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The Dove Has Had This Distinction In All Ages Since the Flood.

The dove has been pictured as the bird of peace by writers and artists in all the ages since the time of the flood, for the dove has figured in the symbolism of many races and of countless generations. According to the Century Dictionary, the dove is the bird of peace because of the incident recorded in the eighth chapter of Genesis: "And it came to pass at the end of forty days that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made, and he sent forth a raven which went to and fro until the waters were dried up from off the earth. And he sent forth a dove from him to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground, but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him in the ark. And he stayed yet another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark, and the dove came to him in the evening, and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off; so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth."

Proper names derived from the dove have always been used in the orient as descriptive of loveliness and were especially applied to beautiful women. The dove was woven into the pagan worship of ancient northern Europe, and it has a great place in early Christian life and symbolism. From immemorial time the dove has always been a type of innocence to the Jews. Elsewhere it has been associated since the Olympian age with the higher idea of Venus as the symbol of natural human affection—the love that goes with purity and simplicity of heart. It had a part in marriage scenes and was naturally introduced by early Christian painters into pictures of the Madonna and child and of female saints. These qualities of gentleness and affection combined with their mournful notes made doves equally appropriate to moods of sorrow, and they were a part of the furniture of most pagan funerals. This passed on into Christian usage and their likenesses, generally combined with the olive branch, were carved on the tombs in the catacombs beneath Rome and elsewhere, emblematic of eternal peace.

In the Sporting Magazine for 1825 this appeared: "Pigeons are rarely seen at the table of the Russians, who entertain a superstitious veneration for these birds because the Holy Ghost assumed the form of a dove." Commenting on this, a writer says, "This custom of the abstinence from the flesh of the dove is far older than Christianity, being indeed in all probability connected with the same class of feelings as those which marked it out as the Aryan death bird."

Sir Richard F. Burton remarks: "Ever since Noah's dove every religion seems to consider the pigeon as the sacred bird. For example, every mosque swarms with pigeons, and the same exist in most Italian market places. The Hindoo pundits and the old Assyrian empire also have them."

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"I insist upon your leaving the house," she said angrily.

"Certainly," replied the tramp blandly. "I have no intention of taking it with me."

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