

The Free Press Short Story

The Trail of the Easter Bonnet

By MARGARET E. SANGSTER

LOIS WHEATLY was trying on her new Easter hat when the room...

Lois Wheatly made a charming little face at her husband. "You're right," she said...

"That's the way for a married woman to feel," said William, almost fustiously. "As a matter of fact, Lois went on, disregarding any husbandly interruption...

"Oh, a girl who works at the office where I worked before we were married," said Lois softly. "She's a perfectly lovely girl, but she's the sole support of her widowed mother. She doesn't make very much money, and she never has anything very pretty to wear. The hat that was so unbecoming to me looked stunning on her!"

"You're a sweet thing," said William Wheatley, and crossing the room on swift feet, he kissed Lois. "I'm awfully glad you got the second hat," he added.

"That was the way it all commenced. The girl from the office was named Irene Murray. She was a really attractive young person, although her shabbiness had come to be a byword in the office. Rumor said that she was being considered for a big position in the office, and that she probably would not get it because she dressed so poorly."

"Lois Wheatly was right. Irene Murray did look stunning in the hat that she had discarded. She had been thrilled by her ex-office mate's unexpected gift. She had carried it home almost reverently, and had tried it on to the tune of excited "ohs" and "ahs" from her mother.

"I'll wear it to work to-morrow," said Irene. "And I'm going to give my old hat away at once!" "Whom will you give it to?" asked Mrs. Murray.

"Oh," said Irene Murray, "I'm going to give it to the janitor's daughter. She's an awfully nice youngster, and she told me just the other day that she'd worn her hat so long that it was practically in shreds. After all, though I'm tired of the hat, it's at least whole."

So Irene Murray did not wait until Easter Sunday to wear her new spring hat; she wore it to the office bright and early the day after Lois had given it to her. The consciousness of its smartness made her cheeks flush and her eyes look bright. It also made her commit the unprecedented extravagance of pausing at the corner to buy a gardenia from a street vendor, of stopping off in the corridor of the office building to have her shoes polished. With their shiny blackness making them look like new, with the fragrant flowers fastened to the lapel of her shabby suit, with the exotic lily hat perched upon her charming head, she made a picture as she entered the office.

Two men were talking together as

Irene entered a little breathlessly, more than a trifle flushed. They looked up at her approach. One of them was the president of the firm, the other was the office manager. The president of the firm stared at Irene with a crinkle of surprise on his forehead, the office manager, allowed his mouth to drop just a little bit open as he regarded her.

That afternoon Irene was called into the office of the president of the company and was offered a job that almost doubled her salary and more than tripled her importance. "You'll have to meet outside people in this job," said the president of the company, "and I hesitated to give it to you at first, Miss Murray—to be perfectly frank—because you've always seemed a trifle, well," he paused, "not careless with your dress, but too—well, shall we say casual?" (Of course he could not know the real financial reason back of that so-called casual appearance!) "But this morning," all at once the president was smiling, "when I saw you looking so fresh and tailored and well groomed, I knew you were just the person for the place."

The janitor's seventeen-year-old daughter, Sally Jarrett, almost cried when she received Irene Murray's discarded hat. Of course, it was not so gay nor so smart as an Easter hat should be, but it was whole and its shape and color were very becoming to the janitor's daughter, who was clever with her needle. She immediately ripped off the old trimming and put a bow of ribbon on the tilted tip of the brim. It gave the hat a jaunty air.

"It's a pretty hat, isn't it?" she said to her father, the janitor. "I won't look so much like a back number in it, as I did, eh, Dad?" The father sighed. Being a janitor of a shabby apartment house gives a man such a very small reward. "I'll be proud," he told his daughter, "to walk out with you on Easter Sunday in your new bonnet." "You," he gulped, "you look like your ma in it."

Sally patted her father's hand. "Stop your blarneying," she told him, but there were tears in her eyes too. On Easter Sunday they went out together to church. Sally had laundered and pressed a little printed silk dress left over from the summer before. The printed figures in it toned in with the color of the bow that she had put upon Irene Murray's old hat. She looked very dainty and girlish and happy as she walked beside her father.

They went to church and sat together through the lovely service. After the service, thrilled and uplifted by the music, the prayers and the sermon, they started to walk home again. Outside the church, however, a young man stopped them. He was a handsome young man, with a humorous light in his blue eyes, and a thatch of unruly hair that rippled in the springtime breeze as he removed his soft hat. "Ah, there, Dan," he called—Dan was the janitor's name—"how are you this fine Easter morning?"

The janitor beamed. "Oh, I'm fine, Jack my boy," he said. "And say, it's been a month o'Sundays since I saw you last." "This fellow, Jack Moran," he had turned to his daughter, "and I used to work together in the foundry, before I took kind of feeble and went over to janitoring. Of course, he was only a youngster then! Here, Jack," he turned to the young man, "met my daughter!"

The blue eyes of the young man flashed smilingly over the face of the girl in the printed dress and the retrimmed hat. "Now, Dan," he exclaimed, "why didn't you tell me you had a daughter like this? It wouldn't have been a week of Sundays, the time between our meetings, if you had."

The janitor's daughter was blushing; she was too embarrassed to speak. The janitor, however, spoke for her. "Well, it's never too late, Jack," he said, "to mend a mistake! Why don't you begin by coming home with us to dinner?" The young man flushed now. Again his eyes sought the eyes of the janitor's daughter, and there was an appeal in them. "If the young lady wouldn't mind," he said.

The janitor's daughter had recovered from her confusion. She was smiling now. "There is always enough for a guest," she told him, "on Easter Sunday. We'd be glad to have you, Dad and I." The young man fell into step beside them. It was the beginning of a new habit of his, falling into step beside them, only one of them knew it then.

Sally Jarrett did not give away her old hat. As she had said to Irene Murray, it was in rags. The straw of it was faded, shapeless and torn. The road that had once decked its brim was also faded and shapeless. So the janitor's daughter, humming gaily on the day after Easter, threw the hat on the top of the ash barrel that stood in front of the apartment house.

The hat lay on top of the ash barrel all morning, and then at noon when the children began to pass by on their way home from school, the hat moved magically from the ash barrel. A ragged little girl, seeing it there, swooped upon it with a little cry of joy. It was limp enough to fold easily under her ragged coat, and she carried it, as tenderly as the average little girl would carry a doll, down the sunless alleyway in which stood the tenement house where she lived. Her steps fairly skipped as she climbed the long flights of stairs to the sunless room where her mother, her crippled sister and she spent their days and nights. She burst into the room flushed, excited and joyous.

The crippled sister was alone, sitting in a chair by the one narrow window; the mother was out doing her daily washing. "See, honey," exclaimed the little girl, as she went racing across the room to her sister's side, "see what I found!" With the air of a conjurer she pulled the faded, dilapidated hat from under her jacket. She held it up before the eyes of the pallid young person who sat in the chair by the window. "Of course the hat isn't any good," she went on excitedly, "but just look at the roses on the brim of it. Why it seems almost real!"

The crippled girl reached for the hat. Her eyes were big and bright with excitement. "Why, Ellen," she said to her little sister, "the rose is made of silk and velvet. It must have cost an awful lot of money, once. Get me some scissors and we'll cut it off the old hat."

The scissors were produced in a scented red chest that held the belongings of the family. The crippled girl ripped the rose from the brim, and then occurred one of those little miracles that make life worth living even in the slums. The underside of the rose, where it had been fastened against the brim, was freshly, brilliantly pink.

"I never thought," said the crippled girl, and her thin hand patted her little sister's hand, "that anybody would be bringing me an Easter flower, this year, did I, Ellen?" The little girl did not answer. It was not because she was sad that she was inadequate of the flower that had given her a gift; she was silent because she was so happy at having been able to give it!

In our celebration of Easter, rabbits and chickens always figure prominently, yet many may not know just where we get the connection. An explanation is found in a very pretty Easter legend, as follows:

One day a rabbit went for a quiet walk in the forest. He came upon a nest filled with eggs but there was no hen in sight. After a futile search for her, he concluded a wary old fox must have made a meal of her. He realized how the mother hen must have worried over the eggs, so he decided he would play the part of Good Samaritan by trying to keep the eggs warm, and he huddled close on the hen's nest all night.

When he woke next morning, which of course was Easter, the nest was full of little yellow chicks. They knew no different and supposed the rabbit was their mother so turned to him to be sheltered and fed. The rabbit did not desert the little fellows but went out into the woods every day and found food for the chicks and stayed with them at night to keep them warm.

In northern Germany the inhabitants have an Easter tree somewhat similar to our Christmas tree except that the decorations are different, the trimming being all colors of eggs. And that is the reason a rabbit always stands guard over a huge nest of eggs at this Easter tree! The eggs are intended for all the children and grown folks, and they join hands for a frolic around the Easter tree just as in this country we join hands and sing carols around our Christmas tree. There is much fun and feasting all day long.

The old Indian at the Dude ranch was busily whittling arrows. "What's his job?" said the easterner, who was being shown around. "Him, him heap munitions maker," explained the redskin, who was acting as guide.

Leaves Without Notice



ARLINE JUDGE Arline Judge, petite and pretty motion picture star, is reported separating from her husband, Wesley Ruggles. When asked the reason, Miss Judge made no other statement than to say that her husband was the finest man she ever met. The couple were married in 1931, and have one son.

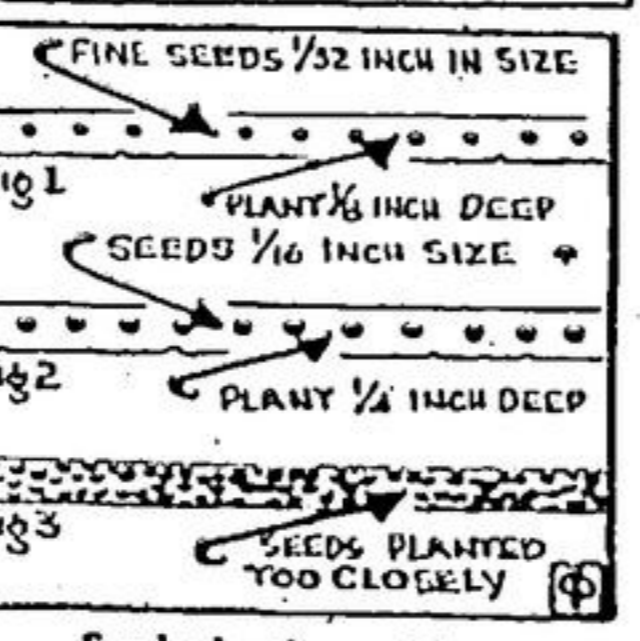
THE MINIATURE BEDDING DAHLIA

One type of plant which has quickly endeared itself to the flower growers and has won popular acclaim for and wide is the miniature bedding dahlia. This has been grown with unqualified success at the Experimental Farm, Indian Head, Saskatchewan, for the past number of years and during this time climatic conditions have not always been of the most favorable.

These dahlias may be grown from tubers or cuttings that have been overwintered, which generally come into bloom earlier than plants grown from seed. However, the last mentioned method has been followed each year and results have justified it as there is no necessity of lifting and storing the tubers, with perhaps indifferent success in overwintering. Generally, seed sown the latter half of April has produced plants that were in bloom in mid-July. The plants are not exacting as to soil conditions and generally seem to do well whether used to fill in gaps in the perennial border or used as bedding plants, and in this respect they are equal to any of the half-yearly annuals as regards usefulness, ease of culture and effectiveness.

The plants are 18 to 24 inches tall and stiff enough that staking and tying need not be resorted to. They are very prolific bloomers with flowers borne on tall stiff stems above the foliage. The flowers may be single or semi-double with variations in the shapes of the petals which lend grace, lightness and charm to them. The color is exceedingly wide and pleasing, but strains and varieties may be procured that come approximately true to type and color.

Seed of this type of plant may be secured at very reasonable cost from practically all the seed houses and the growing of it is highly commended to all those who take a particular pride in their flower border.



Seeds should be put to bed as carefully as babies if they are to grow into strong and healthy plants. There are many right and wrong ways of planting seeds, of which two right and one wrong way are illustrated above.

Fig. 1. Shows the correct depth for planting very fine seeds. Seeds as small as one-thirty-second inch in size should only be planted four times as deep as their size. In this case, one-eighth inch deep.

Fig. 2. Shows correct spacing for seeds one-sixteenth of an inch in size, as well as the correct depth of planting, or one-fourth inch deep.

Fig. 3. Shows a common gardening mistake—seeds planted in a drill but too closely together. With exceedingly fine seeds, such as those of the snapdragon and petunia, it is best to mix them with ten times the amount of sand before sowing. For example, mix one teaspoon of such seeds with ten teaspoons of sand.

MILLION DOLLAR WRIGLEY SIGN STARTS OPERATION

The new Wrigley Spearhead Gum Sign on Times Square, New York City, a million dollar project, largest of its kind in the world, was formally dedicated and put into operation on Saturday evening, March 28th.

The sign occupies the entire block on Broadway from 44th to 45th Street on the east side of Times Square. The new sign is a superstructure on the top of a two story steel and concrete building, built especially to bear the tremendous weight of the display. This world's largest spectacular lowers ten stories high; the Spearhead on the sign has a grin a yard wide. The package of Wrigley's Spearhead is larger than a taxicab.

The sign shows gigantic, multi-colored, tropical fish swimming about the sky; the largest fish measuring 42 feet from tip to tail. The flashing mechanism consists of twenty-one pieces of apparatus, all operating in unison, but no one piece is synchronized with another. The electrical current required for this huge display would serve a city of ten thousand. There are 1,004 feet of neon tubing and almost seventy miles of wire used. The investment on the entire project is a cool million dollars.

Hundreds of thousands of people will pass the sign each day; the number who pass daily through the subway at Times Square is estimated to be almost equal to the population of Toronto.

CHILDHOOD'S TRUSTFULNESS

Nothing is more winning to childhood than its trustfulness. Nature has provided that, for many years after we are born, everything about us shall train in us a spirit of trustfulness toward those around us. The babe must cling to its mother without misgiving that her breast will cease to nourish it. The growing child has accumulated, by long experience of the tenderness watching over it, fund of confidence on which the parents may draw. The love may be manifested in disappointment but the gathering fear cannot blind the upward look of infant trust. And where a child has been so unhappily trained that its faith can only live by indulgence, we feel that the chief beauty of childhood has vanished. It would seem that the Eternal Love has provided that mankind shall pass through the age of helplessness, in which it must trust others; for every good, in order that this habit that when in after years the parental confidence has been withdrawn, and man must trust his own arm, for earthly good, he may the more readily find and find the pervading principle of which parental love is the highest earthly manifestation. The history of the race is a steadfast advance toward the conception of a parental Deity. — Dr. Moncreux D. Conway.

What flies and yet has not wings? Time.

Any Time is Tea Time "SALADA" TEA

CROSS WORD PUZZLE with grid and clues for Across and Down.



CANADIANS AND THEIR INDUSTRIES—AND THEIR BANK

TOBACCO GROWING

TOBACCO FARM OWNER: "Henry, you and the other men are doing fine work and I hope you know I appreciate it." TOBACCO FARM WORKER: "Thank you; I figure you know that we appreciate our steady jobs and good pay, too." OWNER: "Oh, well, Henry, I don't deserve all the credit. I never could have started or carried on this business properly, without the assistance of my bank, the Bank of Montreal. Like hundreds of other tobacco growers, I have borrowed every year from the Bank to pay for plants, fertilizer and labour; and soon after I began the Bank loaned me money I needed for barns and other equipment. Of course, I've kept up my end by paying off the loans when I sold my crop. There's nothing like good banking credit for making a sound business, regular profits—and giving employment."

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SCOTT'S SCRAPBOOK

Advertisement for Scott's Scrapbook featuring a man in a hat and various items like cedar of Lebanon, figure of eight, and the Malian Naval War.