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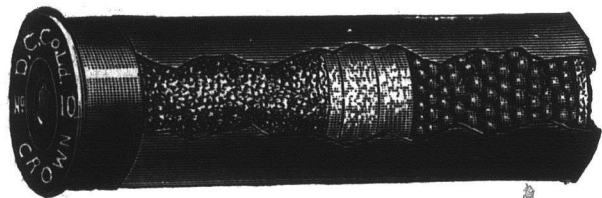
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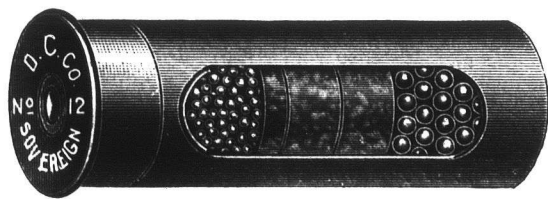
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hotly to Miss Daisy. "There is less display, but more real happiness, and just because people can be themselves."

Margery spoke with all the enthusiasm of her twenty years, for she was thinking of her own parents and her own quiet home. Miss Daisy was bewildered by such a flood of heretical phrases.

"I've been in New York only two days," said Tom, "but I think that I'd be pretty well content to settle here for life, if all the girls are like Miss Thornton."

Miss Daisy laughed. "And I believe that I like Western men," she said, looking coquettishly at Tom. "When you fall in love, do you carry off your sweethearts on broncos?"

"Not always," Margery answered quickly, and walked away.

"I believe that Margery is angry," Miss Daisy giggled.

"No doubt of it, and I'd like to know why," Tom answered gloomily; and Miss Thornton soon found him so dull and abstracted that she joined Mrs. Van Tromp at the tea-table.

alcove. A thin, feminine voice came through the heavy curtains.

"Clever Van Tromp," the voice drawled. "has finally caught Thornton with this little country niece of hers. The girl has nothing that I can see, neither money, looks, nor chic. But tastes are different, and the more fools the more fun."

"A real love match," was the masculine answer.

"Yes, on the man's side; but the girl has been urged, on by her aunt. Mrs. Van Tromp is ambitious. Most of these old Dutch families are falling behind the procession, but she is determined to keep up. Her father was an old Deekman, who, centuries ago, long before I was born, was something or other in the shipping trade."

Tom and Margery stood stiffly silent and stared at the floor until the conversation ended; then Margery ran to the door and looked after the retreating couple. "Tom," she whispered, "you should have heard the sweet way in which she congratulated me. Isn't it awful?"



"THE PORTIERS WERE SWEEP ASIDE, AND GENERAL THORNTON ENTERED"

As Tom's spirits sank, Margery, with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes, had never appeared more gay. She was soon the center of a group that discussed love and marriage in epigram, the echo of modern novels and plays. But Tom was too much disturbed by Margery's answer to Miss Thornton to listen to the witticisms. At the right of the drawing-room was an alcove hung with tapestries, and from this one could step into a glass-enclosed balcony filled with palms and ferns. Tom went to this retreat, and moodily watched the carriages in the street below.

"Well, and what do you think of us?" Margery stood beside him. Seeing him disappear into the alcove, she had almost immediately followed.

"What do you mean?" he asked. "Of the people in there?" She waved her hand towards the drawing-room.

"Oh, they are not so bad."

"I hate them!" Margery went on, almost fiercely. "We are really nothing to one another. It is not good form to be affectionate or show feeling. Did you ever hear how we talked? I try to think and act as they do, but I can't. It's all too serious, too sacred. It's not at all like us at home, is it?"

"It's disgustingly un-American, that's all."

Just then a warmer was heard in the

"Does it trouble your conscience?" Tom asked cynically.

Margery's lips quivered a reproach, but, before she could speak, the portieres were swept aside and General Thornton entered the balcony.

"I was warned that you were here trying to run away with Margery," he laughed, shaking his finger at Tom.

"I promise I shan't run away with her unless she asks me," Tom answered, after a moment of awkward hesitation.

"It is not likely that I shall so far forget myself," Margery replied sharply.

"Don't quarrel, children," Thornton interrupted. "We'll find a wife for Tom, won't we, Margery? How will Daisy serve? Then we can keep him in the family."

"I am not a match-maker," Margery said slowly; "nor shall I ever be. Let Tom choose where it pleases him. I only hope that he will find a woman more worthy of his love than—than—"

She burst into tears and ran from the balcony.

"What does this mean?" Thornton asked. "Has some woman been short-sighted enough to refuse you?"

"I fear that few will call her short-sighted, General."

"Well, my boy, if you need a recommendation, send her to me. I'll speak a good word for you."

"I thank you, General."