

DANDELION GHOSTS

By ELIZABETH AKERS ALLEN.

The common flower that children love
All other common flowers above,
The dandelion blows, alas,
But holds its yellow robes,
And now a myriad gauzy globes,
Glowing like stars, are scattered everywhere,
Like bubbles blown along the air,
Dear home-like flower, which cheers always
The dusty path of every day,
Even death is kind to thee and brings
Two more to the grave,
Oh, peer of butterflies and bees,
Fair playmate of the wandering breeze,
Mother of the sun, and friend of the dew,
And a free and feathered ghost like thee!

No ghostly phantom, pale and stark,
Stalking, reproved fit, through the gloom,
To fight the dark, to drive the shades,
And bring the light to the world on tear,
And last, so hard to bear
Are lone ones and desolate.

The dandelion, however, at least, is dead,
With love more warm than ghosts' are cold.

No sooner, bringin' woe and dread,
To branch from I should I be the red,
But in a moment, like a ghost,
Unhallowed come in fair daylight,
Uncurbed by dust, unmet by dew,
I'd find the dandelion, like a new,
To sail a-screaming through the air,
Uncaught, unheeded everywhere.

No fate were happier than to be
An evanescent ghost like thee.

A small, pale, yellow flower,
Which few would note and none would dread;

To visit, not in grief or gloom,
The sun, the moon, the stars, the sky,

And mark how sweet and how fair
The world could be—and I not here!

Ah, happy flower, that I used to think
The world path of every day,

And then, when time decrees thy doom,
Rise new in rarer bloom,

As pale as death, as pale as white,
As soft as air, as still as light,

Leaving these earthly charms of ours
To seek, perhaps, the heaven of stars!

—Sunday Afternoon for September.

WHICH WILL SHE MARRY?

John Myers loved Florry Castle, the prettiest girl in town, and the prettiest girl in Boroville, a place noted for its beauty, the beauty and intelligence of its ladies. Florry's father was the wealthiest man in town, and John was his clerk.

Now do not imagine I am going to repeat to oft-told story of the Princess, for if you do you will be disappointed. John was Florry's equal in everything, save one respect. While she was the most courageous, romping, fun-loving young lady in town, John was the most timid, the most miffid fellow conceivable, blushing at everything, always appearing, he fancied, as bashful people are apt to, at the greatest disadvantage whenever he attempted to put his foot forward, and doubly awkward, he thought, whenever he essayed to utter more than the commonest of common-place expressions to Florry. Still, he was so handsome, in the general acceptance of the term. Tall, angular, almost awkward at times, there was very little gracefulness about him, it is true, and his great sensitiveness led him to think these little disadvantages infinitely more conspicuous than they really were.

But Florry, overlooking all this, and seeing only big, blue eyes and wavy brown hair—noting his constrained, diffident ways, his bashful manner, and his many odd attentions to himself and her wishes, and discerning his great love for her through all, at last began to pity him heartily for his want of confidence in himself, and we all know to what tender passion pity is akin.

Once he heard her express a wish to read a book, the last new novel, not for sale in Boroville, and he wrote to Mr. Leford, the bookseller, telling him to send it to Florry's address. When he came to dinner one day, she sat near a window turning over the leaves, with the bright sunlight falling in a mellow glow upon her queenly little head. She looked lovelier than ever just then, and he tried hard to keep back the flush that mantled his face as he saw her for the first time in the enjoyment of his anonymity.

"Oh, John," she cried, with a pleasant smile in her face that did his heart good, "you know how I have longed to read 'Claribel's Bride,' and now some good fairy has made me twice glad by sending it to me. I'm sure it must have been Mrs. Chester. She's always so thoughtful, and she said she'd not forget me when she returned home."

"I'm very glad you've got the book, Florry," she said, simply, but in a constrained sort of way that made her look up.

"Why, John," she said, "does anything trouble you?"

"No, Florry," with half-averted face; "why do you ask?"

"Because—because," hesitatingly, "I have business of importance to attend to."

"But you must go, John," permissively.

"It will be the last picnic of the season, and—oh, you know I am going away soon. Casper insists on my naming an early day for our marriage, and you must go just this once for my sake; and you need recreation—you are working too hard."

And so he promised to drive over to the grave about the middle of the afternoon—in time to partake of the refreshments and come home with the picnic.

After a while, the Borovillians ranged to have a grand picnic in Crimp's grove, a mile out of town.

Of course all—that is, all who belonged to the "circle"—were expected to attend. "The Quimby's, the Broddales, the Thomases, and Mr. Ducey and Florry, and Tom Lacy, besides Dr. Grantron and his cousin, Miss Ellis, and even more, are going," said the maid. "And we shall have such a splendid time!"

"Of course you will go, John?" said Florry.

"Florry, I cannot."

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