

ST. TAMMANY FARMER.

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THE BLUE-AND-GOLD FAN.

A gaunt, angular girl of eleven, with straggling hair, that looked as though it had not made the acquaintance of a brush and comb for weeks; with a pair of elfin black eyes peering out from under scanty dark brows, and a mouth smeared with blackberry juice.

That was Doshy. "Doshy," people called her thereabouts—Doshy Mildred, the wildest tomboy of a girl, the sauciest-tongued girl, the most shiftness, ne'er-do-well girl, far or near.

Two young lads, dressed in cool, white linen suits, with every indication of wealth and luxurious living about them. They were Rich St. Lawrence and Howard Leamington, the sons and heirs of two wealthy New York gentlemen, whose families were rusticated at the great hotel near by.

They had been playmates from earliest childhood, these boys, who had been born with silver spoons in their mouths, and with boyhood's advance into youth their friendship strengthened, and it bade fair to continue with them through life.

Just now, they stopped short at the sight of this staring-eyed, sullen-browed girl.

"Hello! Who are you, big-eyes?" It was Rich St. Lawrence who thus unceremoniously hailed her, provoking instant retaliation of speech:

"None o' yer business who I am! I guess my eyes ain't no bigger'n yourn, either!"

Rich gave a delighted life. Self-possessed little aristocrat that he supposed himself, and despite the dignity o' fourteen years and a real gold watch, he could not resist the glorious temptation to tease her.

"I say, How, isn't she a beauty? Isn't she graceful and stylishly dressed? On, my! isn't her hair done up stumping? Say, saucer-eyes, when did you wash your face last, eh?"

Doshy glared fiercely at him. "You jest keep yer mouth shet, will you?"

Howard interrupted Rich in the snuzy answer he had ready.

"He won't tease you, sis. He's only in fun. We're going down to Farmer Whipple's for apples. He said we might come and we don't know the way. Will you show us?"

Doshy stared at him, as if his courtesy of speech was something wonderfully strange and curious.

The spiteful gleam in her eyes was softening, when Rich broke in again:

"Who wants a dirty, ragged beggar tagging on behind a couple of gentlemen? I day say you'd tell us you don't know the way, when I'll bet a dollar you've stole his apples lots of times. Come on, How."

Doshy's eyes fairly blazed, and she suddenly stooped and picked up a stone, which she had poised to throw, when Howard caught her arm.

"You musn't do that! Girls never ought to quarrel with boys like that."

His boyish voice had a ring of manliness in it that appealed somewhat to her.

She dropped her missile, and retorted sulkily:

"I don't care; I ain't no thief, and nobody don't dere tell me so, neither, if I am poor and have to go in rags."

She still scowled at Rich, who laughed tauntingly as he walked away.

"Come on, Howard. Where's the use wasting words on such a little waster? Come on; we'll find the place."

He sauntered on haughtily, while Howard waited beside the miserable girl.

"I wouldn't even talk to boys who teased me, if I were you, sissy. It only makes you angry, and then you act in such a way that you must feel sorry afterward. Do you live around here?"

The soft look was dawning in her big, elfin eyes again. Poor, forlorn creature; it was positive luxury to hear a kind word, or have even the smallest interest displayed in her.

"My name's Doshy Meldred, and I live across them 'ere meeders, down in that red shanty. I'm old Meldred's girl."

Boy though he was, Howard appreciated the defiant ring in her voice as she gave her last morsel of information—"old Meldred's girl"—the very worst that could be said of her; the outcast, neglected, abused daughter of a miserable, drunken sot; and his kindly blue eyes glowed with pity.

"Its too bad you should be allowed to go so! Couldn't you go to school, or—or something?"

"Go to school? Yes, I see myself, in these rags!"

So then there was pride below all these rags, but not the pride that would have led her to take suitable care of herself.

Howard's impulse was to try to awaken such proper pride.

"I don't think the clothes would be in your way half as much as your hair, and your dirty hands and face. Doshy, if you'd wash up, you'd be a real nice-looking girl, I believe."

She stared at him with that wondering, steady glance she had.

"You think I'd be a nice-looking girl, Mr. Howard?"

There was almost awe in her voice.

"To be sure. Why not? My sister has dark eyes and yellow hair, like you, only it isn't so long and so wavy; and everybody says she's pretty. I would really like to see you with your hair fixed out of those tangles."

A sudden glow sprang to her eyes.

"You would? You would? Nobody ever wanted me to do anything before, only git out o' the way. You think I could look like other girls? Oh, Mr. Howard—and a sobbing sigh shook her, and he saw tears in her elfin eyes—"you don't know how awful much I'd like to be like the rest o' the girls I see! I git awful tired o' bein' just nobody but old Meldred's girl, with nobody to say nothin' to me, and no mother or sister, or nobody but just my own self."

Howard impulsively reached out his hand, so fair and shapely, and grasped Doshy's grimy hand one.

"Don't cry, Doshy; maybe it'll all come right some day, if you try to keep yourself as nice as ever you can. And don't you ever talk to the rude boys that tease you, Doshy—do you understand? Here, I'm real glad I stopped to speak to you. I think you're a real nice girl. Don't you want this to remember me by—to remember you had one friend who encouraged you a little?"

He dissevered a little gold-and-blue enamel fan from his watch chain, and gave it to her.

And when he had gone, Doshy looked at it, with a still, solemn, touching look in her black eyes.

"I do wonder if I ever could be like other girls? Well, if they git this here fan away from me they've got to be mighty cute! I am a-goin' to begin to fix up a little; maybe—I don't say I will—maybe I'll take that there place Miss Whipple offered me to help 'em; and she said their Sarah'd learn me my letters. Well, if I don't never learn no letters, I've got a solid gold fan, anyway; and Mr. Howard is the kindest boy I ever see—I'll never forget that!"

"In love with her? You never saw any one so infatuated in your life as Richy is! Why, I believe, if she refuses him, it will be the death of him!"

Mrs. Pierre St. Lawrence looked the fond maternal to perfection, as she confided to her dear friend and confidant the delightful fact that her son and heir, Rich St. Lawrence, was desperately in love with Miss Theodosia Del Valle, the brilliant beauty and heiress who had completely turned all heads and hearts in the exclusive circles of society into which she had been introduced.

Her beauty was certainly striking enough to have warranted any amount of admiration. She was decidedly Spanish in appearance, with glorious, tender, yet brilliant dark eyes, and a warmly clear complexion, whose luscious rose tint melted into pure, creamy olive. She was tall and exquisitely formed, with a luxurious gracefulness in every movement. And Rich St. Lawrence worshipped her.

"Do you think, Pa, sure I shall blow my brains out if she refuses me, Leamington?"

They were friends, yet, these two—and yet, more strictly speaking, intimate acquaintances, rather than warm friends, for their habits, natures and preferences had grown apart, rather than together, since their boyhood days. St. Lawrence had developed into the haughty, self-assured aristocrat his childhood days promised, and into the handsome blonde beauty of face and beard his blue eyes and yellow hair had suggested.

Howard Leamington was not so fortunate in his money possessions as his early prospects had promised. Instead of a large inheritance, he had to the large fortune his father was supposed to possess, he found himself necessitated to take his place in the office, where he enjoyed a large salary, besides a fair share in the concern's profits. His business talents, and patient, intelligent forethought, were brought into active requisition and strengthened; and he was a young man of whom older men spoke well. And he loved beautiful Miss Del Valle, with the first, truest love of his grand young heart.

So it came that the two men were rivals—dashing St. Lawrence, with his money and his mother's influence as a fashion and society leader, to strengthen his wooing; and Howard Leamington, graver, more reserved, with his good, truthful face.

And Leamington had never intimated to St. Lawrence his own feelings, while Rich made no holy secret of them, but boasted openly, as if proud of his subjugation—as if it were impossible for him to love and not be loved in return.

To-night Mr. St. Lawrence sat in his easy chair and told Howard he should certainly blow his brains out if Miss Del Valle refused him; and Howard thought, with a great, quivering pain at his heart, what a desolation and permanent void would be left to him, if the dusky-eyed girl should tell him he was nothing to her.

"St. Lawrence," said he, gravely, and a little abruptly, "has it never occurred to you that Miss Del Valle might have some other preference than yourself? Did you never think that you are not the only man who loves her—who stakes his whole happiness upon her love? Have you never heard—you surely must have heard—that Miss Del Valle was betrothed long before she came here?"

A little pale look of pain was in his own eyes as he spoke. St. Lawrence's face flushed, almost wrathfully.

"Engaged! Miss Del Valle engaged! Leamington, that is a bad joke. But I will confess this to you—that if she is not engaged to-mar-

row, it will not be my fault."

Nor was it his fault, for he pleaded his cause well; but Miss Del Valle was inexorable in her refusal.

"Then it is true your hand and heart were promised before I knew you? People are right when they say—"

A little flash from her haughty black eyes silenced him. Then, as if sorry that she had given him even a look of unkindness, she said:

"People have no right to say anything, Miss St. Lawrence, because they know nothing. But to you, who have always been a friend, who always will be, I hope, I will tell the truth. I shall never marry unless the one whom I have loved for years comes and asks me for myself. Mr. St. Lawrence, am I not good to confide so in you?"

And by the look in her eyes, half pain, half pride, he knew the secret of her life, and he went away, assured that for him his dream was over—went away just as Howard Leamington went in.

Miss Del Valle received him just as she had done St. Lawrence, with her sweet courtesy of welcome.

"I am real glad you have come," she said, as he took her hand.

Then, as he retained it, a faint glow crept to her cheeks.

"I am glad to hear you say that, Miss Del Valle. Dare I take it as a favorable token? I have come to lay my fate in your hands—to tell you how I love you, how I want you for my own. Oh, my darling, don't tell me I am presumptuous in daring to think you could love me!"

He had commented quietly, but passion seized the rein of speech, and he stood before her the eager, ardent lover, in all his bold manliness. Theo lifted her eyelids almost shyly.

"Mr. Leamington, did you not know people say I am already engaged? Have you not heard the romantic story of my love for a friend of my girlhood days—a grand, noble fellow, who won my heart, but—who—did—not care for me?"

She flushed a little as she spoke, but her eyes had a radiance in them that was glorious.

"Not care for you?"

"At least he did not tell me so then. But years ago, Mr. Leamington, I gave my heart to the giver of this. Tell me, then, how I can conscientiously change my mind?"

She took a small gold chain from her neck, which he had observed she always wore with the pendant concealed. She handed it to him with a passionate glory in her eyes. It was a tiny gold-and-blue enamel fan, so far as any remembrance went.

"Oh, don't you remember? It was your own—your own—and you gave it to me! Don't you remember the day you told forlorn little Doshy Meldred there was hope even for her to become like other girls? Oh, Mr. Leamington, ever since then I've worshipped you! Ever since then I have kept the blessed little talisman through discouragements and successes, when I struggled through the poverty and helplessness in which you knew me, until discovered and adopted by a long absent uncle, who had made his fortune in the East Indies. Mr. Leamington—Howard—I am so happy that my talisman has fulfilled its mission, and brought you to me, so I might tell you how truly, how long I have loved you!"

He listened to the marvelous story, spoken in quick, impassioned tones, that went to his very heart. He was almost stupefied by the wonder, the beauty, the bliss of it.

"You—you, forlorn little Doshy Mildred? You, the very queen of beauty, peerless for style, and wealth and elegance—you?"

She had her lovely hand on his arm.

"I, Theodosia Del Valle! Will you reject me for what I was, when it was from your kind words I began to rise from my hopeless condition? Shall you refuse my love now, Howard, because—"

His kisses stopped her tender words.

"Refuse you? Refuse heaven? My love! My darling!"

And choicer than all Mrs. Leamington's rare diamonds and pearls, and costly jewels, is the little blue-and-gold fan, which she wears night and day, whose whole history only two people in the world know—two happy people.

Rich St. Lawrence never knew they were identical—the wretched little girl to whom he was so un pardonably rude and discourteous, little Doshy Meldred, and queenly Theo Del Valle, than whom he never loved another woman truly. He never knew it would have been nothing—and so Theo and her husband are content to keep their secret.

"What makes that noise," asked a little boy in a train the other day.

"The cars," answered his mother.

"What for?"

"Because they are moving."

"What are they moving for?"

"The engine makes them."

"What engine?"

"The engine in front."

"What's it in front for?"

"To pull the train."

"What train?"

"This train."

"This car?" pursued the youngster, pointing to the one in which they sat.

"Yes."

"What does it pull it for?"

"The engineer makes it."

"What engineer?"

"The man on the engine."

"What engine?"

"The one in front."

"What's it in front for?"

"I told you that before."

"Told you what?"

"Told you."

"What for?"

"Oh, be still! You're a nuisance."

"What's a nuisance?"

"A boy who asks too many questions."

"Whose boy?"

"My boy."

"What questions?"

At this point the train pulled up at a station. The last that was heard, as the lady led the youngster along the platform, was, "What tickets?"

The women are walking this year! Next year will be leap year.

Mr. Outch, of New York, recently mentioned his name to the other passengers, as the car door jangled his fingers.

A Columbus man says he started thirty years ago to make \$14,000. He has got the fourteen, but the cipher's bother him.

Love may be blind, as they say, but but we notice that in all the records of the ages, it has never kissed the girl's mother by mistake, when it reached after the girl.

Two pretty girls were going along the other day, when the extra-blond one snail laughingly to the other; "Oh, I don't think much of him. He was a little too sissy, and he parted his hair sissy!"

When a woman combs her back hair into two ropes, holds one in her mouth until she winds the other upon her side comb, and then discovers that she has lost her last hair-pig, she feels that the sex needs two mouths—one to hold the hair in, and the other to make remarks with.