

VIOLETS

By A. M. DAVIES OGDEN

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Miss Anstruther touched the purple blossoms at her breast with caressing fingers.

"They are lovely," she said: "so fresh and fragrant. I think them the only flower for a man to send a woman."

Carrollton laughed. The dinner had reached the stage where general conversation glides imperceptibly into monologues or duets. The soft shaded lights, the odor of flowers, tempted to confidences.

"Then you agree with a friend of mine who declares it is deceitful for a girl to buy violets for herself, thus creating a false impression of owning a 'young man,'" he answered lightly. Miss Anstruther's lips curved into a slow smile.

"I am not sure that I should go so far as that."

"Well, perhaps not. And yet"—Carrollton's voice grew more serious—"I suppose the sending of violets does mean more than the gift of other flowers. When a man begins to associate a girl with violets, it's usually all up with him."

Miss Anstruther, a faint hint of disquietude creeping into her dark eyes, glanced quickly around.

"But—couldn't he have sent them for any other reason—because he knew she liked them—for congratulations?" she asked in a troubled tone. Carrollton shook his head.

"Oh, no; he would send roses in such a case," he answered with conviction. "And—and if she wears them?" anxiously.

"I think the man would be justified in construing it as a hopeful sign. Don't you?"

Miss Anstruther flushed painfully and dropped her eyes.

"Why I—!" she stammered.

"Duck, sir?" interposed the butler at Carrollton's shoulder. When he again turned toward Miss Anstruther she was talking gayly with her left hand

you both most eagerly. Joe's a comy chap, and mighty lucky too," he added a little awkwardly. "Of course I am to be an usher." What was the girl

wanted, Carrollton wondered. He noticed that she had grown quite white.

"You—you and Joe are such friends that I was sure you knew," she struggled. Why was he making it so hard for her? "It was only at dinner that I began to suspect—when you spoke about the meaning of violets." Her voice was unsteady. "I—I never dreamed that you cared; I thought you had sent me them because"—She stopped, startled by the change in his face. Carrollton jumped.

"I—I sent you?" he stammered, starting. Miss Anstruther stared in turn.

"But—but didn't you?" she demanded. "I found them in my room. You card was in the box. To be sure, it was not addressed. Tell me," with a quick inspiration; "there was some mistake, then?"

Carrollton, taken aback, was striving to regain his wits.

"I—I sent them to the blue room," he muttered stupidly, then bit his lip. What a brutal speech! A sudden flash of comprehension lighted the girl's face.

"To the blue room," she repeated in undisturbed relief. "Why—oh!" Darting impulsively into the hall, Miss Anstruther seized a girl standing by the billiard room door, and before either she or Carrollton could realize what was intended had whirled her behind the curtain.

"Ethel," she gasped, "here's Mr. Carrollton proposing to the wrong girl. It's you he means—not me," breathlessly. The next moment she had vanished down the hall. Miss Wheatley, startled and a little indignant, turned to follow, but Carrollton caught her by the hand.

"It's—it's true," he murmured incoherently. "I've been trying all the evening to tell you, only you wouldn't let me."

"What made Patricia think you were making love to her, then?" demanded the girl, still resentful. Carrollton shook his head.

"I don't know," he groaned bewilderingly. "She—she began talking about some rot that I had said at dinner, and then burst out that she was engaged to Joe, and said I had sent her violets. You are in the blue room, aren't you? Mrs. Mortimer said you were to be," doggedly. "I—I brought them down from the city myself." But Miss Wheatley's soft laugh had rippled out.

"Why, I was to have had the blue room," she explained, "but it had no fireplace and Patricia, who doesn't mind the cold, insisted on changing with me. And then, when she came in wearing those flowers and saying that you had sent them"—with a delicious pout. Carrollton, whose face had cleared, joined in her laughter.

"There seems to have been a mixup all around," he declared. "Now, see here, Ethel, that was a pretty narrow escape, and the next time the girl might not be engaged. Don't you think that you could do something toward claiming your own property? It isn't much good, perhaps, but still—hadn't I better tell Patricia that we have been engaged for some time too? That would remove finally from her mind any lingering idea that I was in love with her, and, besides, I'd hate to have her think you second choice," artfully. "What do you say, dear?" There was a pause—a long pause—then Carrollton thrust his head from between the curtains. "Patricia," he called.

Compassion.

Among the stories which were told by certain aged physicians at a reunion of medical men of the times when surgical operations were conducted without anesthetics none was more touching than the following:

A little girl not more than eight years old was injured in such a way that it was necessary to amputate one of her legs. She proved to be of wonderful pluck, and instead of blinding her, as was customary in such cases, she was given her most cherished doll to hold. Pressing it in her arms, she submitted to the amputation without a single cry.

When it was done the physician in charge, seeking to brighten matters up with pleasantry, said, "And now, my dear, we will amputate your doll's leg."

Then the little girl burst into tears. "No, no," she gasped between her sobs. "You shall not; it would hurt her too much."

Tough on Society.

Subscriber—Say, why don't you publish society intelligence in your paper? Village Editor—Society intelligence! Why, I never heard of such a thing—Detroit Tribune.

A Connoisseur.

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