

Easter Lilies



By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

AS WE read the sixth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, we find these two verses: "And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: "And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

And it is these flowers which, more than anything else, have become the symbols of Easter which we celebrate this year on April 20. As such a symbol the lily has a double significance. It is one of the earliest spring flowers. It typifies the rebirth of nature after the long winter sleep. In its dry, brown bulb life lies dormant during the winter and then when spring comes, this life begins to stir. First it pushes out the tender green leaves, and then the buds appear. Finally the white blossom comes forth in all its glory as the perfect emblem of resurrected life.

Its other significance is a religious one. Its snow-white purity being emblematic of the flawless life of Christ whose resurrection from the tomb we commemorate on Easter day. In fact, no other flower has a place in the religious life and literature of the Christian world to compare to the lily. Yet its glory is not so new as Christianity, ancient though the beginnings of that religion may seem to us. The Greeks and the Romans prized it above all flowers and in their earlier civilizations it had already come to symbolize purity and virtue. It was because of the place lilies had won in the popular esteem that they found place in the early paintings of the Virgin. The angel Gabriel was depicted carrying them in annunciation pictures and it is because of this that the most beautiful of these flowers, *Lilium candidum*, most used at Easter, is called the *madonna lily*.

Although this trumpet-like blossom is the best known of all the members of the lily family, there are others which are very interesting even though they do not have such significance for us as the *madonna lily*. In the high Himalayas in Asia grows a great lily ten feet tall. Agents of the United States government found a magnificent specimen of lily in China a generation ago—a lily of the *madonna* type, but harder—and brought it to America and they have been offering it to citizens to plant from coast to coast.

Most of the lilies that are native to America are radiant with color. There is the *turk's cap*, for instance, that flaunts the deep yellow of its many blooms through the waste stretches of parts of New England. Great, staminate stalks, sometimes nine feet tall, has the *turk's cap*. It may have half a dozen orange blooms at its top, but those who have tamed this plant and given it care have induced it to provide as many as 40 blossoms.

A quite different American flower is the little *trout lily* which likes to grow along the streams or in the deep woods. With the nourishment it has saved up in its bulb it starts growing in the early spring and is likely to have bloomed before the leaves of the trees have grown to the stage of making shade to interfere with it. A radiant yellow, the *trout lily* stands out vividly against its background of green.

The blue flag running to purple is another American lily that has found itself a home in many gardens. The mottled *tiger lily* has been a favorite for many generations. In California the "leopard lily" lights the heather dun, and the late shorn meadow is often red with their bloom.

The red lilies of New England, however, outshine them all and have inspired many a poet of that region. Lucy Larcom spoke of them as "red lilies blazing out of the thicket." Paul Hamilton Hayne thought that the red lily "stands from all her sister flowers apart."



An Easter Flower

"To make one petal, myriads of atoms (each in itself a planetary system of electrons) must climb and wheel to their exact stations in the design."—Statement of a scientist.

Up-whispered by what Power,
Deeper than moon or sun
Must each of the myriad atoms of this flower
To its own point of the colored pattern run;

Each atom, from earth's gloom,
A clean sun-cluster driven
To make, at its bright goal, one grain of bloom,
Or fleck with rose one petal's edge in Heaven?

What blind roots lifted up
This sacramental sign,
Redeeming their dark food, in this wild cup
Of glory, to what Heavenly bread and wine?

What Music was concealed,
What Logos in this loam,
That the Celestial Beauty here revealed
Should thus be struggling to its lost home?

Whence was the radiant storm,
The still up-rushing song,
That built of formless earth this heavenly form,
Redeeming with art, the world's blind wrong.

Unlocking everywhere
The spirit's wintry prison,
And whispering from the grave, "Not here! Not here!
He is not dead. The Light you seek is risen!"
—Alfred Noyes in the Washington Star.

Probably the most remarkable lily in the world is the yucca, or spanish bayonet, of the arid plains of the Southwest. There the lily becomes a plant that is quite tree-like and lives for years. The lily leaves become harsh, dagger-tipped implements to serve the purpose of repelling attack. These may sit close to the ground or, again, they may stand as high as a man on horseback.

From the cluster of leaf armor there springs now and again a tall stalk that may reach like a fagpole into the desert sunshine. At the top of this staff there forms and finally breaks into bloom such an assemblage of pure white, bell-like, richly-perfumed, and in every way perfect lilies as nature produces nowhere else in a single cluster. It is given to the desert to grow the greatest of all the lily-bearing plants despite the fact that the chief habitat of the breed seems to be the marsh.

Lilies all grow from bulbs. This bulb-making capacity of the lily family is one of its dominant traits. It and the six petals to all lily blooms are marks of the tribe. Tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, crocuses, all are actually, because they spring from bulbs, members of the lily family.

our common vegetables are in reality "lilies." There is asparagus, for instance that is bought in the market tied up in bundles of many stalks, each exactly like the other. There is nothing about this asparagus in this form that would indicate that it is a lily. Asparagus tips are but young plants just coming through the ground. If they were allowed to grow they would throw out tall, lily-like stalks and crown them with six-tipped flowers that any observer would be able to identify as lilies.

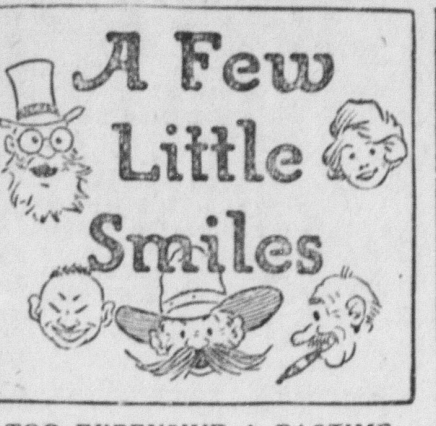
The presence of this commonplace asparagus in an idling family is rather a let down to its pretensions. This, however, is not the worst. If the truth must be told, the onion is a lily. The onion is a lily that has been bred through centuries for the development of its bulb and the suppression of its top. So it has come about that the bulb may be three inches across and the top so insignificant that, when it has dried up, it hardly appears at all. Yet when this top is growing and flowering it is like those delicate plants of the window sill which sometimes are called tube roses, but which actually are a delicate, refined and fragrant lily that comes out of the Orient.

Onions came from the Near East and in ancient days furnished a staple food for the rural inhabitants of Greece and Italy. Not only was garlic a food, but it was reputed to have medicinal value and to be helpful to the stomach in its functions.

These two bulb vegetables, the Cinerellas of the plant food world, ride about the earth in trainloads and shiploads. The material service they render is greater than that of all the other lilies put together. One would have to look far in all the relationships of nature to find a contrast more striking than that of the Easter lily and the garlic of the Mediterranean.

Even though the lily is the one perfect symbol of Easter, there are two others which through the centuries have become so closely associated with this red-letter day in our calendars that we think of them almost as quickly, in thinking of Easter, as we do of the lily. They are the rabbit and the egg.

The association of the rabbit or hare with Easter has its foundations in the ancient belief in European and Asiatic countries that the hare is the symbol for the moon. In fact, the Chinese represent the moon as a rabbit pounding rice in a mortar, while Hindu and Japanese artists paint the hare across the face of the moon. As the time of the Easter festival is governed by the phases of the moon this may be an explanation of their connection.



TOO EXPENSIVE A PASTIME

"Why are you so opposed to your daughter working?" asked the bachelor friend.
"I can't afford to let her work," replied the family man.
"What the heck do you mean, can't afford it?" demanded the B. F.
"Say, she couldn't even earn the silk stockings, let alone all the party dresses she would need to wear to work," growled the F. M.



IT SEEMS LARGER

"You think a square yard is three square feet, eh?"
"Of course it is."
"Did you ever try raking all the rubbish out of one?"

Here's Another
In your affusions I can see
The clever minor poet:
But in the majors you will be
Some day before you know it.

Down to Snail's Pace

"What's the matter, officer?" demanded the youth as the cop drew alongside.
"Oh, nothing much," snapped the cop, "except I'm arresting you for speeding, you were going 38."
"For crying out loud!" exclaimed the youth, "do you call going a mere 38 speeding?"

A Medal for This Man!

Judge—So you broke in the store just to get a dime cigar. Then what were you doing at the safe?
Prisoner—Your honor, I was putting in the dime.

Simple

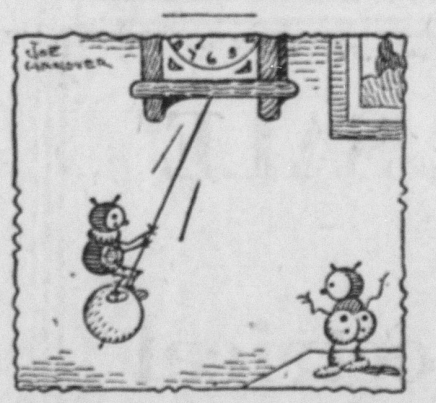
Trainer—I have only one friend. Yes, only one friend on earth, and that's my dog.
Stranger—Why don't you get another dog?

Too Much Competition

Lady—How come you are a tramp?
Tramp—Crowded out of my profession. I'm a sky writer from Pittsburgh.
—Allston Recorder.

Happy Individual

"I am not thin-skinned. I am the first to laugh at my own foolishness."
"What a merry life you must lead."
—Gutierrez (Madrid).



Bug—Gee, this is the best ride I've ever been on and it don't cost anything either.

Fair Exchange

When a man proposes
But straightaway on his shoulder
Her head is dropped instead.
He's apt to lose his head.

Changed With Age

Fussy lady (who has been a long time in selecting her purchase)—
But I don't think this is lamb. It looks to me like mutton.
Exasperated butcher—It was lamb when I first showed it to you, madam.

Believed in Hereafter

Bob—Do you believe in the hereafter?
Babe—Why—a-yes.
Bob—Well, how about a little necking? That's what I'm here after.

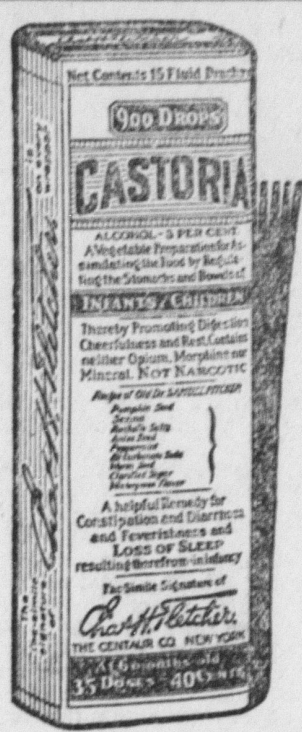
Man Displaced

Annabelle—Mabel hasn't a thought for anything nowadays except her new automobile. She's perfectly in love with it.
George (saddy)—Another case of man being displaced by machinery.

What, indeed?

"Don't see any more stuff like Spartacus to the Gladiators."
"Eh?"
"What's become of all those fellers that wrote for the old Third Reader?"

When Babies CRY



Babies will cry, often for no apparent reason. You may not know what's wrong, but you can always give Castoria. This soon has your little one comforted; if not, you should call a doctor. Don't experiment with medicines intended for the stronger systems of adults! Most of those little upsets are soon soothed away by a little of this pleasant-tasting, gentle-acting children's remedy that children like.

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Egyptian Marriage Contracts

Marriage contracts were in vogue among early Egyptians, according to explorers. The earliest known nuptial contract there dates from 590 B. C., the terms of which were drawn by the husband. It has been translated as follows: "Since God willeth that we should unite one with the other in righteous wedlock, after the manner of every free man and every wise woman, therefore I have given thee four dollars in gold as a bridal gift. And for my part I will not neglect thee. Neither shall I put thee forth without a cause, having legal ground. But should I wish to put thee forth, I will pay seventeen dollars for the matter."

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