**Easter – Stories & Illustrations**

**Archbishop Trench tells how, in 1690, an agave plant was brought over and planted in the gardens of Hampton Court Palace by Queen Mary. The last ten years of the seventeenth century passed, and the plant gave no sign of flowering. The whole of the eighteenth century passed, and never a bud did the plant put forth. Eighty-eight years of the nineteenth century passed, and still no sign of a flower. But in 1889 the venerable plant burst into blossom. *(Paul Lee Tan, in Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations, p. 1145)***

**How animals react to temperature extremes:**

**Frogs – frozen two weeks, survived**

**Garter snakes – frozen one day, survived**

**Box turtles – frozen two days, survived. *(World Features Syndicate)***

**The doctors couldn't do anything more for Bertha, my elderly neighbor. She was in pain and no longer able to care for herself. “I'm ready,” she told me. “Why won't the Lord take me home with him?” I stood at her door, watching the paramedics carry her to the ambulance for another emergency trip to the hospital. That night Bertha died. The following week I was out in my garden. I missed my neighbor, and thought about her every day. It seemed strange not to be checking in on her. Suddenly I heard my phone ringing, but as I reached the door, my answering machine clicked on, taking a message. Inside I pressed the play button and was surprised to hear some old messages I had neglected to erase. I went to the sink to wash my hands as the tape ran through. All at once I heard a familiar voice. “Eileen, this is Bertha.” She had called me when she got out of the hospital two weeks before. “I just wanted you to know,” she said. “I'm home.” And so she was. (Eileen Timothy, in Guideposts magazine)**

**The story is told that Steinberg, the artist, struck with the beauty of a gypsy girl, took her to his studio and frequently had her sit for him. At the time he was at his masterpiece, “Christ on the Cross.” The girl used to watch him work on this painting. One day she said to him, “He must have been a very wicked man to be nailed to a cross like that.” “No,” said the painter. “On the contrary, he was a very good man, the best man that ever lived. He died for others.” The little girl looked up at him and asked, “Did he die for you?” Steinberg was not a Christian at the time, but the gypsy girl’s question touched his heart and awakened his conscience and he became a believer in Him whose dying passion he had so well portrayed. *(Eugene A. Hessel)***

**An artist, at first only painfully aware of an utter emptiness and impotence, finds his imagination gradually stirred into life, and discovers a vision which takes control of him and which he feels not only able but compelled to express. That is resurrection. *(H. A. Williams, in True Resurrection)***

**A rare phenomenon under way at Australia’s largest and driest lake is drawing nature lovers from around the world. They’re hoping to catch glimpses of species than can gather there as infrequently as only once in a generation. Recent heavy rains are flowing into Lake Eyre, usually just a 3,740-square-mile expanse of crusty white salt that has filled only four times in the past 150 years. Millions of tiny eggs laid there by various marine species years ago before the lake last receded have begun to hatch. *(Earthweek, as it appeared in the Rocky Mountain News, April 10, 2007)***

**Eight-million-year- old bacteria have been revived from Antarctic ice. (Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 139)**

**Bacteria 10,000 years old, found in ice at McMurdo Station in the Antarctic in 1974, revived -- and reproduced. (Ripley's Believe It or Not!)**

**Bacteria returns from the dead: Ancient bacteria that had been frozen for 32,000 years came to life as soon as they were thawed, say NASA researchers. The bacteria, a newly discovered species called Carnobacterium pleistocenium, were recovered from the side of a tunnel dug through Pleistocene Era ice in central Alaska. “The instant the ice melted, they started swimming,” researcher Richard Hoover tells Reuters. “They were alive.” While other microbes have been found in frigid environments, they were located in pockets of liquid water. Carnobacterium pleistocenium is the first species to be resuscitated from ancient ice. Because the microbes would not have been able to divide during the time they were locked in ice, the thawed-out specimens must be 32,000 years old – the time the Alaskan pond was last in liquid form. The resilience of the bacteria suggests that life could possibly survive in places like the glaciers of Mars and the icy crust of Jupiter’s moon Europa. *(The Week magazine, March 18, 2005)***

**Seminary Professor Robert Wood tells of an experience that symbolizes most clearly the meaning of Easter in our lives. He was invited by a former student to accompany him to the local minimum-security prison for a baptism. Wood reluctantly agreed. The baptism turned out to be a real joy. Wood says, “It was as close to a New Testament experience as perhaps I shall ever have.” A guard escorted the prisoner from behind a fence that was topped with razor wire. There were just the three of them, with the guard looking curiously on. Wood writes: “The barefoot prisoner stepped into a wooden box that had been lined with plastic sheet and filled with water. It looked like a large coffin, and rightly so. This was no warmed and tiled First Baptist bath, with its painted River Jordan winding pleasantly into the distance. This was a place of death: watery chaos from which God graciously made the world and into which, in rightful wrath, he almost returned it. Pronouncing the Trinitarian formula, the pastor lowered the new Christian down into the liquid grave to be buried with Christ and then raised him up to eternal life. Though the water was cold, the man was not eager to get out. Instead, he stood there, weeping for joy. When at last he left the baptismal box, I thought he would hurry away to change into something dry. I was mistaken.” The prisoner, the newborn Christian, told them, “I want to wear these clothes as long as I can. In fact, I wish I never had to take a shower again.” They walked to the nearby tables and sat quietly in the Carolina sun, hearing this new Christian explain why his baptismal burial was too good to dry off. “I'm now a free man. I am not impatient to leave prison because this wire can't shackle my soul. I know that I deserved to come here, to pay for what I did. But I also learned here that Someone else has paid for all my crimes.” So it is – Easter is the promise that there is new life that frees us from whatever bondage that would hold us down, regardless of where we find ourselves. May you know this Easter joy within you this Easter season. (Rev. Robert E. Hunter)**

**The creosote bush, a classic desert plant, can drop its leaves to reduce water loss and, during the worst droughts, it even dies back to the ground. Then, when it finally rains, the plant revives and flourishes--like the mythological phoenix. (Christopher L. Helms, in The Sonoran Desert , p. 8)**

**Large, naked, raw carrots are acceptable as food only to those who lie in hutches eagerly awaiting Easter. (Fran Lebowitz)**

**Jesus came as a human “caterpillar”, “cocooned” on a cross, then burst forth to a new life from the tomb! But the reality of Easter goes much deeper than that! The reality goes on to tell us that He has left behind a book entitled “How to be a Fulfilled Caterpillar” (which we have carefully wrapped in a cover with the title “Holy Bible”). (Rev. Richard Stratford)**

**Arthur Brisbane once pictured a crowd of grieving caterpillars carrying the corpse of a cocoon to its final resting place. The poor, distressed caterpillars, clad in black raiment, were weeping, and all the while the beautiful butterfly fluttered happily above the muck and mire of earth, forever freed from its earthly shell. Needless to say, Brisbane had the average orthodox funeral in mind and sought to convey the idea that when our loved ones pass, it is foolish to remember only the cocoon and concentrate our attention on the remains, while forgetting the bright butterfly. (Sanctuary Magazine)**

**Today Helen Ansley is a dynamic woman in her nineties. She was one of the principals in a recent exploratory project, Conscious Living/Conscious Dying, funded by the Institute of Noetic Sciences in California. “I see life as the Ultimate Finishing School,” she proclaims, “with a full curriculum that teaches us Conscious Living, so that we may graduate -- with honors -- with Conscious Death.” *(Dana Voght, in Unity magazine, June, 1993)***

**Jeffrey Bada of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, California, estimates that DNA could survive intact in bone for at most a few thousand years in temperate climates, and perhaps 100,000 years in cold climates like Alaska or Antarctica. The exception to this rule, he says, is DNA from insects preserved in amber. Bada found virtually no amino-acid degradation in any of the amber specimens he studied, even some that were 130 million years old. “Amber is just a great medium for preserving stuff,” Bada says. “It's waterproof, and when you get water out of a system, you have very little degradation.” *(Discover magazine)***

**Pronounced extinct, but not:**

**- Ivory-billed woodpecker -- found 60 years after thought extinct  
- Lord Howe Island stick insect -- found 80 years after thought extinct**

**- Jurassic Wollemi pine -- found 200 million years after thought extinct. *(World Features Syndicate)***

**Federal wildlife biologists announced on November 6, 1981, that a black-footed ferret, a mammal feared extinct, had been discovered alive and well and living in Wyoming. The 2 ¼ pound male, found at home in a prairie dog burrow, was fitted with a radio collar and released. By 2006, captive breeding and reintroduction helped the wild population rebound to some 700 animals in five Western states. *(Alison McLean, in Smithsonian magazine)***

**How old is the species of fish known as the coelacanth? This ancient creature existed 350 million years ago. Scientists had believed that the fish became extinct 60 million years ago, until a living specimen was caught in the Indian Ocean off southern Africa in 1938. *(Barbara Berliner, in The Book of Answers, p. 25)***

**Several months later I traveled home once more, this time for dad's funeral. I walked into his bedroom and found his fishing rod in the corner, rigged with a brand-new Eagle Claw and two tiny split shot. My mother came in and saw me holding it. “He had it all ready for another trip,” she said. “He thought maybe the two of you could go fishing together one more time.” “We will, old man. We will.” (Jim Berlin, in Outdoor Life)**

**At a funeral I heard a minister say, “I cannot tell you anything about the life to come. I cannot prove it to you, for I have never been there. But I have a Friend who has, and I trust that Friend.” That sums it all up. We believe in the resurrection of the body and the life of the world to come because of the testimony of that friend, Jesus Christ. My hope of life after death, and a great and blessed life, depends altogether upon faith in that friend, Jesus Christ. When we turn our faces toward the unseen world we walk by faith and not by sight. *(Clarence E. MacCartney’s Illustrations, p. 157)***

**The Alaskan wood frog survives long, bitter Arctic winters by turning into a “frogsicle”: It becomes frozen solid, and for several months its heart stop beating and it doesn’t draw a single breath. When the weather warms, the frog miraculously thaws and comes back to life. *(Harry Bright & Harlan Briscoe, in So, Now You Know, p. 141)***

**Wood frogs freeze solid in winter and thaw back to life in spring. *(Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Extraordinary Book of Facts, p. 12)***

**The remains of Bredo Morstol have been kept frozen in a shed in Nederland, Colorado, since 1993. His grandson, Trygve Bauge, hopes to revive him one day. 83 tons: Approximate amount of dry ice used to keep Morstol frozen since his body was brought to Nederland. *(Rocky Mountain News, March 10, 2003)***

**A garden that never died eventually would weary. Robbed of springtime, unacquainted with the extraordinary perfume that rises from the soil after it's had its rest, the garden winter doesn't visit is a dull place. The return every spring of earth’s first freshness would never be kept if not for the frosts and rot and ripe deaths of fall. So when I go out from the garden for the last time in autumn, I leave the gate open behind me. *(Michael Pollan, in Second Nature)***

**William Jennings Bryan describes securing a few grains of wheat when in Cairo that had slumbered thirty centuries in an Egyptian tomb. Upon thinking of the unbroken chain of life of the grain we sow and harvest today, he wrote, “If this invisible germ of life in the grain of wheat can pass unimpaired through three thousand resurrections, I shall not doubt that my soul has power to clothe itself with a new body suited to its new existence when this earthly frame has crumbled to dust.” *(Paul Lee Tan, in Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations, p. 1145)***

**When you see a beautiful butterfly, you don’t grieve over the dead cocoon, nor over the dead shell of a new born chick. No! Both of these experiences indicate the ongoingness of Life. (*Charles Simon)***

**If you would have the kernel, you must break the shell. (Meister Eckhart)**

**There is another law of physics called the law of conservation of energy. This law is based on the fact that energy never dies. Energy changes form. The life of that energy – that spirit – may change form, but it eternally is. *(Jim Ockley)***

**Scientists from the New York Botanical Garden and the University of North Carolina discovered leaves that have remained green and intact for more than 15 million years. These leaves, from a Chinese elm called zelkova, which is extinct in North America, were found in eastern Oregon--remarkably preserved in volcanic ash. They were described as appearing almost as if they had been pressed in the pages of a book for only a few weeks. (Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts, p. 179)**

**Seed of the Oriental lotus -- found in a peat bog in Manchuria and dated at about 1000 years -- produced flowers. (Charles J. Cazeau, in Science Trivia)**

**The Manchurian lotus in the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, Washington, D.C., was grown from a seed that had lain dormant in the bed of a lake in Manchuria for thousands of years. (Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 144)**

**Ancient lotus returned to life: Jane Shen-Miller, a plant biologist at the University of California at Los Angeles, has reanimated centuries-old seeds of the sacred lotus. She recovered the seeds from a dry lakebed in China’s Liaoning Province and managed to germinate four of them. Two plants have been growing for two and three years now. Cumulative exposure to low-level radiation in the soil apparently mutated them. Both plants produced abnormal offspring with thin underwater stems and floppy, discolored leaves. But it’s amazing that the seeds germinated at all. Common food grains last only a few years before rotting. “To remain alive, the lotus seeds need to repair damage accumulated over hundreds of years. If we can figure out the lotus’s repair mechanisms and transfer them into crops, we may be able to reduce famine,” says Shen-Miller. (Kathy A. Svitil, in Discover magazine)**

**While driving over one of the country roads in a historic section of Tennessee, we saw an old colored “mammy” approaching us in the distance. We stopped and waited for her to reach us. As she came near, we drew her into a conversation. She readily answered our questions-- "What is your name?” “Where do you live?” “How old are you?" To this question, she made reply in a clear, mellow voice—“Chile, I'se one hundred and sixteen yeahs old.” “Are you sure?” “Yes, I'se quite shuah--I is.” “How long are you going to live, Sylvia?" we asked. Her eyes sparkled, and her lips parted, as she said with a broad smile, “Live? I'se gwine to live fohevah.” Not knowing the extent of her understanding or the nature of her philosophy, we said, “Yes, but how long are you going to live here on the earth?” “Fohevah,” came the quick response, with a positive note of faith behind it. “Yo' see,” she continued, “Ah died once; yes Ah did; Ah died to sin, and Ah don't haf to die no mo’.” (Franklin Fillmore Farrington, in The Second Finding of Christ, p. 292)**

**A married couple find their old relationship, once rich and fulfilling, slowly drying up into no more than an external observance to the point where it seemed impossible that these dry bones should ever live again. Then a new relationship emerges, one that is deeper, more subtle, more satisfying than the old one, with a new quality of life which is inexhaustible because it does not depend on the constant recharging of emotional batteries. That is resurrection. *(H. A. Williams, in True Resurrection)***

**One of my most frequent destinations was a peaceful town only two blocks long in the farmlands of southern Minnesota. My spirits never failed to rise when I saw the highway sign: “Hope, 1 mile.” As I was approaching Hope once I saw a monarch butterfly just ahead, flying toward me on a collision course. I watched helplessly as it disappeared into the front of the car. The butterfly was wedged into a crevice along the hood, its wings sticking up over the top, a flutter of orange and black at the lower edge of my vision. I stopped in Hope to remove the butterfly. As least I could lay its body on the grass, or in a bush. But as I lifted the hood the monarch beat its wings, rose up and flew off. I watched the lilting light dance of that born-again butterfly and searched for some explanation. Maybe I shouldn't have been quite so surprised. A monarch's graceful wings, made for annual migrations as far away as Mexico, aren't as fragile as they appear. And I suspect a few aerodynamic principles could adequately explain why it was spared. Still, when I saw the butterfly take to the air in winged testimony to life's resiliency. To my mind, that’s a miracle – and my mind needs all the miracles it can get. *(Carol Howard, in Psychology Today)***

**All mosquito eggs need water to hatch, but some will hatch just a few days after they are laid, others only after freezing through a winter, still others only after drying out. In fact, some eggs laid by the millions at floodwater levels may survive five years on dry land until floodwaters come again to hatch them. *(Richard Conniff, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Every February, the Philadelphia Meditation Center hosts s screening of the 1993 Bill Murray comedy Groundhog Day. To Buddhists, Murray’s portrayal of a jaded weatherman stuck in an endlessly repeating day illustrates the concept of samsara, the eternal cycle of birth and rebirth. “It’s a very Buddhist movie,” says Ken Klein of the Tibetan Buddhist Center of Philadelphia. *(Philadelphia Inquirer, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 16, 2007)***

**The mystery of reappearing flowers: Adolf Hitler had ordered the complete annihilation of the city of London. The Battle of Britain is history now, yet sometime after it was over, people noticed strange-looking flowers growing up the sides of the huge bomb craters. Curiosity was aroused when no one recognized any of the different varieties. Horticulturists were called in, but even they could not identify any of the flowers. Finally, they went to the natural history department of the British Museum at South Kensington, and there in the library of old manuscripts and rare books they found records of these now extinct varieties – 90 of them! The seeds had been buried for hundreds of years, and were long forgotten as generation after generation covered them up and built the city over them. But the German bombs had resurrected them, and the nitrates in the bombs had fed them and caused them to grow. *(Catholic Digest)***

**Last month, a baby penguin named Toga was stolen from a zoo on the Isle of Wight, off England’s southern coast. Despite a reward of more than $40,000, Togas is still missing, But in the meantime, Toga’s parents, Oscar and Kyala, have produced a new egg. According to zoo owner Derek Curtis, their mood has also improved. “Kyala was absolutely stressed for the first two weeks, wandering up and down,” Curtis said. “Then they started to beak-tap and then they started carrying nesting material, which we were quite happy about.” Kyala laid the egg last week. “Within 40 days,” Curtis said, “we should have another Toga in our life.” *(The Week magazine, February 3, 2006)***

**Rhubarb and asparagus immediately come to mind as usual dinner vegetables which are perennials. Any Others? *(L. M. Boyd)***

**The frescoed Villa of the Mysteries and everything else at Pompeii was buried under more than 19 feet of ash and debris from a two-day eruption of Mount Vesuvius, August 24-25, A.D. 79. “Darkness and ashes came . . . a great weight of them,” wrote witness Pliny the Younger. Thousands died. Excavations began in 1748, revealing well-preserved houses, shrines and inscriptions that provide key evidence of Roman culture and city planning. (Alison McLean, in Smithsonian magazine)**

**There is a cyclic plan on earth. The rose left undisturbed, unsevered from its source, lives on as pod with seed, wherein a magic force holds in its sway a thousand roses more. The rose will teach its lesson well for those with eyes to see. For herein lies eternal life, seed thoughts to set you free. *(Christine M. Boyer)***

**In Romsey, England, an expert in ancient plants has identified a seed discovered inside an abbey wall as an 856-year-old rose. Workmen found the rose behind a medieval painting in a hole sealed in 1120. Think of it! A seed preserved and isolated for 856 years. That seed which was never allowed to fall into the ground, die, and spring up as a beautiful rose bush. (Prairie Overcomer)**

**The man who was dead for 3 days! Sai Baba (1856-1918) of Shirdi, India, was pronounced dead in 1886, with both circulation and breathing stopped completely. As preparations for his funeral were being made 3 days later, it was observed that he was breathing – and he lived another 32 years. (Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 213)**

**Saint Francis Xavier -- the 16th-century missionary who converted hundreds of thousands of people to Christianity -- became even more famous after he died -- his body refused to decay. Even 150 years after his death, Francis’ body was still intact. And some 400 years later, it was still in a remarkable state of preservation, even though no attempt had ever been made to preserve it. (Malcolm Balfour, in National Enquirer)**

**A seed taken from a 600-year-old rattle necklace in South America has germinated and grown into a plant. The seed was imprisoned in a nutshell, as part of the rattle necklace taken from a tomb in Santa Rosa de Tastil. The seed germinated in 1968 and has grown to six feet and flowered. (Pastor’s Manual)**

**Living dead: Seeds found in the tombs of ancient Egyptians when planted have blossomed into flowers. They have retained their life force for over 4,000 years. (The Diagram Group, in Funky, Freaky Facts, p. 184)**

**In 1967 scientists discovered the seeds of an arctic tundra bush in a frozen lemming burrow. After applying radiometric dating procedures on the seeds, they discovered that the seeds had been lying in the burrow since the last ice age, about 10,000 years ago. Yet when scientists placed them in conditions favorable for growth, the seeds began to germinate within forty-eight hours! (Philip & Nancy Seff, in Our Fascinating Earth))**

**I am standing on the seashore. A ship spreads her white sails to the morning breeze and starts for the ocean. I stand watching her until she fades on the horizon, and someone at my side says, “She is gone.” Gone where? The loss of sight is in me, not in her. Just at the moment when someone says, “She is gone,” there are others who are watching her coming. Other voices take up the glad shout, “Here she comes,” and that is dying. (Henry Scott Holland)**

**There are no fish in the Great Salt Lake. However, from April to December, brine shrimp do live there. These shrimp die in the winter after laying trillions of eggs. The eggs are so small that 150 could fit on the head of a pin. It is a big business to harvest the eggs and dry them out. The eggs can be stored for years. When put in salt water, they come to life, furnishing food for prawns and birds. *(Betty Debnam, in Rocky Mountain News)***

**A tiny little desert shrimp lays eggs that may remain dormant for years during dry periods . . . and at the first rain, the eggs hatch. *(Ann Adams)***

**There is a certain little shrimp that lives in the mud of desert waterholes. When the mud dries up, the shrimp shut down almost completely until rain comes along to bring them back to life. Scientists have found shrimp eggs in a dried mud hole that turned into shrimp when soaked with water. Those eggs were known to have been twenty-five years old! (Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 111)**

**Jurassic Park suddenly seems a little less far-fetched. Sperm harvested from frozen animals, a new study suggests, could actually be used to bring extinct species back to life. After defrosting several mouse bodies that had been frozen for 15 years, researchers extracted sperm from the animals’ testes and impregnated living female mice. Those mice later gave birth to healthy pups. It turns out that sperm, frozen slowly within intact bodies, can stay viable for much longer than scientists expected – perhaps even long enough to survive for thousands of years. “The Jurassic Park idea was thought to be pure science fiction by sperm biologists,” Australian anatomist J. M. Cummins tells Discovery News. “Now we are not so sure.” While there are no known specimens of frozen dinosaur testes, there are a number of well-preserved frozen mammoths and extinct cat species, whose sperm could be injected into the eggs of a living relative. That procedure would result in a hybrid animal with half ancient, half modern DNA. Scientists, though, say they have a more practical aim: replenishing small populations of living but endangered creatures. *(The Week magazine, September 8, 2006)***

**I am reminded of the first time I ever attended an Easter Sunrise Service. We gathered at five o’clock in the morning at a desert spot and it was extremely cold. No one had thought to wear heavy coats and we stood around in the dark shivering, our teeth chattering, hugging ourselves to keep warm and all the time wondering, “Why am I here?” And then the sun came up sending a dazzling array of pink and gold into the sky. The sunlight sparkled on every little leaf and blade of grass. It was the most fantastic sight I’d ever seen, worth all the effort that preceded it, an occasion never to be forgotten. I couldn’t help but think, “It’s just like life – the darker the night, the brighter the dawn. If we can endure through the night, the sun always rises.” (Cornelia Addington)**

**Like many ancient people, Emperor Qin believed he could take the real world with him when he died. He had an army of 7,000 life-sized terra cotta soldiers built to guard his tomb. Terra cotta is a kind of pottery. The soldiers are all different, with individual expressions and uniforms. More than 1,000 have been restored. They are lined up in trenches as if they were going into battle. They were discovered in 1974 near the city of Xi’an in central China. *(Betty Debnam, in Rocky Mountain News)***

**A scholar or scientist as he pursues his research finds a favorite theory breaking up in his hands. He is left with no home in which to house the quantities of evidence he has collected. Then a new, more adequate theory gradually takes shape in his mind, which makes him even more at home with his material than he was before. That is resurrection. *(H. A. Williams, in True Resurrection)***

**The mausoleum of Red Square in Moscow displays Lenin’s embalmed body. The pyramids of Egypt protect the mummified bodies of ancient Egyptian kings. Mohammed’s tomb is noted for the bones it contains. Westminster Abbey of London houses the bodies of English heroes. And Arlington Cemetery in Washington, D.C., is the honored resting place of many great Americans. All of those places are famous, attracting tourists because of the bodies they contain. There is all the difference in the world, however, between those monuments and the tomb of Jesus. Although Pilgrims still travel to Jerusalem, Jesus’ tomb is famous because it is empty. Jesus’ bones are not there. He is risen from the dead. *(George Sweeting, in Moody Monthly)***

**A husband and wife, married many years, had planned to enjoy life and travel. But only a month after he retired, the husband suddenly died. All of life seemed to end for that widow. And on her husband's tombstone she had engraved the words: “The light of my life has gone out.” But with the passage of time and the encouragement and counsel of friends, her life came alive again. Two years later her pastor joined her in marriage to another good man and watched them as they enthusiastically anticipated building a new life together. Later she went to her pastor and said, “I'm going to have to change that inscription on my first husband's tombstone.” “No,” replied the pastor. “I think all you have to do is add one more line: ‘I struck another match!’” No matter what happens to us, there is always something left to live for. Broken lives can be rebuilt. What do you do when your world caves in? If you have faith in the goodness of God and in His power to change the course of your life, you never give up on life. An inscription found on a small gravestone after a devastating air raid on Britain in World War II gained much attention. People thought it must be a famous quotation, but it wasn't. The words were written by a lonely old lady whose pet was killed by a bomb. They read: “There is not enough darkness in all the world to put out the light of one small candle.” And we have the Light of life! (M. P. Horban, in Pentecostal Evangel)**

**It is a known fact that many trees continue a never-ending cycle of life even after they have been taken down. When a redwood falls in the forest, its roots sprout other trees around its stump, creating a new circle of life. In one way or another, most trees continue to contribute to life long after they have fallen to the ground. A downed tree can be a haven of safety for wildlife, nourishment for the earth, and source of food for nature, and an area that provides a fertile environment for new trees to come forth. *(Unity School of Christianity, in The Promise of Christmas)***

**A certain Hanoverian countess, who lived about a hundred years ago, was a noted unbeliever, and was especially opposed to the doctrine of the resurrection, as indeed every unbeliever might well be, especially if his opposition could alter it. This lady died when about thirty years of age. Before her death she gave orders that her grave should be covered with a slab of granite, that around it should be placed square blocks of stone, and that the corners should be fastened to each other and to the granite slab by heavy iron clamps. Upon the covering this inscription was placed: THIS BURIAL PLACE, PURCHASED TO ALL ETERNITY, MUST NEVER BE OPENED. All that human power could do to prevent any change in that grave was done. But a little birch tree seed sprouted, and the root found its way between the side stone and the upper slab and grew there. Slowly but steadily it forced its way until the iron clamps were born asunder, the granite lid was raised, and it is now resting upon the trunk of the birch tree, which is large and flourishing. *(Selected, Paul Lee Tan, in Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations)***

**Some years ago a vase hermetically sealed was found in a mummy-pit in Egypt, by the English traveler Wilkinson, who sent it to the British museum. The librarian there, having unfortunately broken it, discovered in it a few grains of wheat and one or two peas, old, wrinkled and hard as stone. The peas were planted carefully under glass on the 4th of June 1844, and at the end of thirty days these old seeds were seen to spring up into new life. They had been buried probably about three thousand years ago, perhaps, in the time of Moses, and had slept all that long time, apparently dead, yet still living in the dust of the tomb. *(Gaussen)***

**Resurrecting an ancient virus: French researchers have revived a dormant and previously unknown virus from a 30,000-year-old sample of Siberian permafrost. The pathogen poses no threat to humans, but its zombie-like return to an infectious state demonstrates the remarkable durability of microbes and raises the question of whether unknown, disease-causing viruses from some ancient era might be locked in ice. “(This) is a good demonstration that the notion that a virus could be ‘eradicated’ from the planet is plain wrong, and gives us a false sense of security,” Jean-Michel Claverie of the Mediterranean Institute of Microbiology tells Smithsonian.com. The virus, Pithovirus sibericum, is between 10 and 100 times larger than an average-size virus, and its 500 genes give it far greater genetic complexity than the common influenza virus. All viruses require host cells to reproduce, and they exist in an inert state in between reproductive cycles, much like a plant’s seed does. In this instance, researchers thawed a sample of frozen soil taken from 100 feet underneath the surface, then placed it on a petri dish containing amoeba colonies. The resuscitated virus was absorbed by the amoebas and then began making copies of itself until it split open its hosts, killing them. *(The Week magazine, March 21, 2014)***

**To Phyllis Laughlin's surprise, watermelon plants started coming up about a month later. The melons got no water, but benefited from an unusually wet spring and summer. They got no fertilizer, except a child's amazement. Still they grew. Even their beginning was chancy: Seeds thrown out with the rinds germinated this spring. “My husband never had any luck. He'd water them and water them,” Laughlin said. Their grandchildren, Corey, 6, and Kelsey, 4, watched the melons' growth. Corey was especially excited. “He said, ‘Grandma, that's amazing!’” “It is amazing,” Laughlin said, “that they grew this big without being watered. I don't know, I thought maybe now that Cliff's gone, the living goes on. I thought maybe it would be a good remembrance of him. He would have thought, ‘Oh, my gosh.’” These watermelons resulted from a Laughlin family picnic a year ago at the home where Cliff and Phyllis had lived for nearly 50 years and raised their eight children. “We had watermelon and corn to eat,” she said. “Instead of putting them (the remains) in the garbage, Cliff would always say, ‘Let's bury it out in the yard.’” So the watermelon rinds and corncobs were buried out back and forgotten. Their unexpected appearance not only means Cliff Laughlin got his wish, but the tradition will continue: Now Corey has been bitten by the watermelon bug. “Oh, yes, he wants to grow more,” Phyllis Laughlin said. For 50 years, no matter how hard he tried, Cliff Laughlin of Pueblo, Colorado, never could grow watermelons in his garden. Laughlin died April 11, 1999, at the age of 92. *(Associated Press)***

**In the ninth century, Pope Nicholas I decreed that a cockerel would be displayed from every church steeple as a weather vane. The cockerel was used to remind all parishioners of Peter’s three denials of Christ before the cock crowed, to keep them from this sin. (Noel Botham, in The Amazing Book of Useless Information, p. 15)**

**Four years ago, Mrs. Cordray, a widow 68, who had been under care for treatment of Parkinson’s disease, was declared dead and her body was sent to a funeral home. A funeral home employee began making preparations for embalming when he thought he saw her tongue move. A moment later she took a breath. Mrs. Cordray recovered from that ordeal, and spent the remaining years of her life at an extended care facility. A spokesman confirmed that she died in a hospital in Canton, Ohio, in 1975. (Associated Press)**

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