several miles beyond Critz. As yet no lives have been reported lost, but there have been many thrilling escapes. The valuable dwelling houses of W. N. Martin, a prominent citizen, was destroyed together with its contents. The occupants fled for their lives and no effort was made to save anything.

The scene of the origin of the fire was on the plantation of the Stuart Orchard Company, which had many acres of apples and peach trees. All of the fruit trees of this concern, which is the largest of its kind in this section of the State, have been burned.

Patrick county is a mountainous country located about 60 miles southwest of Danville and is famous for its timber lands, and as a fine fruit growing section. Apples grown in the county are shipped to all parts of the world.

The fire is confined mostly to Bull and No Business mountains. The first named mountain was burned several years ago. No Business mountain is a great timber land and the loss in this respect will be heavy. In the area of about 15 by six miles already swept only a few farm houses located in the valleys escaped destruction.

The Danville & Western, a branch line of the Southern, is the only railway that runs through Patrick county. No damage is reported to have been done to railroad property.

It is impossible to get any communication to any of the points along the scene of the fire. The first news was brought here by the crew and passengers of a train arriving here in the afternoon. No trains run on the Danville & Western Saturday and Sunday, hence the telegraph offices are closed. The fires on the burning mountains illuminated this section for miles around, the blaze being clearly seen by those on the train.

## By Wire and Cable.

E. C. Fosburgh, of Norfolk, was elected president of the North Carolina Pine Association.

John C. Blair, Assistant United States District Attorney for the Western district of Virginia, died at Wytheville.

The Seventh District Educational Conference is in session at Woodstock.

A student of the University of Virginia who was accused of cheating was acquitted at a public trial, five of the university's alumni sitting as a court.

District Attorney Jerome submitted affidavits of alienists who consider Thaw insane, and asked for the appointment of a lunacy commission.

Brig.-Gen. Theodore J. Wint of the United States Army, died in Philadelphia.

Floods have isolated four States in the Northwest, tied up railroads in California and cut a gap 80 miles wide in a Utah railroad.

## OPPOSE INSANITY CHARGE

Attorneys For Thaw Deny His Being Insane at Present

## SHARP FIGHT ON JEROME'S MOVE.

This With One From Thaw's Mother Supplement Unanimous Opinion of Defense Attorneys in Regard to District Attorney's Suggestion Looking to Appointment of Lunacy Commission.

New York, Special.—The attorneys for Harry K. Thaw filed answer to the suggestion made by District Attorney Jerome to Justice Fitzgerald that Thaw is mentally incapable of understanding the nature of the proceedings against him and is a subject for a commission in lunacy rather than for a jury which holds only the power of liberty or death. Supplementing their own unanimous opinion, that Thaw does understand the nature of the proceedings against him and daily advises intelligently with his counsel, the lawyers have filed affidavits from the medical experts employed by the defense and a farther affidavit by Mrs. William Thaw, the mother of the defendant. Mrs. Thaw, however, does not address herself to the question immediately at issue. She takes advantage of the opportunity, she declares, to state that in the direct line of descent for four generations there has been no taint of insanity or epilepsy in the prisoner's family. She resents the "malicious misrepresentation and gross exaggeration" on the subject.

The principal affidavit made in Thaw's behalf is signed Delphin M. Delmas attaches to his personal statement a score or more of letters and notes he has received from Thaw during the progress of the trial. These writings of the defendant, Mr. Delmas declares, clearly indicate his grasp of the proceedings and have contained from time to time valuable suggestions as to the course of the defense.

## Turnpike Co. in Receiver's Hands.

Norfolk, Special.—The Consolidated Turnpike Company, owning a large majority of the county toll roads and bridges in Norfolk county, under a suit brought by Arthur Depeu, of New York, holding \$120,000 of the company's \$180,000 bond issue, has been placed in the hands of H. L. Page, receiver. The remainder of the company's bonds are held principally in New York. The paralleling of the company's toll roads by trolley lines, thus reducing toll collection; the high cost of improvement material and high labor are assigned as the causes of the failure.

## Kept the Lamp Burning.

Norfolk, Special.—Stricken with paralysis and scarcely able to move Captain Finerson, keeper of the White Shoals lighthouse in the James river, stuck to his post until relief came. Although stricken early in the night he kept the light burning. His feeble cries for help could not be heard. He hung out a distress signal when daylight came. That was seen in the afternoon by a party of excursionists from Smithfield. He would not leave the lighthouse until relief came. Captain Finerson's home is in Portsmouth. It is believed that he will recover.

## Shot in Drunken Row.

Clifton, Special.—Bud Cupples and Lute Brooks became involved in a drunken row at Cerro Gordo Saturday and Cupples shot Brooks just below the heart with a .42-caliber Derringer. At last reports little hope was held out for the recovery of Brooks.

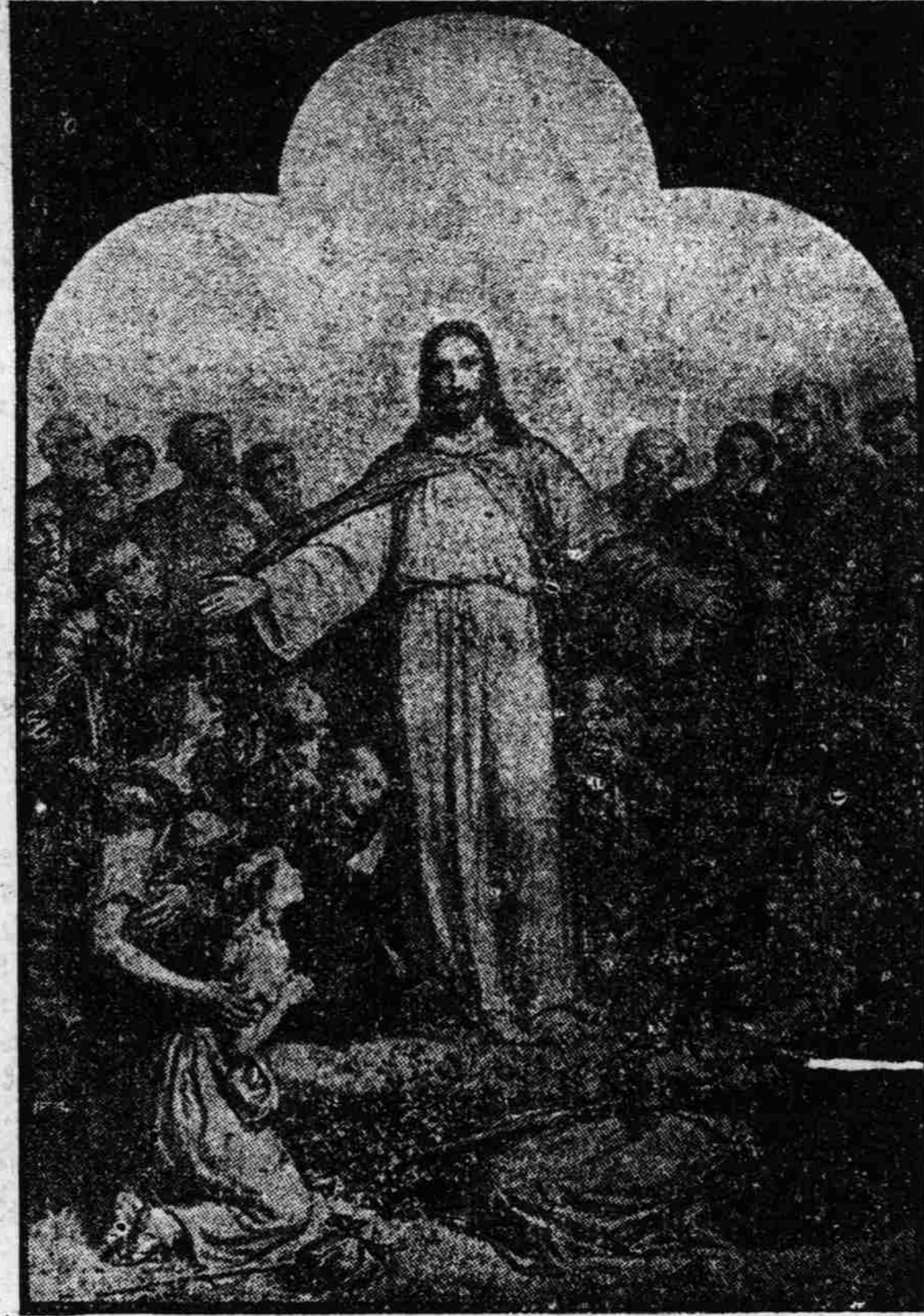
## Timber Land Deal.

Dickson, Special.—A deal was consummated by which George Eleazer, a lumberman of this vicinity, gets possession of a large tract of timber in the Fifth Civil District, known as the Hall lands. The timber is very valuable and will at once be manufactured into merchantable lumber.

## Negroes Suspected of Murder.

Norfolk, Special.—Charged with being implicated in the probable murder of Charles F. Ferguson, the Newsoms postmaster and business man, whose body, with pockets picked, was found in a lane here early Sunday morning, Thomas Tynes and Lee Johnson, two negroes, have been arrested. The prisoners were seen coming from the lane and on their persons keys and eyeglasses supposed to have been the property of the dead man were found.

## COME UNTO ME.



By H. DIETRICH.

is his mother; soon, if God will, he will rest in her bosom. But now it is time. Once more Wassil looks up to the stars, bares his head, crosses himself and seizes the ropes.

Now, through the air resound a sharp stroke, a second, a third, a fourth, one after another, rising and falling, now sharp, now soft, in a tuneful peal.

The bells are silent, the service has begun. In former years Wassil would descend the stairs and place himself in a corner near the door to listen and pray; but now the weight of years is heavy on him, and he remains above. To-day his limbs seem unusually heavy; he sits down on a bench, and as the sound of the bells dies away, he sinks into thought. Of what? He hardly knows. The bellry is but scantily lighted by his lantern; the bells themselves are but dimly seen in the gloom. From beneath, in the church, one can hear faintly the singing of the congregation, while the wind plays with the bell ropes. The old man's head sinks on his breast as broken visions of the past float through his mind. "They are singing," he says, and then he sees himself in the church. From the altar come the voices of

pers the old man, and heavy tears roll down his withered cheeks.

"Wassil! Are you asleep?" some one cries from below.

"Who calls me?" asks the old man, and started from his bench. "Dear God! have I really been asleep? Never has this shame come upon me."

Quickly, with practiced hand, he seizes the rope and gives a look below, where, like ants upon their heap, the people are moving about busily. The solemn procession is setting out, with the crosses and icons in front, to march round the church, while to Wassil in his tower rises the joyful cry, "Christ is arisen from the dead!" The words come with healing to the overfull heart of the old sexton. The tapers seem to burn more brightly, the peasants to sing more heartily. He rings, and the newly-arisen wind seizes the tones, and, with wide-spreading wings, carries them upward and the echoes, far and wide, repeat the solemn music of the bells.

