

The Free Press' Short Story**A FORTUNATE MASQUERADE**

BY HARRIET LUMMIS SMITH

IF Aunt Lavinia was hard, of hearing she was sharp-eyed enough. "What's gone wrong between you and Olive?" she demanded of her grand-nephew, who was taken by surprise he just missed upsetting his coffee.

"Everything's all right," Roger Young muttered.

"What's that?"

"I said everything was all right. This time he shouted.

"It's more'n a week since you went to see her. And a girl's good-looking as Olive isn't going to be left to sit alone on her front porch."

Roger did not answer but a devastating blush burned its way to the roots of his hair and made his ears feel hot and swollen. He hoped that if he kept silent, Aunt Lavinia's cackulation would come to an end, but he was deathed to be disappointed.

"Got somebody else on the string already, bus she?" Aunt Lavinia remarked casually after a moment. She had a way of jumping at conclusions that irritated Roger, all the more because her conclusions were almost invariably correct. He took a long drink of water and made no attempt to relieve her curiosity.

"Yes," he roared, and added under his breath, "if you must know." The last remark was impossible for her to hear, but she had an uncanny fashion of understanding anything he would rather keep a secret.

"Of course I must know. You're my nephew's son, aren't you, and all the kin I've got? If Olive Pendleton puts Lester Brooks ahead of you, her brains aren't up to her complexion."

The only answer for that was a laugh, but Roger felt his heart warm by the old woman's uncompromising loyalty. "Maybe you're prejudiced," he shouted, but by now he was grinning.

"Me?" Miss Lavinia Young seemed surprised at the suggestion. "I'm pushing seventy-eight. Don't you suppose I know by this time? I say again, if Olive Pendleton likes that Brooks boy better 'n she does, you, she's a poor judge of human nature."

Roger felt that to tell even Aunt Lavinia that he honestly believed Olive preferred him to her more prosperous admirer, Lester Brooks, would seem a mark of conceit. Aunt Lavinia would have been troubled had he explained that the rift between him and himself was due to his own pride, rather than to her choice. A fellow would hardly consider camping in a girl's living room, if he never had the cash to take her to the drug store for ice cream and soda. Especially was this the case when at any moment Lester Brooks was likely to drive up in his smart-tanned roadster. Olive was not the sort of girl to classify her friends according to that which she could get out of them, but a fellow had his pride.

If only old Dickson at the bank would carry out the intention of retiring he had expressed a thousand times! That would mean a general moving up, with one position left vacant. Mr. Webb had promised that the job should be Roger's. "As things are now, my boy," he had said, "I can't take on an extra man. But when there is a place you can have it, if you still want it." Roger smiled grimly as he still recalled that "if." Of course at the start his salary would be small, but for the present his ambitions were modest. To be able to pay Aunt Lavinia board, buy himself the clothes he needed and occasionally have a few dollars to spend for Olive's pleasure was all he asked.

White-wanted for the deliberate Mr. Dickson to make up his mind, he was far from idle. Aunt Lavinia's little home was located on ten acres of ground which in her more amorous moods the old lady referred to as her "farm." All last spring and summer, Roger had worked hard in the garden and not only had his vegetables supplied their table, but he had also sold a good many to passing motorists. His chickens had flourished, too, and eggs had been plentiful. The motorists would not pay for fresh eggs and broilers what they had paid in the days of plenty, but nevertheless, his chicken yard had met Aunt Lavinia's taxes! thus spring.

As Roger took his time over his breakfast, Aunt Lavinia got up and trotted to the window. "It's a nice day," she said approvingly. "I think I'll take those eggs to the Hamiltons if you'll harness Ginger."

He went to the woodshed where he took the necessary garments from nails driven into the wall. Familiarity blunts the sense of humor, and Roger donned this most incongruous apparel without a change in his intensely solemn expression, though the first time he had done it, he had

been so convulsed by mirth that he had dropped to the floor, unable to stand till he had finished his laugh.

When Aunt Lavinia had purchased Ginger she had been assured that the horse was so gentle that a woman could manage him without difficulty. The little peculiarity the former owner forgot to mention was that a man could do nothing with Ginger. He would meekly submit to the curvycumb in Aunt Lavinia's hands, but let Roger start to use it, and Ginger lashed out with his heels, with the evident intention of annihilating the intruder. Aunt Lavinia could harness Ginger without any trouble, but if Roger attempted it, Ginger gave a spirited imitation of a bucking broncho.

For Aunt Lavinia to act permanently as groom and stable boy was out of the question, and Roger's efforts to convince Ginger that trousers did not necessarily indicate total depravity, proved unavailing. "If we can't make him listen to reason," said Aunt Lavinia, "we'll have to try a trick."

"What sort of trick?" "I've got an old wrapper you can wear, and a sunbonnet. I guess that'll do it."

Roger screamed with laughter at the idea of appearing in such garments. When Aunt Lavinia brought them out and insisted on his putting them on, the reflection of himself in the kitchen mirror had resulted in his rolling on the floor in an ecstasy of mirth.

Aunt Lavinia had not underrated in her estimate of equine psychology. When a tall, lank figure in a queer-looking pink wrapper and disengaged sunbonnet backed Ginger from the stall, the horse obeyed with the subservientness of a lamb. For the first six months Roger made occasional efforts to induce Ginger to surrender his prejudices and accept him as an other unobjectionable male, but the first appearance of trousers and masculine headgear resulted in such decided authority that Roger was the one who surrendered. His unquestioning in Aunt Lavinia's cast-off garments had long before lost its humorous aspect. For a time the situation had been distinctly irritating. By now it had ceased to vex him as earlier it had ceased to amuse him. It was all in the days work.

"Don't let Peter into the house," said Aunt Lavinia, as she climbed into the buggy. "He's been in the pond, and I don't want my clean floor tracked up."

"All right," Roger answered, as he went into the kitchen. He stopped to bolt the screen door, for the dog, Peter, could open any door that was merely "latched." The incongruous costume had become so much a matter of course that before removing it, he went to the sink and pumped himself a glass of water.

Just as he raised it to his lips, a trapping came at the door and a voice cried, "Miss Young! Oh! Miss Young!" Miss Young, with a look to which he was not equal if she once saw him in that absurd wrapper that preposterous sunbonnet, she would never be able to think of him without laughing.

"Miss Young! Miss Young!" screamed Olive and rattled the door. Roger set down his untasted water, his hand shaking. For him to walk into the next room, carefully keeping his back to the door, and then return properly garbed and learn Olive's errand would be impossible. Suppose Olive had really come to see Aunt Lavinia and asked for her?

He could not say his aunt had driven over to Hamiltons, for Olive would be almost certain to reply, "Why I saw her just a minute ago. I called to her but couldn't make her hear me."

The unwashed breakfast dishes stood on the table at his elbow, carelessly keeping his back to the door. He filled the dish pan from the teakettle and began to wash the dishes. He worked slowly. When Olive called as she did every now and then, "Miss Young! Miss Young! Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" a chill ran down his spine. He was sure she would grow tired in time and go away.

"Suddenly he heard the sound of an automobile crunching its way up the drive. Some one jumped from the car and came toward the house. "What are you doing here?" boomed an angry voice.

A plate slipped through Roger's fingers and dropped to the floor, broke into a dozen pieces. Roger had recognized the voice of Lester Brooks and his start would have betrayed him if the couple the other side of the door had not been too absorbed to notice anything special. "What I'm here for is my own business," Olive's tone was no more amiable than Lester's.

Find Other Uses Than Foodstuffs For Grain Yield

Canada's Experts Deep in Research to Get Paying Products from Surplus Wheat and Barley

BY MARSHALL RATEMAN
Canadian Press Staff Writer

WINNIPEG, Feb. 26 (CP)—A portion work that may lead to profitable industrial uses for wheat and reports on tests of new grain varieties that are resistant to disease other than rust will be reviewed when leading Canadian grain research scientists meet here March 3-5.

Dean Robert Newton of the agricultural department, University of Alberta, and chairman of the Associate Committee on Grain Research,

said the committee's main purpose is to reorganize its program to make the explanations-at-possible-new-industrial uses for wheat and suitable crops "our main project in the immediate future."

Prior to the meeting Dean Newton visited laboratories in Saskatoon, Winnipeg and Ottawa, probing the possibility of commercial application of the theory that gluten concentrations from wheat can be mixed with European native wheat to bring it to the high standard of hard prairie wheat.

Dr. J. A. Anderson, chief chemist of the Dominion Grain Research Laboratory, Winnipeg, will report on commercial preparation of gluten concentrates.

Uses With Profit

Dean Newton said a number of industrial uses for wheat are technically possible—but the difficulty has been in making them economically profitable. "This is notably true in the manufacture of power alcohol from wheat or other grains."

He said no other new use has been proposed which might use such substantial quantities of grain as power alcohol, used to increase the octane rating of gasoline.

"We may have no content ourselves with exploring a number of comparatively minor uses in the hope that their sum total will reach an appreciable quantity."

It was just as important to find an expanded market for barley, flax and other grains.

All the work except power alcohol is still in the laboratory stage, Dean Newton said. "We must not look for immediate new commercial applications. About 10 years is required for a new scientific idea to reach the stage of commercial exploration."

Testing Wheats

Discussion of new grain varieties, said, includes one rust-resistant wheat that matures early and which might be suitable for northern districts. Another, a new Durum variety, has reached a semi-commercial testing stage and its performance will be reviewed.

Opportunities for wheat substitutes will be dealt with by Dr.

Harrison, assistant commissioner Board of Grain Commissioners, Dr. H. E. Sallan, Biochemist-in-charge of the oil seeds laboratory, University of Saskatchewan, and W. O. A. Morefield, Biochemist-in-charge of the Experimental Malting Laboratory, University of Manitoba.

Dr. W. H. Cook, Biochemist in charge of the food storage investigations, National Research Council, Ottawa, will report on uses of starch residue from wheat.

World Bullion Headquarters

Great New Building in Hatton Garden, London

The world's clearing house for precious metals will be one of the most conspicuous buildings to rise in London when the war is over.

The site of this great new block is only half a mile from St. Paul's Cathedral, and at present houses part of an organization with an international reputation for the refining and preparation of precious metals.

Long associated with the history of platinum refining, this organization produced, in 1876, an International Standard Metre in an alloy of ten per cent Iridio-Platinum. It was later to the order of the Paris Commissions Internationales du Metre, and duplicates were subsequently ordered by many governments, including those of Argentina and Brazil.

Among its other activities are the manufacture of rolled gold and liquid gold, both of which were developed during the last war when German supplies ceased to be available. Since 1914, Great Britain has not only met her own requirements in these products but has also developed an export trade of very considerable value in them. Buyers in many countries are today familiar with British rolled gold for the manufacture of jewellery, optical and fancy goods, as well as British liquid gold and liquid platinum for fired decoration of porcelain, glass and earthenware.

Empire Air Fighters

First Year's Number One-Third Above Estimate

The number of pilot officers and sergeants trained under Britain's Empire Air Training Scheme is now over one-third more than the total originally aimed at. The first contingents of them have passed for active service in the United Kingdom from the Empire Training schools which have been set up in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Southern Rhodesia.

When the scheme, which had just

completed its first twelve-month

work, was in full operation, Canada

and New Zealand are expec-

tated to produce from their own

resources alone, no fewer than 20,000

pilots and 30,000 air crews each year, all fully trained to meet the enemy.

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