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A DAFFODIL'S SERMON.

"Oh, daff-dilly-dilly, the air is so chilly!
How can you keep warm, you bright little things?"
"Oh, it is so chilly!" said daff-dilly-dilly.
"I thought it was warm, for you know it is spring."
If I should once shiver, the little world quiver.
The birds then would see us, and they would sing.
My heart is not chilly, "said daff-dilly-dilly."
"And that is the reason I think it is spring."
—St. Nicholas.

AN ESCAPE.

Major Owen passed almost with a look of relief down the steps from the crowded reception room into the garden. Then he had left Philip Rutherford and annexed Miss Phoebe Horton (much the prettiest of the three Miss Hortons), and now passed into the garden, looking as one who passed out of the valley of the shadow of death. Chinese lanterns twinkled everywhere. In a general condemnation of the "fiddling" in the reception room Phoebe supported him enthusiastically, and the walk in the garden would not have taken more than 3 minutes. It seemed by a respectable chronometer. And that was all there was against the major—absolutely nothing else. He returned Miss Phoebe Horton to Philip Rutherford in excellent condition and the walk in the garden was almost empty now. Nearly everybody was in the supper room.

"You like this garden, don't you?" said Christine.

"Well, yes," he said. "These lanterns and things are so good. If you get right up to the far end, you can hear the music—at least, not enough to matter."

"Did you go up to the far end just now?" asked Christine.

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing." One doesn't say those things for nothing.

"Very well, then. For the last half hour you've been hiding in the garden."

"Oh, come! You mustn't say such things."

The passion deepened in her voice.

"You've been hiding in the garden with Phoebe Horton." She tried to laugh. "I thought you'd had time to explore it."

"As a matter of fact," said the major, "I don't suppose I was out here five minutes. If I'd been out here for five fortnights, what would it have mattered to you?"

"Nothing," she said cheerily. "Nothing matters to me now."

Then he observed that things were growing more serious. He took her two hands.

"Tell me," he said, "what is it?"

She began to cry.

An hour and a half later Major Owen got out of a hansom in Jersey street, changed his dress coat for a smoking jacket, mixed himself a brandy and soda, lit a cigarette and sat down in an easy chair. But his mind was too disturbed for inaction. He got up again and paced the room, circling like a comet round the little table on which the tall glass sparkled like a star under the electric light. At last he stood still.

"I have done for myself," he said.

Freedom was at hand. His comfortable chambers, that cozy in the evening, had been regarded as his permanent abiding place, now seemed the unsatisfactory fabric of a vision—the breath of Hymen, and they were gone.

The engagement was to be short. The drogery of it began at once. He had to go to many places where he had never been before and did not want to go again.

He waited, a perfectly ghastly figure, in the shops of fashionable milliners, feeling that every lady customer who entered regarded him as an insult and outrage.

He had to sit through concerts; they were very good concerts, and a very good concert was from the major's point of view, the very worst sort of concert. An ordinary tune, as he sometimes observed, he could more or less understand.

He was made to dance frequently, and in the small hours of the morning, when respectable, middle aged gentlemen should be in their beds. It was all very trying, but gradually it dawned on him that there were one or two compensations.

Christine certainly behaved very nicely to him. He bought her a ring (diamonds and sapphires), and her reception of it gave him great pleasure.

He repeated this pleasure by buying her other things. After a fortnight he owned to himself that things might have been worse.

But he didn't fall in love with Christine definitely until she fell ill.

Then the major went temporarily mad. He became a source of wonder and pained surprise to his friends and a source of chagrin to his valet.

He lived chiefly in telegraph office, hansom cabs and in the shops of the florist and fruiterer. By a constant succession of telegrams he kept himself in-

formed of Christine's progress during those brief periods when he was not driving a hansom or purchasing for her scented flowers, which she could not bear to have in her room, or out of season fruit, which she was not allowed to eat.

By the time she had recovered her health her conquest was complete, and with the magnanimity of a conqueror, she decided to do something to please him. So she told him that she meant to have her portrait painted. It would be hung on the line of the academy—Delmay was always hung on the line—and afterward she was going to give the portrait to him. He said that he was charmed, and he really was.

"But," he said, "the sittings will bore you terribly, and you are really not strong enough for them. Why don't you have your photograph taken instead?"

Christine pointed out that it wasn't the same thing at all.

"No," he answered, "I suppose not." In matters of art his education had been somewhat neglected.

"But," he went on, "I have really seen some photographs which I liked better than the thing which had been colored by hand."

She laughed at him and instructed him.

"But why do you go to Delmay?" he said. "If I were going to have my portrait done, I'd have it done at Delmay's. Delmay charges no end of a lot, just because he got some of those writing chaps to scribble about him in the papers."

"But he paints so beautifully," said Christine. "There is no one at all like him."

"That is just it," said the major. "If you were not very pretty, it might be just as well to go to a clever chap who could put it on a bit for you, but as it is, why, any one of them who understood the rudiments of his trade couldn't go wrong."

However, Christine had her way.

Once more it was late at night, and the major paced his chambers. They no longer had the air of a dream that might pass at any moment. In fact, he knew that, except when he was away for the shooting or spending an occasional week in Paris, he would inhabit them for the rest of his natural life.

Christine's letter lay on the table. He took it up and reread portions of it.

"It was your impetuosity that drove me into it. I was frightened and hardly knew what to say and gave way. I had my fears even at the time, but I thought that I would give it a fair trial and see if I could bring myself to love you. I am so sorry if I have given you any pain, but I know now (something which has happened recently has shown me) that I could never really love you like that."

He read this through twice. Then he recalled that scene in the garden where the proposal had been made, and he remembered from whom practically the proposal had come, and then, though he was sore at heart, he grinned sardonically.

It says much for the generosity of his nature that, although he was not present in response to Miss Blake's invitation to the reception on the occasion of her niece's marriage with Maurice Delmay—it says much, I say, that, though he was not present, he sent silver candlesticks—four of them.

The Delmays still use them.—Today.

Two Friends.

The Outlook tells the queer story of a first edition, that of the "Poems of Two Friends," by William Dean Howells and John James Platt. It was published at Columbus, O., at the authors' expense, and financially it was a dismal failure.

The two young men were full of enthusiasm, and they packed a boxful of the books and sent it to a New York publisher. Nothing was heard from it, and shortly after Mr. Howells was appointed consul at Venice. He set sail, forgot all about the books, and it was only after his return that he remembered them again. Then, a stranger in New York, poor and in search of newspaper work, it occurred to him that the publisher might have sold the books and would give him a check.

Reveling in hope, he made his way thither, but, alas, the man of books had no recollection of the box and had never even heard of the "Poems of Two Friends!" He did, however, dispatch a clerk to the cellar, and after some search the missing box was found. It had never been opened.

Today this first edition has a distinct market value, and nobody understands it better than the Columbus dealers in secondhand books. One of them says: "I remember that a man came, years ago, to my father's shop and left a big bundle of books as security for something he had bought. He never returned. Long after we opened the bundle, it contained 50 copies of the 'Two Friends.' They lay for years round my father's garret. Finally they were sold as waste paper. I wish to goodness I had them now!"

The Force of a Rifle Bullet.

In the English official regulations it is stated that the mean extreme range of the Lee-Metford bullet may be taken as about 2,500 yards, although with a strong wind 2,760 yards have been observed. The bullets find their way through joints of walls, unless the walls are made very fine and set in cement.

About 150 rounds, concentrated on nearly the same spot at 200 yards, will break a nine inch brick wall. Ramméd earth gives less protection than loose. When fired into sand, the bullet is found to be always turned aside after it has entered a little way. The following thicknesses of material (in inches) are usually necessary to stop the regulation .303 inch bullet: Sheet iron between boards, 1; hardened steel plate, 1; lead, 2; brickwork, 2; rock or coal, 14; hard, dry mud wall, 14; post earth, 60; compressed cotton bales, 23; oak, 27; elm, 22; teak, 26; fir, 46; clay, 46.



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One of the greatest helps a mother can have in nursing and rearing her children and carrying them safely through all the little sicknesses and ailments to which children are subject is Dr. Pierce's great thousand-page illustrated book, the People's Common Sense Medical Adviser. A paper-bound copy will be sent free for 31 one-cent stamps to pay the cost of postage and mailing only, or in cloth covers for 50 stamps. Address World's Dispensary Medical Association, Buffalo, N. Y. This book should be owned by every mother. It is like a family doctor always at hand.

MUSICIANS AND ACTORS.

The Professionals Live in a Country of Their Own Making.

Some way, when a man makes a profession of his art, he lowers it and himself. Nature takes out of the man what she puts into his chest. She's afraid he'll build a tower of Babel so high that he'll enter paradise, and so she blocks his little game by stuffing him to the point of bursting with vanity. The professional musician lives in a little world of his own fashioning, nearly as small as an actor's universe, which means New York and "the provinces." Most actors lose their real characters playing they are somebody else, and writing men who break away from the great and seething world of God's fallen man and women become puny little fellows of myopic vision and atrophied faculties. Shakespeare was a theater manager, Dante an officeholder, Robert Burns a farmer, Lamb a bookkeeper, Milton a schoolteacher and clerk, Wordsworth a stamp agent, and I cannot recall a single individual trained and educated for a writer who ever wrote.

The artists of earth are men who have been something else first and something else besides professionals. To belong to the "perish" is to wear a No. 6 hat and lose all consciousness of the meaning of nouns at times. But of all professionals none are quite so little and fussy as musicians, and to prove the assertion I'll explain that if a layman ventures a word as to his liking for music in a professional's presence he of the fur collar always asks the reply being in the negative, a look is given that implies you neither have a right to criticize music nor to like it. This contempt for the layman I know exists among historians in degree, but not in the universal way it does among musicians. If you express your liking for poetry, no one ever thinks to ask you if you write. If you state your preference for a certain style of painting, you are not supposed to apologize for the fact that you never throw a pot of color at a canvas, but timidly on the public that a man who does not perform seldom dares reveal the fact that he knows a Jew's harp from an accordion, let he incur the irony of the man who gives ten lessons in vocal harmony for \$5.—Elbert Hubbard in Philistia.

A rural exchange says: "Silver is less valuable than gold. Perhaps it is, but a pocket full of the former causes less uneasiness than the same quantity of the latter."

Here is a good conundrum. What English word contains three vowels and three syllables, but only four letters. Answer—Idea.

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