The Wreck of the Easter Egg

Sarah Bernhardt-for-short, as Miss Rose called the small Polish maiden in place of the long string of consonants that was her real name, stood looking in the window of the little candy store next door to the Hester How School. As she stood there, her small ragged person pressed close against the window, Sarah's anxious eyes followed the bird-like hand of Mrs. Wiener, the tiny old woman who kept the store, as it occasionally reached into the window from within, hovering perilously over the object of the child's solicitude, ere it escaped with some other object in its grasp.

The treasure in the window that so obsessed the tempestuous soul of the little Polish girl was an egg, an Easter egg, but not at all like the ordinary chocolate kind with their unvarying white and yellow insides. This egg was different. The outside was of a snow-white, glittering substance that shone in points like diamonds; a border of lace paper girded the middle. And it was hollow with a tiny bit of magnifying glass fastened in one end. You put your eye to the glass and presto! you were transported to a wonderful oval fairyland all the more enthralling to the imaginative because the egg had been so placed that even if you pushed your face so hard against the window you would think either it or your nose would have to give way, only a tiny corner of the interior of the wonder egg was revealed.

Because of the difficulty in tearing herself away from the store window, Sarah had been late at school every day for a week, but Miss Rose, fearful of a clash with her most difficult pupil, weakly ignored the defection.

One afternoon, several days before Easter, when the Primer Class had just settled down to work, Sophie Kalinsky, the class historian, appeared at the door. Sophie's two little pigtails were trembling and her speech sputtered excitedly through the place where two front teeth should have been.

"Oo-h, Mizzis Rozy!" she cried, "Sarah iss gittin' tooked up by th' per-liss fer stealun!"

At the news, one hundred awestruck eyes rounded into saucers.

"Yiss um," Sophie continued unctuously, enjoying the sensation she was awaking. "We wuz lookin' in th' winder down by ol' Mizzis Wiener's und Sarah sez she iss gonner kill anybody wot boughten that egg in there und Mikey McCloskey heerd wot she iss sayin' und he sez he iss gonner git it hiss-self und Sarah runned in th' store after him und—und——"

Six feet of blue uniform looming behind her caused the cessation of Sophie's narrative. At the bulky apparition, the fifty Primer Classers made themselves as small as possible and even Miss Rose trembled. Everyone recognized the intruder. He was the officer who stood down on the corner from the Hester How School and helped small persons through the traffic. The big policeman paused awkwardly on the threshold of the room and propelled the two offenders forward at mighty arms' length.

In that terrifying gasp, the two captives were trembling visibly; Sara wiped furtively at tears that made pathetic tracks down her grimy face and, beneath his flaming hair Michael's yellow freckles stood out in the unaccustomed pallor of his engaging countenance. He also bore several fory scratches.

"Madam—Miss—" the big officer stammered sheepishly as he looked down on little Miss Rose. He never had had prisoners of such tender years in tow and he felt mortified. He stood teetering to and fro on his huge feet, like a swaying elephant, and swung his stick in embarrassment. Then he welcomed the faint glimmer in Miss Rose's eyes with a grin of relief. "Well, ma'am, I'm thinkin' ye'll know how to daale wit th' young uns better than th' majusthraate cud," he conceded cheerfully, "specially as th' wirst damuge I seen is this here litty rapscallion's face. Yis, ma'am, I dunno whin I iver come across a wuurse scratcher thin this litty grunch."

Sarah accepted the tribute with modestly downcast head, stepping bashfully on one ragged foot with the other.

"But what was the trouble, officer," asked Miss Rose with due reserve.

"Ma'am, an' thet's somethin' I might be askin' you," the big fellow acknowledged. "Furst t'ing th' old liddy bust out th' stoore yellin' 'polace!' an' 'murther!' an' I t'ought it wuz a coupl holdup men an' I come runnin' an all I seen wuz these litty young uns pitchin' into each other."

"I'll see that they are punished. Thank you, sergeant," said Miss Rose, who knew quite well he wasn't a sergeant.

"Shame on you litty children acting so bad wi such a nice young liddy teecher," exclaimed the big policeman. "Ain't you shamed to be wurryin her so?"

Inspired by the big of "sergeant" flattery, he delivered quite a lecture to the unappreciative ones and then with a few more words of warning anent their future conduct he took his looming bulk away.

When he had gone Miss Rose turned to the two culprits and sternly looked them over.

"Miss, lemme tell yer," Michael explained hastily to her look, "honust to gaw—scuse me, miss—honust, I wuz only swingin' her when I sez I wuz gonner buy de yegg. An' enyhow I never had no more'n a jit fer a moon agate."

"What really happened, Michael?" Miss Rose asked.

"Miss, de fust t'ing I know'd, Sarah come runnin' in da store an' sez she wanted to buy dat yegg an' she snorched de yegg in' ol' lady Wienerwurst grabbed her an' a box er pencils fell on de ol' lady's head an' she kermenced ter holler. She kept a-hollerin' 'T'ief! T'ief! T'ief!' an' 'HELLupp! HELLupp! HELLupp!'" Michael's voice rose with dramatic fervor.

"That's enough, Michael," said Miss Rose coldly, "unless you want to bring the officer back."

The young narrator looked uneasily toward the door.

"An' den, miss," he went on in a more refined style, "I remembered bout youse sayin' we wuz allus to hellup de ol' ladies an' gents an' I got hold of Sarah an' miss, look wot she done ter me!"

The children south ran his finger over his gory wounds and pathetically held it up for inspection.

"I see nothing but dirt," answered Miss Rose calmly.

She sent him to his seat without further comment. She also dismissed Sarah to her place. She needed time to decide how best to deal with the turbulent little girl.

In a few minutes the Primer Class was back to normal, happily copying down on a length of wide-ruled paper the repeated declaration that "Baby loves mamma," or, as the diligent fat little fist of the small boy who sat in front of Sarah rendered it, "Bby lv mmm." This little boy, shining clean, white-headed, and with round china blue eyes, was little Frederick Vogelsang. Several years ago, when Herr Stork had brought little Frederick to his proud parents, he had also been given a middle name. But shortly afterwards, Father Vogelsang, thinking it best to become a real Canadian, discarded this middle name of his son's and about the same time he turned down the ends of his whiskers and invested the profits from a flourishing cafe in Victory Bonds. Later, the cafe was succeeded by an equally remunerative eating house, but Miss Rose, viewing his offspring's appetite, sometimes wondered that there was anything left for Mr. Vogelsang's patrons.

Except for a propensity to nibble at the other children's lunches, the little German boy was her best behaved and most dilligent pupil. As about his sixth record of Bby's" devotion to "mmm" Miss Rose noticed Frederick's china-blue eyes raised imploringly to hers. The color flooded his nice, clean little face.

"What's the matter, Frederick?" she asked. He pointed to Sarah, sitting innocently back of him.

"She iss p-pullin' me where my pants iss," Frederick quivered tearfully.

"Miz, id's lies! I ain' doin' nuddins to him!" cried Sarah, sticking out her tongue naughtily at Frederick and the world in general.

This disturbance had hardly been straightened out when pretty little Mamiebell, a dear little golden-headed girl who sat behind Sara, burst into tears. As she bent her diligent head over her work, a large piece of mature chewing gum had been firmly stuck in her shining ringlets.

During the next hour Sarah continued to kick, scratch, pinch and slap all within reach, finally eluding Miss Rose's detaining hand and rushing in a tornado-like burst of weeping from the room. Miss Rose was so worn out that she scarcely regretted the escape. Some time later, as she walked wearily home, she caught sight of a little figure squeezed with painful tenseness against the window of the candy shop. As she looked a bony old hand appeared within the window and a vigorous fist was shaken at the enemy, who returned the salute with grimy thumb lifted to a defiant little face. Miss Rose hastily crossed the street.

That evening, the old man who kept the second-hand shop down the street from Sarah's tenement received a customer. The old fellow had somewhat of a "fee-fi-fo-fum" reputation among the juvenile circles of the neighborhood and when Sarah, holding a package wrapped in newspaper, marched boldly into the store, a deputation of her acquaintances peered goggle-eyed through the dirty window in the hopeful expectation of seeing their colleague devoured. The intrepid descendant of Shaddock of Warsaw reached up and laid the package on the counter.

"How much?" she inquired straight to the point.

The old man unwrapped the bundle. He had a great curly beard like the stuffings in a mattress and he wore a long clean coat. The opened package revealed a fine bisque doll, unclean but expensively clad. Sarah had received the doll at the Christmas entertainment of the Empty Stocking Club and strangely enough, when one considered her unvarying hostility to all the friendly advances of that young woman—the doll's name was Miz Rozy. The old man examined the little lady's legs and body with the detachment of a physician at his diagnosis; then he looked at Miz Rosy's soiled finery with a shrewd calculation as to the effect of gasoline upon it.

"Twent' tf cent," he announced. He spoke as one who had been insulted.

"Tirty cent," Sarah threw back as quick as a flash.

The old ogre laid Miz Rozy down, spread out his hands in a disowning gesture and assumed an air of indifference.

"—she shuds her eyes an' she's got real hair," remarked Sarah coldly. A terrible tearing feeling came into her little chest as she remembered the doll's attractions.

The old man turned his back and with meticulous care began to brush off a greasy striped waistcoat. Sarah gathered up Miz Rozy and started out.

"Ho hum! Goodnesshe!" the old man suddenly roared with terrible ferocity. The noses glued to the window outside turned pale with fearful anticipation. "Aw ri'. T'irty cents, you bettle t'ief."

When the thirty cents had been satisfactorily produced, Sarah laid Miz Rozy tenderly on the counter, as on a bier. Taking a last dimmed look at the loved but betrayed features, she turned out.

The next day being the final one before the Easter holidays, the Primer Class spent the closing hour in having an entertainment. First, Miss Rose told a few seasonal stories, Molly Cottontail and The Pea Blossom. Then several songs were sung and the finale was a play of The Five Little Rabbits. The individual performers were called and immediately the loquacious Sophie came forth and started upon an original story wherein the Kalinsky family skeleton was exposed. "Then my fah-ter sez to my mudder 'Shut upp,'" she chanted in an hypnotic singsong, the rapt expression of the creative artist on her small smug features, "und den my mudder sez to my fah-ter 'Shut upp,' und my beeg brudder sez——"

At this point Miss Rose tapped her little "attention" bell—it was a decisive tap.

"Ma'am?" the interrupted one came to attention with aggrieved look and tone.

"Thank you, dear," said Miss Rose hastily. "That will do. We will have a song next, children. Who would like to sing 'Springtime's Coming?'"

Michael McCloskey volunteered. He had a willing monotone.

Springtime's commun into-de-woods,"
"Springtime's commun, Spring wit' her burds,
Mister green's tressus, wi-g-luts dressus,

carolled this sunny-headed and hearted harbinger of the vernal equinox.

Miss Rose again expressed her appreciation. Next followed a popular number, The Drama of Chicken-Little. As the star of the production, Miss Rose selected Sarah and in so doing she knew that she was giving the greatest possible reward to the little Polish girl for her late excellent deportment. Gentle little Mary Placido was Henny Penny. The following spirited dialogue ensued:

"Oh, Henny Penny, de sky iss fallin'!"

"'Ow you know, Sheeken Lep?"

"I saw'd id wid my eyes, I heerd id wid my ears——"

Here the action was interrupted by the jealous Sophie.

"O-oh, Mizzis Rozy," she cried virtuously, "lookit wot she iss sed. Ain't you allus tell'd uss it ain't nice little gurls und beys wot sez 'saw'd'?"

Miss Rose frowned. "Go on, Sarah," she encouraged, "you are doing well."

As the tragedy of the irresponsible Chicken Little approached its climax all eyes were fixed on the actors; that is, all with one exception. For that one member of the audience was impervious to all thrills save those of the palate and in the general absorption he took a chance of providing himself with a distinct thrill—a treat, in fact. The first intimation of the terrible catastrophe did not occur until Sarah had resumed her seat, a shy smile at her teacher's words of praise lighting up her tragic little face.

The griefs of six, while transient, are usually intensely vocal, but the Primer Class had never before echoed to a cry as heart-rending as that sole outburst. After that first bitter lamentation, Sarah, holding the ruin of her happiness in trembling hands, gave an agonized and terrible look around in search of the destroyer. Fortunately, her stricken gaze did not take in the significance of the sticky whiteness around little Frederick Vogelsang's small pink mouth. The dismissal bell breaking in opportunely upon the renewed cries of desolation that were coming from this true daughter of a pillaged race, Miss Rose speeded the reluctant Primer Class homeward; Frederick, however, she quietly detained. Sarah, in her abandonment of her grief, had cast herself upon the floor and refused to be dismissed or uplifted. From beside the prostrate little figure, Miss Rose rescued the broken treasure, several pieces of rock candy, a bit of tinsel, some lace paper and frosted glass, and a tiny papier-mache figure.

"Come, Sarah, don't cry so," Miss Rose pleaded as she tried to lift the small convulsed body. "Why, you are always so kind and generous with your candy. See, here's plenty of your egg left." She held up a tempting piece of rock candy. A muffled reiteration came from Sarah.

"He bit-ed de angel's head off! He bit-ed de angel's head off!" she moaned over and over. It was true. The gluttonous Frederick's small white teeth had decapitated the shining figurine.

"He can haf id all now," sobbed Sarah. "I don't wand efer to look ad id no more!"

In exhausted silence, she wrapped her ragged little shawl about her small body and began to gather up her things. Although she had an unpedagogical desire to spank him, Miss Rose tried not to make her lecture to the little German boy too severe. She realized that the wrong was mostly of the spirit and therefore not to be understood by him. He had merely helped himself to something he wanted; that a fair world had been destroyed in the attempt, meant nothing to him.

What was to be eaten was to be eaten. That was all there was to it and as Miss Rose scolded the small gourmand, she noticed that even as he wept, his pink tongue crept out to relish the whitish stickiness in the corners of his mouth and his innocent round eyes were fixed longingly on the piece of candy she had laid on the edge of her desk.

When he had gone she turned to Sarah. After all, at six the world is never irrevocably shattered.

"I know a store not so far off, Sarah," she softly told the sorrowing maiden, "where they have the most *beautiful* eggs and you and I are going there and buy another fairyland—maybe two!"

THE FIRST CANADIAN AUTHORIZED FLAG TO FLY OVER THE DOMINION.

Above is shown a design of the new official flag of Canada, the first authorized flag of the dominion, which is now the only one permitted to be flown over government buildings. The main figure on the new flag is still the old Union Jack. The only change is the use of the new Canadian coat of arms design that has been authorized by King George. The use of flags bearing the old shield was permitted up to March 31, 1924.

The First Bluebird.

Jest rain and snow! And rain again!
And dribble! drip! and blow!
Then snow! and thaw! and slush! and then—
Some more rain and snow!

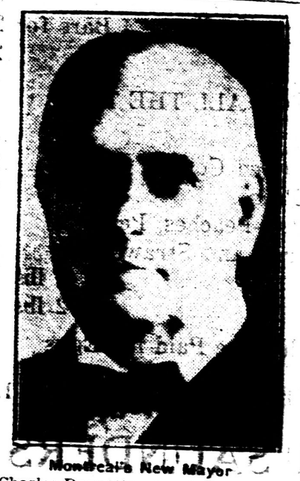
This morning I was 'most afeared
To *wake* up—when, I jing!
I seen the sun shine out and heerd
The first bluebird of spring!—
Mother she'd raised the winder some;
And in acrost the orchard come,
Soft as an angel's wing,
A breezy, treesy, beesy hum,
Too sweet fer any thing!

The winter's shroud was rent apart—
The sun burst forth in glee,—
And when *that bluebird* sung, my heart
Hopped out o' bed with me!

—James Whitcomb Riley.

The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

The Easter Resurrection proves to us that what seems defeat is but the opening of the door to higher, grander things.



Montreal's New Mayor

Charles Duquette, who defeated Medric Martin by over 3,000 votes.

BUDGET OF 1924 REMOVES SALES TAX FROM FARMING MACHINERY

A despatch from Ottawa says:—Acting Finance Minister Robb presented the Budget of 1924 on Thursday. The implements of the following industries will, it is proposed, receive duty reductions averaging about 5 per cent. on the preferential tariff, and running as high as 12½ per cent. on the general tariff: Farming, fruit-growing, poultry raising, dairying, mining, lumbering and fishing.

The resolutions dealing with the changes in the sales tax show a general reduction in the tax from 6 to 5 per cent.; exemption of a large number of items included in the industries above quoted from the operation of the tax; a reduction of 50 per cent. on boots and shoes, biscuits, canned vegetables, canned fruits, jam and preserves.

It is proposed to give to manufacturers of agricultural implements "free entry" on pig iron, bar iron and bar steel when used in the manufacture of mowers, binders and reapers in lieu of a drawback of 99 per cent. The "free entry" is also extended to these raw materials when used in the manufacture of cultivators, harrows, horse rakes, seed drills, manure spreaders and weeders.

Materials which enter into the cost of the aforementioned items and other implements on which the duty is to be reduced will be entitled to entry at 7½ per cent. under all tariffs.

It is proposed to grant a drawback of 99 per cent. on materials and parts of implements on hand imported prior to this date which will have entered into the cost of all agricultural implements on which the duty is to be reduced.

It is also proposed to exempt from sales tax all the articles and materials to be used in the manufacture of those agricultural implements as well as goods consumed in the process of manufacture.

It is proposed to remove the sales tax from the following articles: Cereal foods, macaroni and vermicelli, sago and rice, meats, salted or smoked.

The sales tax is being reduced from 6 per cent. to 2½ per cent. on biscuits, canned vegetables, canned fruits, jams and preserves.

On boots and shoes, including rubber footwear, we propose to reduce the sales tax from 6 per cent. to 2½ per cent.

The sales tax will be removed from milk foods.

Woollen, and many other manufacturing establishments, will benefit by a proposed clause which will provide that materials consumed in process of manufacture or production which enter directly into the cost of goods subject to the consumption or sales tax will be exempt from the sales tax.

On well-drilling machinery and apparatus the sales tax is to be removed.

Crutches are being made free of both customs and sales tax.

On traction ditching machines the value for "free entry" purposes is being increased from $3,000 to $3,500.

The Week's Markets

TORONTO.

Man. wheat—No. 1 Northern, $1.09.
Man. oats—No. 3 CW, 42c; No. 1 feed, 41c.
Man. barley—Nominal.
All the above, c.i.f., bay ports.
Ontario barley—65 to 70c.
American corn—No. 2 yellow 98½c.
Buckwheat—No. 2, 76 to 80c.
Ontario rye—76 to 78c.
Peas—No. 2, $1.45 to $1.50.
Millfeed—Del., Montreal freights, bags included: Bran, per ton, $27; shorts, per ton, $29; middlings, $35; good feed flour, $2.

Ontario wheat—No. 2 white, 98 to $1.02, outside.

Ontario No. 2 white oats—39 to 41c.

Ontario corn—Nominal.

Ontario flour—Ninety per cent. pat., in jute bags, Montreal, prompt shipment, $4.60; Toronto basis, $4.60; bulk, seaboard, $4.25.

Manitoba flour—1st pats., in jute sacks, $6.10 per bbl.; 2nd pats., $5.60.

Hay—Extra No. 2 timothy, per ton, track, Toronto, $14.50 to $15; No. 2, $14.50; No. 3, $12.50 to $13; mixed, $12.50.

Straw—Carlots, per ton, $9.50.

Standard recleaned screenings, f.o.b. bay ports, per ton, $20.50.

Cheese—New, large, 17 to 18c; twins, 18 to 19c; triplets, 19 to 19½c; Stiltons, 21 to 22c. Old, large, 24 to 26c; twins, 25 to 27c; triplets, 26 to 28c.

Butter—Finest creamery prints, 38 to 39c; No. 1 creamery, 37 to 38c; No. 2, 34 to 35c; dairy 28 to 30c.

Eggs—Extras, fresh, in cartons, 32 to 33c; extra loose, 29c; firsts, 27c; seconds, 24 to 25c.

Live poultry—Chickens, 3 to 4 lbs., 25c; hens, over 5 lbs., 26c; do, 4 to 5 lbs., 24c; do, 3 to 4 lbs., 18c; spring chickens, 4 lbs. and over, 25c; roosters, 15c; ducklings, over 5 lbs., 19c; do, 4 to 5 lbs., 18c.

Dressed poultry—Chickens, 3 to 4 lbs., 30c; hens, over 5 lbs, 28c; do, 4 to 5 lbs., 24c; do, 3 to 4 lbs., 18c; spring chickens, 4 lbs. and over, 32c; roosters, over 5 lbs., 18c; ducklings, over 5 lbs., 24c; do, 4 to 5 lbs., 25c.

Beans—Can., hand-picked, lb., 6½c; primes, 6c.

Maple products—Syrup, per imp. gal., $2.50; per 5-gal. tin, $2.40 per gal.; maple sugar, lb., 25c.

Honey—60-lb. tins, 11 to 11½c per lb.; 10-lb. tins, 11 to 12c; 5-lb. tins, 11½ to 12c; 2½-lb. tins, 12½ to 13c; comb honey, per doz., No. 1, $3.75 to $4; No. 2, $3.25 to $3.50.

Smoked meats—Hams, med., 23 to 24c; cooked hams, 34 to 36c; smoked rolls, 17 to 18c; cottage rolls, 19 to 20c; breakfast bacon, 21 to 25c; special brand breakfast bacon, 28 to 30c; backs, boneless, 28 to 33c.

Cured meats—Long clear bacon, 50 to 70 lbs., $18.50; 70 to 90 lbs., $18; 90 lbs. and up, $17; lightweight rolls, in barrels, $37; heavyweight rolls, $32.

Lard—Pure tierces, 14¾ to 15¼c; tubs, 15 to 15¼c; pails, 15½ to 16c; prints, 18 to 18½c; shortening tierces, 14 to 14½c; tubs, 14½ to 15c; palls, 15 to 15½c; prints, 16½ to 17c.

Heavy steers, choice, $7.50 to $8.25; butcher steers, choice, $7 to $7.50; do, good, $6 to $6.50; do, med., $5.25 to $6; do, com., $4.50 to $5; butcher heifers, choice, $6.75 to $7.50; do, med., $5 to $5.75; do, com., $4.50 to $4.75; butcher cows, choice, $5 to $5.50; do, med., $3.50 to $4.50; canners and cutters, $1.50 to $2; feeding steers, choice, $5.50 to $6; do, fair, $4 to $5; stockers, choice, $4.55 to $5.25; do, fair, $3.75 to $4.20; milkers and springers, choice, $75 to $90; calves, choice, $10 to $11.50; do, med., $7 to $9; do, com., $5.50 to $6; lambs, choice ewes, $15 to $15.50; do, bucks, $13 to $13.50; do, culls, $8 to $9; spring lambs, each, $8 to $15; sheep, light ewes, $8 to $9; do, culls, $5 to $5.50; hogs, fed and watered, $7.75; do, f.o.b., $7.25; do, country points, $7; do, off cars (lang haul), $8.15; do, selects, $8.50.

MONTREAL.

Oats, No. 2 CW, 52c; No. 3 CW, 49½c; extra No. 1 feed, 48c; No. 2 local white, 46c. Flour, Man. spring wheat pats., 1sts, $6.20; 2nds, $5.60; strong bakers, $5.40; winter pats., choice, $5.55 to $5.65. Rolled oats, 90lb. bags, $2.80 to $2.90. Bran, $27.25; shorts, $29.25; middlings, $35.25. Hay, No. 2, per ton, car lots, $16.

Butter—No. 1 creamery, 34½ to 35c; 2nds, 33 to 34c. Eggs, fresh extras, 31c; fresh firsts, 28c. Potatoes, per bag, car lots, $1.25.

Dairy type cows of slightly better than cutter quality, $3 to $3.25; med. to good calves, $6.75; do, com., from $5 up; hogs, thick, smooth, and shops, $8.50 to $8.65.

BRIEF HALTS IN CANADA BY BRITISH FLIERS

Longest Stop Will Be Two Days at Ottawa to Install New Engine.

A despatch from Ottawa says:—The passage across Canada of the British airmen who are flying around the world will be a race against time, the similar flight begun by United States airmen having started a competition between the two countries.

The itinerary, which provides for the landing of the British flyers at Prince Rupert, B.C., and their departure from Sydney, N.S., for Europe via Newfoundland, has been completed by the Royal Canadian Air Force, which will supply the airmen at Prince Rupert with large-scale maps of the country they will traverse.

The longest stop in Canada will be at Ottawa, where about two days will be consumed in installing a new engine. The airmen will make only the briefest stop at Edmonton, Regina, Winnipeg, Sault Ste. Marie, Montreal, Riviere de Loup, Fredericton, St. John, N.B., Amherst and Sydney, N.S.

In the awakening Voice of Spring, we seem to hear that mighty resurrection call: "Awake, thou that sleepest!"