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References:

Malcolm Macfarlan, M. D., Phila., Pa.

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HOLIDAY INCIDENTS.

The graver themes which belong to the Easter Holidays have, ere this, been fully descanted upon by pulpit and press. The JOURNAL will not attempt an appendix to what has been well enough said by others. It is moreover a trifle late. The "nine days" assigned by the proverb to any subject of comment, are literally expired, on this 15th day of April. If telegraphs and telephones had been known in the Forest of Arden, Gentle Rosalind would not have spoken of the "nine days of wonder." Nine hours would have been ample. But there are certain things incident to holiday making which have not, that we have observed, been made "the subject of comment."

The allegation that Americans are too matter-of-fact and business-ridden to like holidays, appears to be losing, year by year, whatever truth it once had. There are reflections deeper and more important than the mere surface indications. That liberal preparations are made for the two great religious festivals of the year means something more than that people who have money like to spend it, though there is something in that, too. Man has been wittily defined as a bargain-making animal. One dog never exchanges a bone for another bone with another dog, however the quadruped may seem, in some regards, to approach his human master. The joys of shopping never enter into the head of little Fido or big dog Tray; and the delights of purchasing, inverse to the intrinsic value of the things purchased, is something to which the S. P. C. A. can never introduce their dumb clients. What were holidays without presents? What were home without a mother? What were man or maid without a lover? What were "intimate friends" and Sunday School scholars without Marcus Ward's Easter Cards? The buying of presents is good for trade; and it is good for humanity, too, if the recipients are well selected, and if affection and charity are all considered.

Since buying is a manly characteristic, it is evident that women is the more manly. The retail shops in the season, are alive and the ladies are in their glory. The Lenten time, which should deepen in sobriety as Easter approaches, lights up with the animation of expectant faces. The last solemn week gives proof that the greatest pleasure of a holiday, or of any other pleasant occasion is in the preparation for it. Is it not so, O busy maiden with crevel yarn, in cruel haste to finish that bit of fancy work?

The social philosophers have been want to say that Americans did not appreciate holidays because they did not need them. They were not serfs and "down trodden," ready, upon any pretext, to break their bonds and forget their oppression. Certainly Americans are no more serfs now than they were, and yet holiday seasons are now noted with an appreciation which is no where exceeded. The reason of this improvement—for it is an improvement—will be found in the pleasant fact that society has been raised by freedom from restraint into a higher groove. Laugh as we

may at the extravagance imputed to the disciples of "culture," it is true, beyond question, that the graceful amenities of life are better understood. What Theodore Parker called "The Function of the Beautiful," has been at work for the last half century, and notably for the last two or three decades. The popular taste has been elevated. The old holiday was almost a purely sensual outbreak. The modern holiday is the free and grateful indulgence of cultivated and intellectual tastes. Extremes meet. What serfs once enjoyed in their way, by permission, freemen prize and observe, in their better way, from choice. The chains self-forged out of "utility," are laid off by our own motion. It has been gradually pressed into our perceptions that the useful and the pleasant may not only exist together, but that the useful is more efficient and the beautiful more charming for the blending of poetry with the prose of life. And herein lies the explanation of the advanced favor in which holidays are held;

WM. PARRY, Party F. O., N. J.