

THE HEART OF A CHILD

By JOSEPHINE DODGE DASKAM

HE sun-glasses lies on the road and the field and the house. There are only three little white clouds in all the warm blue sky. No one passes up or down the road.

Suddenly comes the grating sound of something dragged over the floor, and the door opens. The child pushes out with a little wooden rocking chair and a great tin pan heaped with unshelled peas. Her blue-checked apron is tied by the waist-band around her neck—it is a grown woman's apron, and covers her and the chair, which is far too small for her now. But one cannot be always 8 years old, and when one is 11 she shall one relinquish without a pang the birthday gifts of one's childhood?

She lays the pan beside her and puts a handful of peas into her blue-checked lap. She presses her brown little thumb against the sharp green edge and drags it down the pod. Out patters the little green balls, and rattle into the pan. Truly, a pleasant sound! Like the rain on the roof. When she was very little and slept with her mother, she woke once in the night, and it was raining hard. The thunder frightened her, and her mother comforted her and sang her to sleep in the bed. And when the lightning flashed and all the room was bright and dreadful, her mother told her to keep her eyes shut and then the flashes would not trouble her. So she screwed her eyes hard together and held her mother's hand, and drifted off to sleep.

That was so long ago! But whenever anything rattles and patters she shuts her eyes quickly, and sees for a moment the dark room and the square white counterpane, and hears her mother singing "Mary of Argyle." She wonders if when she dies and goes to heaven she will be surrounded by little lights and sounds of what we need to do on earth. Of course, we shall do only pleasant things there, but they might remind us of the pleasant things here—the pasture in the early morning, when it is so still and cool and the daisies and the ferns, tall of sweet peas of hay, muskilled with plegons, checked with amber sunlight; a fairy palace, on whose fragrant divans one sits with Sultans and milk girls, and listens to Shab and Aladdin; the shady porch, where cool white milk and dark shiny gingerbread wait the weary, berry-stained wanderer. In the brown book in the parlor is a poem about a little girl who used to "take her little porridge and eat her supper there." The child feels like that little girl when she sits in the porch.

There is another little girl in the brown book—"Sweet Lucy Gray." She thinks of Lucy when she comes home alone at dusk, and quivers her steps. How frightened she would be! Not that the child has been foolishly taught to fear. Only that she is imaginative, and knows enough to be afraid.

If she could have one wish in all her life she knows what it would be. A beautiful gold watch all chased with figures and a cherry-colored ribbon tied into the handle. Then she would cut it into her waist—but her dress is open in the back! The disadvantage of youth is obvious enough. In all conscience, without that last pathetic touch. When can she have a separate waist and skirt?

Suppose she should die before she grows old enough to attain this glory? People have died when they were young—much younger than she. The little Waters girl died, and she was only 3. The child went to the funeral, but not with her mother. She slipped into the kitchen and listened at the door. When she told her mother that she had gone, her mother looked at her so strangely.

"Why did you want to go?" she said. The child could not tell.

"It made me cry," she answered, "but I felt good, too. I want to tell my brother that I am pretty well, and that I hope he is the same, when she gets to heaven. Do you suppose she will get there by tonight?"

They talked about her conduct on that occasion so strangely and so long that she never spoke any more with them about death or the life after it. But she thought about these things.

She wondered whether Mary Waters remembered the secret place they made together in a hollow gnatpost. Mary Waters had a way of saying things that were not quite as they really were. Did she do so now? Or had she told enough lies to send her to hell? For liars inherit hell. It is not that this fact has been impressed upon her mind by others, but she has read it in the Bible and heard it read.

There are strange things in the Bible. One is commanded to refrain from doing so many things that one never would do anyway. But those things must have been done by the Israelites and the Pharisees and the Hittites and the Publicans. Then did God mean that the Americans must keep the same laws? But Americans were free and equal. They threw over the tea, and with a wild whoop—wait! let us pretend!

This is Persia. It is still and quiet. Night is dark all around. Soft and stealthily come footstep—the Indians! They gather from the shadows of the trees and houses, they wave their tomahawks exultantly, they glide to the wharf. In their path stands a little girl in a blue-checked apron. She falls upon her knees in terror.

"Save me!" she cries. The chief laughs a horrid laugh; he raises his tomahawk—the door bursts open and the child nearly drops the peas on her lap, so frightened she is.

"I thought they were real! I thought they were coming!" she whispers to herself.

Let us think of pleasant things. Peas are so small if you count them by ones! If people consider whenever they bobbed peas so quickly that every one had to be shelled by one poor, tired little girl! But no, they eat them without a thought of how she sat in the little tight chair and rattled them into the pan. If they were only rich enough to leave the chair and the peas and the farm and go to a city? What city? Oh, New York, or Boston, or Persia. In Persia the nights are full of richness and the nights are Arabian. Along the streets walk veiled and lovely women—does it matter that to the child their veils are of the dull blue cotton that she wears her mother's hat? By all the Persian monarchs, no—driving black dogs and white hinds, followed by turbaned slaves and glaring eunuchs, with misty gowns hovering in the background. They enter a frowning portal—but let us pretend!

This is Persia. The streets are narrow; the people jest and crowd to one side a little girl in a blue-checked apron who walks along unknown, unnoticed. Wait! Who is this? It is a slave in a turban, with a scimitar flashing with jewels. He bows low.

"I am blinded to tell you that your presence is desired by my master, lovely maiden!" The lovely maiden looks haughtily at him.

"I will follow you, slave," she says. They go on to a low, narrow door. The slave says a magic word and the door swings open. Through a long passage and a great hall they go. There bursts upon them a radiant light. Flowers and the air with an unearthly fragrance. Golden goblets and ruby pitchers stand on silver salvers with "dried fruit, cakes and sweetmeats, which slave girls tend, the grinning." Lovely slave girls tend the maiden to the bath and attire her in rich and costly robes. They seat her in a golden chair and give her a bowl of seed-peas to string. (These are the feast of the approaching prince: will she dare to raise her eyes. How will she look? What gift will bring? She sinks her hands

deep in the pearls. Ah, what is that? A great sweet-bough drops in the pan.

"Your gran'ma wants them peas!" says the prince in genial rebuke. Alas! And did Haroun-al-Raschid speak through his nose?

The child stares at him, dazed.

"These—these are pearls!" she says. "I am stringing them for my girl!" Does your Highness desire that I should wear this—this carbuncle?"

His Highness laughs loud and long.

"It's a sweet-bough," he chuckles, "and I guess you better eat it right up, now."

One moment of wavering: shall awful wrath come upon this desecrator of the soul's best rites, or good fellowship and feasting be given him? She scowls, she shrugs her aproned shoulders, she glances from beneath her lashes, she smiles.

"I'll give you half," she announces. After all, it is hardly probable that the prince would have helped her shell the peas. And William Searies will, if he is only the chore boy. Vain hope!

"I got to drive the chickens 'round back," he demurs. "I can't spend my time shellin' peas. Your gran'ma says if you don't get 'em done pretty soon you can't go over to Miss Salome's this afternoon. She says you're a dreadful slow child!"

This is the last straw. The child rises with what would indeed be a freezing dignity were it not that with her rises the birthday chair. "William," she begins. But more suddenly than is consistent with her tone she sinks back. William sits upon the grass shaking with laughter.

"You looked so awful funny, so awful funny!" he gasps. The child hangs for a moment between tears and laughter.

Then she accepts the situation and laughs as merrily as the chore boy.

"I was pretending I was a princess," she explains. "I—"

"Ho!" rejoins William. "You ain't like a princess. You don't look like the ones you tell about, anyway. Why—" as she glares at him over the apron, "your hair's red, red. An' your eyes are kind o' green, they are! An' you're just jam-packed full o' freckles! I guess I know well enough how they look, and you ain't like 'em!"

The tears stand in her eyes, but she will not let them fall.

"I don't care," William Searies," she says, bravely. "I may look freckled, but I don't feel so! And it's better to know how they look than— But, no! She knows that it is better to look like them than to know about them; better for the maiden and the prince, at least. William waits for the sentence.

She begins again. "William Searies," she says, solemnly, "wouldn't you rather I could tell you about those princesses than look like them?" William's eyes sparkle greedily. "You best!" he replies with fervor. The child sighs with relief.

"All right," she says, "then don't complain."

She is alone again, and only William's faint and fainter invitations to the chickens break the silence. The peas fly into the pan. Suppose she should be kept from Miss Salome's! But, no, that shall not be. She looks ahead to the happy afternoon, singing as she works.

And, now, and now, the time has come. The dishes are wiped, the cat fed and the fennel picked for the long sermon

tomorrow. She, her very self, in her new dotted lawn walks carefully up the hill to the big house, terrace and gravel-paths. She knocks timidly at the brass ring and the tall colored butler lets her in. He is the only indoor man servant she has ever seen, and she reverences him greatly. He smiles condescendingly at her, as he smiles not upon all the country people.

"If Miss will walk up," he says. She goes up the soft carpeted stairs into the upstairs drawing-room. She draws a long breath of happiness and wonder over new, and makes her little courtesy to Miss Salome.

Out of the dim, delicious dusk of the room comes slowly the familiar treasure: the high polished desk, the great piano; the marvelous service of delft that fills a monstrous sideboard in the distance, the chairs, all silk and satin and shining wood, the great pictures in gilt frames. In the largest chair sits Miss Salome. Will the child ever tire of looking at her pale lined face, her silver high-dressed hair, her beautiful hands, sparkling with rings, her haughty mouth, her tired, troubled eyes? She must have been almost as lovely as the Princess Angelica, once. But she smiles so seldom. She puts out her hand.

"And what has happened since last Saturday?" she says.

The child laughs for pure joy. To talk, to describe, to venture at analysis, to ask the why and wherefore, to illustrate by gesture as vivid as her speech—these things are her happiness. To be suffered this joy in matches is much, to have it demanded, and for one whole afternoon. Here is no one to reproach, no one to blame the idle hands, no one to question

the propriety of mimicry or to insist on her sitting in her little chair.

Miss Salome watches her flitting about the dusky parlor, her reddish gold hair gleaming now against the delft blue, now against the polished mahogany desk. She tells of the chickens that lost their mother. She wanders about clucking for her brood and cooing over the returned prodigals. She walks across the room as William does—her slouching gait, open mouth, drawing voice, irresistibly perfect. She describes the shooting star that seemed to her like a lost spirit, gone to sorrow and the earth.

"It made me think of 'Lucifer,' son of the morning, how art thou fallen!" she says solemnly. "I wonder how that star felt, Miss Salome?"

There is a long pause. The lady sighs. Then, "You may read, if you like," she says at last.

The child's face flushes for joy. She runs to the bookcases and brings out a small brown book. She fingers lovingly the treasured book that covers the precious pages, and opens them before she finds her chair. She curls up on a great satin ottoman and smooths the leaves. Where is the farm? Where the peas? Where William? They are less than shadows, more unreal than dreams. Her voice trembles as she begins:

"And now, your highness permitting, I shall relate to your majesty one of the most surprising adventures ever known to your majesty—" Ah, it is good to have been a child and perfectly happy.

What do children know of life, she thinks, who play with tops and dogs and kittens? There are books in the world. And they own all lands and seas and peoples who own those printed leaves.

Even Miss Salome does not know as much as the books. Even Miss Salome cannot say such curious wonderful things. Why is Miss Salome so good to her? In heaven, will they see each other? "In my father's house are many mansions." Suppose she should be put in Miss Salome's? Will the "Arabian Nights" be there? When she lifts her eyes from the book they fall on an immense peacock-feather. It glows on the wall, and the eyes dilate and tremble and satisfy her hungry little soul with the color she loves. On a small table near her stands a sandalwood cabinet. Its faint sweet smell mingles with the spices and gums of the tale, and should a genius spring from the cover and bow to the ground before them, she would not be surprised.

With a sigh of pleasure she releases the Princess and outwits the evil spirit.

"And now if your majesty would care to listen to the story of the Fisherman—" "That is enough," says Miss Salome. "Are you tired?" The child's eyes answer her.

"Then sing to me."

"What shall I sing?" says the child.

"If you like," answers Miss Salome.

The child rises and stands before the great chair. Her face is raised and serious. She knows only ballads, but to her they are opera and symphony in one. She clasps her hands and begins:

Lord Lovell he stood at his castle gate, A-combing his milk white steed, When out came Lady Nancy Bell To wish her lover good speed— To wish her lover good speed.

Her voice rings true as a bell. Miss Salome smiles at the eager little face.

She carries them through fateful verses of unaccountably soft and sudden her voice at the woeful ending.

Miss Salome applauds vigorously. "One more," she begs.

The child's heart grows big with happiness. That she should love it so, and yet with it pleasure others! It is too much joy. She will make a special prayer to-night and thank God, as does her grandmother, for unexpected bounty.

"I will sing 'Come With Thy Love,'" she says. It is a quaint, old-fashioned tune, and her voice rises and falls and reaches for the notes with an almost pathetic feeling for their beauty.

She looks at the lovely lady in the white satin gown in the great gold frame before her. How beautiful she must have been! The one who loved her so very young. Her husband shot himself with grief for her. She might have sung that song to him—who knows? The child chokes and swallows her tears at the end of the song, and when she looks at Miss Salome she sees that her eyes, too, are full of tears.

"Oh, I have made you cry! I am sorry—"

Miss Salome wipes her eyes.

"If I make my guests unhappy they will not care to come again," she says. "Ring for Peter, dear child." So the child taps the bell and Peter comes gravely in with the beautiful silver tray and in a flutter of delight the child forgets the song and the picture. Miss Salome cuts the dark frosted cake and dishes into glass plates the candied ginger, floating in syrup, and pours out cups of real tea. And the Fairy Princess is served with a banquet worthy of her dreams. Oh, to be at last in Miss Salome's house!

The clock chimes for half-past five. Heaven is over. She brushes the crumbs to a little heap on her gilt-rimmed plate. "I must go now, I think," she says with obvious effort. Her hostess smiles.

"But you will come next week?" she asks. And the child's face lights up. "Oh, yes! I'll surely come next week, surely, surely, surely!" she says. So she goes around to Miss Salome's chair, and the beautiful ringed hand raises her face and strokes her little freckled cheek. "Good-bye, my Sunshine," she says. The child catches her hand in a rush of loving worship and kisses it.

"I will never be cross to William Searies again, never!" she cries. "I'll be good to everybody—even to stupid pigs!" Miss Salome pinches her cheek laughs.

And the child goes out and down a steps of the terrace, rapt, wondering, lit to a height of love and admiration. It keeps her little soul to its sweetest, high est pitch for—ah, measure not the time, I beg you! The children who are older, how long do the glow and the flush remain with them? They can only say, "There will be another!" and wait for it as well and patiently as may be.

The child goes back to the life of every day, and embroils its dull web with the eyes of peacocks and sits into the scent of sandalwood, and sets it weaving to the tune of ballads, quaint and sweet. Yet she has taken into another's web, unknowing, a tiny acutely thrust of happiness that weaves through the tarnished cloth of silver and blesses the pattern as it grows. And the Master of the Looms has planned it all.

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Youngest Officer in Regular Army.

New York Herald.
Lieutenant Rudolph Smyser, 19 years old, is the youngest commissioned officer in any branch of the United States service. Lieutenant Smyser is visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Smyser, of York, Pa., and on Wednesday the local camp of Sons of Veterans, of which he was formerly a member, gave him a handsome sword. He was scarcely 19 when, at the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, he enlisted as a volunteer. He served in Southern camps until the close of the war, and then re-enlisted for the Philippine campaign.

He rose to the rank of Second Lieutenant of the Forty-seventh Infantry, and for gallantry in night attacks won the Legion. He was promoted to a First Lieutenant. On October 27, 1901, he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Regular Cavalry and assigned to the Fourteenth Regiment. In November last he was advanced to First Lieutenant and assigned to the Fourth Regiment, which goes to Manila.

On the International Wedding.

Bismarck Tribune.
It was a love match, it was a love match, it was a love match. So the newspapers told; She loved the title And he loved the gold.

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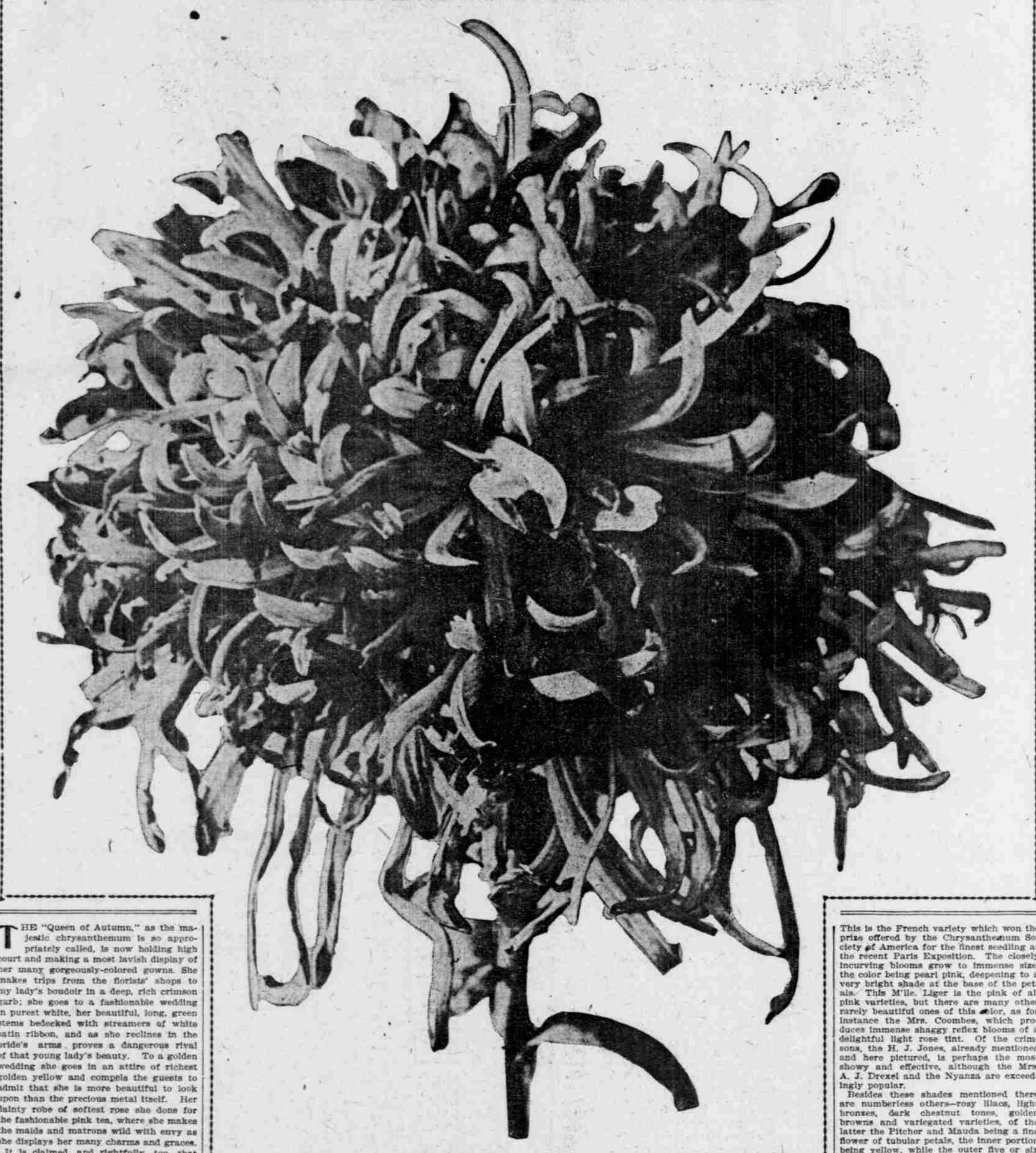
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A PORTLAND GROWN CHRYSANTHEMUM AT ACTUAL SIZE



THE "Queen of Autumn," as the malleable chrysanthemum is so appropriately called, is now holding court and making a most lavish display of her many gorgeously-colored gowns. She makes trips from the florists' shops to my lady's boudoir in a deep, rich crimson garb; she goes to a fashionable wedding in purest white, her beautiful, long, green stems bedecked with streamers of white satin ribbon, and as she reclines in the bride's arms, proves a dangerous rival of that young lady's beauty. To a golden wedding she goes in an attire of richest golden yellow and compels the guests to admit that she is more beautiful to look upon than the precious metal itself. Her dainty robe of softest rose she dons for the fashionable pink tea, where she makes the maids and matrons wild with envy as she displays her many charms and graces.

It is claimed, and rightfully, too, that the chrysanthemum has done more to increase the love of flowers in the past decade than any other agency. The importation of the many new varieties from Japan proved an impetus to general cultivation and the many magnificent specimens put on the market caused it to spring into instant popularity. There is no other flower that can be used in decorative work with such fine effect. Whether used singly, in clusters, or where masses of color are required, it is the most popular flower of the season, and may be said to have the field entirely to itself.

A beautiful display of unusually large specimens in a downtown window attracted large crowds of admirers last week, the many ejaculations of admiration and praise giving an insight to the estheticism of the Portland public. The variety here pictured is the H. J. Jones, and was grown by Burkhardt Bros. These great ragged blossoms averaged eight inches in diameter, the petals being a rich red on top, the underside a dark, old gold. This variety may be called both a

reflex and an incurve, as the petals grow both ways, showing it to have some Chinese blood mixed with its Japanese lineage. These richly colored blossoms were displayed to great advantage by a background of autumn leaves, growing only about three feet high, while the Timothy Eaton will run up eight or ten feet. This latter one is a compact, pure white bloomer, also of unusual size, and both have been winners at various shows.

Among the golden tints of the yellow varieties the Yellow Eaton, or De Oronhy-atheka, stood out in all its glory. It does not seem possible that a more beautiful yellow chrysanthemum than this can ever be produced. The daintily tinted yellow petals are incurving showing the under tips of perfect silver, the effect being indescribably beautiful. Next to this variety in beauty is the Colonel Appleton, a large golden yellow, incurved, which is considered by florists as the best seller of all yellows. The Mrs. F. W. Pocket has long, narrow, reflexing florets of a deep canary

be described. To the flower lover it is a feast of the gods. The Merza is an exquisitely beautiful Chinese variety, of a rich cream-white, the bloom being larger in circumference than the pot in which it grows. The plant is of dwarf habit, growing only about three feet high, while the Timothy Eaton will run up eight or ten feet. This latter one is a compact, pure white bloomer, also of unusual size, and both have been winners at various shows.

After the yellow and white favorites the pink comes next in popularity, the most gorgeous representative of this branch of the family being the Mlle. Marie Liger.

This is the French variety which won the prize offered by the Chrysanthemum Society of America for the finest seedling at the recent Paris Exposition. The closely incurving blossoms grow to immense size, the color being pearl pink, deepening to a very high shade at the base of the petals. This Mlle. Liger is the pink of all pink varieties, but there are many other rarely beautiful ones of this color, as for instance the Mrs. Coombes, which produces immense shaggy reflex blossoms of a delightful light rose tint. Of the crimson, the H. J. Jones, already mentioned and here pictured, is perhaps the most showy and effective, although the Mrs. A. J. Drexel and the Nyman are exceedingly popular.

Besides these shades mentioned there are numerous others—rosy lilacs, light bronzes, dark chestnut tones, golden browns and variegated varieties, of the latter the Fitcher and Maude being a fine flower of tubular petals, the inner portion being yellow, while the outer five or six rows of petals are white.

It seems but a few years ago that chrysanthemums were an old-fashioned garden plant, not receiving any more attention than other hardy annuals, but since the Japanese showed us what they could accomplish by cultivation, there is a new era in this branch of flowerdom. It takes most careful attention to bring a bloom to such great perfection and size, and one's work has only begun when he buys a fine plant.

The chrysanthemum is grown from cuttings. To produce the enormous blossoms here described, all shoots or branches are kept carefully trimmed from the one stalk, and only one bloom allowed to mature, so as to throw all the strength of the plant into it. After the plant buds, all are pinched off but one, and thereafter the stalk is fed twice a day with liquid manure, no more plain water being used. This is a great deal of trouble to go to for one blossom, but when it reaches its perfection it is so glorious and regal in its splendor that any one would feel repaid for the time devoted to its culture.

MARION MAC RAE.