



### Flowers Greet Easter

► FLOWERS HAVE been associated with Eastertide ever since the earliest days of Christianity. Even in pre-Christian times there was a springtime feast of rejoicing, when people wore wreaths of flowers in their hair, hung garlands of flowers around their pagan altars.

After winter, mankind has apparently always found it fitting to make offering of

the first flowers, just as after harvest we have the impulse to make offering of the first fruits.

Easter floral observances that have become conventional in our own time and land have drifted away from the freshness and naturalness that they had in the younger days of Christianity, and from the naivete that was theirs in the pagan childhood of our culture. The wreaths of flowers in the hair have suffered a sad change into mere simulacra on women's bonnets, costly but artificial.

The flowers piled on the altar or banked around the pulpit are real, to be sure, but almost always exotic, besides being forced to bloom out of their natural time. The one we call Easter lily, for example, would not blossom until July if left to itself outdoors; and it came originally from Japan!

We can really learn more of the Easter symbolism of flowers if we take a turn in the woods or fields during Eastertide, and see our native wildflowers as they grow. Almost all of our spring flowers are either white, like bloodroot and dogwood, or light-tinted, like the lovely pasque flower of the prairies. These are true Easter colors.

Some, like violets, run a gamut of color through a hundred species; or are white in some and tinted in others, like the trout-lilies that are white in the Midwest, yellow in the East and the Rocky Mountain region.

The expectation of "resurrection, and life everlasting" can be seen better exemplified if we look at flowers that have not been violently divorced from their roots. Practically all our early spring flowers are perennials, either springing up from bulbs or rootstocks hidden in the sepulcher-like soil, or bursting forth, even before the leaves appear, on the seeming-dead branches of shrubs and trees.

Science News Letter, April 4, 1953

### AERONAUTICS

## New Seaplanes Halve Pacific Crossing Time

► THE PACIFIC will be spanned in 1954 by a fleet of flying boats that can whisk passengers, litter patients and cargo across the ocean at nearly twice the speed of present-day seaplanes.

The first flight model of the R3Y-1 Tradewind is scheduled to take to the air late this summer and is to be followed soon by others.

The Tradewind is designed to fly at a top speed of 350 miles an hour, but even when heavily loaded it can cruise at about 300 miles an hour. Equipped with air conditioning, the 80-ton flying boat has rearward-facing passenger seats and also can accommodate litter patients and cargo. Rugged magnesium cargo decks lighten the plane.

Finishing touches are being added to the flight model now being built for the Navy Bureau of Aeronautics by the Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Corporation, San Diego, Calif.

Science News Letter, April 4, 1953

### ACOUSTICS

## Study Sound in Fog And in Mountain Air

► WHAT WEATHER conditions do to the sound of sirens, foghorns and whistles is being studied at the University of California at Los Angeles. The effects of various situations ranging from clear but turbulent mountain air to seashore fog are being studied.

Using a toy oxy-acetylene cannon as a sound source, Dr. L. P. Delsasso is trying to determine how much the intensity of sound is decreased as it travels through the two media. This is done by recording the variation in intensity of the sound between two successive microphones.

Studies recently completed in the High Sierra indicate that turbulence tends to scatter the sound waves.

The fog phase of the study is now underway and is currently concerned with the nature of the fog medium. A complex electronic device developed in the research uses a tiny beam of light to determine the size and number of fog droplets in a given area.

Mountain studies have been supported by the Air Force. The fog studies are being sponsored by the Office of Naval Research.

Science News Letter, April 4, 1953

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