

**ANCIENT ENGLISH
HOLY WEEK
CEREMONIAL**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649002689

Ancient English Holy week ceremonial by Henry John Feasey

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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HENRY JOHN FEASEY

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BY

HENRY JOHN FEASEY.

LONDON:
THOMAS BAKER, 1, SOHO SQUARE.

1897.





The Ancient English Holy Week Ceremonial.

The Lenten Array.

THE spectacle presented to the eyes of the faithful in our English Churches in times anterior to the Reformation period in the Holy Season of Lent was one of exterior penitence. Not alone did the Church insist on the necessity of a sincere interior penitence, but also on the penance of the senses. Thus, in order that the minds of Her children should not be diverted from the sublime "PAGENTE OF THE PACION" of Her Divine Lord and Master, She shrouded Her altars, and covered up with veils Her sacred pictures and images; hushed the notes of Her organs, and stilled the music of Her bells.

In the first four weeks in Lent white linen or similar plain material was used by Her for the

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vesting of Her altars and Her priests, as typical of the purity and sincerity of repentance* ; and from the Passion till the Vigil of Easter—the two last weeks in Lent—red cloth or a like stuff, pointing to the dust of Earth by the one, by the other the immortality of Heaven. While by a mystic combination of the two she continually reminded them, at this most solemn season of the whole Christian year, of the precious blood-shedding of the Pure and Immaculate Lamb of God.

With the same intention she also suspended the Lenten Veil between the Choir and the Altar—"the Veil," as the *Liber Festivalis* says, "that all this Lent hath been drawn between us and the choir betokeneth the Passion that was hid and unknown till the day came."

The Lenten Array.

Before proceeding to speak particularly of the Lenten Veil, the Rood Cloth, etc., it may be interesting to touch, somewhat lightly of necessity, on the several other parts of what was known as "the Lenten Array," which includes the vestments of the clergy, the ornaments or coverings for the altars, crosses, statuary, and pictures. The best and shortest way of doing this will be to give a few extracts from the old inventories and churchwardens'

* See *Lev.* xvi. 4.

accounts, merely premising that in the early days plain white linen was used as the material for vestments and coverings both of clergy and church ornaments*, which as time went on became more ornamental—the ground colour remaining generally white though the stuff was of silk, satin, velvet, and other rich material.

Thus we find in

1407. *Warwick College* (S. Mary's) :

“An hole vestiment of *white tartaryn* for lenton that is to say. iij aubes. iij amytes. wyth the parures. a chesible. iij stolis. iiij fanons. iij girdelis. ij auter clothis wyth a frontel. and a towail. iij curtyns. a lectron cloth. and a veyle of lynnyn cloth.”—*Chartulary of Warwick College*, f. ccij^b. (Public Record Office.)

Here we not only find the “vestment” including the chasuble and all its appurtenances,—stoles, fanons (maniples), and girdles; but also altar cloths and curtains, frontal, towel, lectern-cloth and lent veil. We find also that

* Post completorium cruces pannis albis cooperiantur “et linteis.”—*Ordinarius Cisterciensis*, printed by Dr. Rock. “Secunda feria prime ebdomade Quadragesime ad matutinas omnes cruces et imagines, et reliquie, . . . sint cooperta usque ad matutinas in die Pasche.”—*Registrum Osmundi*, § cii.

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the amices appertaining to the albes, and doubtless the albes themselves, were apparelled, although the time of Lent :—

15th century King's College, Cambridge:
“iiij aubes for childre. with parours according to the same for Lenton”—

and that in *practice*, whatever may have been ordered, the old English colours for Lenten use were White and Red—*white* for the earlier part of that Season, with red crosses, and *red* for Passiontyde*. This has been abundantly proved by Mr. St. John Hope in his valuable paper on *The English Liturgical Colours* (S. Paul's Eccles. Society Trans., Vol. ii., p. 233), *e.g.* :—

In 1453, the Lenten Array at *King's College, Cambridge*, included :

“iij chesibles of bustian the orfrez of raied riban of threed iij aubes iij amities with parours stoles and phanons according to the same. viij aulter clothz of lynen cloth with reed crosez iij pair curteyns & j vail of the same j painted cloth to hange before the Crucifix ij baners of the same with figures of

* “Red albes for Passion Week” are specially mentioned at Peterborough. See Gunton's “*History of the Church of Peterborough.*”

the Passion for Lenton."—*Ecclesiologist*,
xx. 311-13.

At Ludlow (Whitefriars) Priory was "a chasabull and ij decons of whyte nedell work for Lent"; among the "Lent stuff" in the "Vestry" of King Edward VI. in 1547, "one Priest, Deacon, and Sub-deacon of white Damaske with redd Crosses"; and at St. Stephen's, Coleman Street (1466), j hole sute of vestments of whyte bustyan for Sundayes in time of Lent with Rede Roses embraudet."

Occasionally, among the numerous instances of *white* vestures for clergy and altar, we come across such as the following:

1453. *King's College, Cambridge.*

"iij dalmatiques of *reed* with aubes amytes stoles and phanons and iiij aubes for childre with parours according to the same, for lenton."—*Ecclesiologist*,
xx. 311-13.

circa 1550. *Wingham College, Kent.*

"j vestyment of *redd* with a crosse of blewe worsted used in Lente."—*Sacristy*,
i. 376.

temp. Edward VI., *York Minster.*

"A *blewe* vestement with two dalmaticks