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Little boys sold violets. Old Fink pinched his mouth in a thin line. His face looked drawn and bitter. The fairies were covered with snow flakes, and he was afraid the paint would come off the wings. Amelia trotted along with chapped grey lips, saying nothing.

Finally Fink could restrain his disappointed wrath no longer. "You see!" he cried to the little girl. "You see that my monsters are no lies. Look at the face of the man over there; look at the face of the lady in the carriage; look at the child in furs and furbelows, look at the young girl simpering. . . selfish beasts all of them, with hard hearts. They don't care for us. What do they want with fairies." He railed away, and the more Amelia tried to calm him, the more violent he became. Then because he had lost hope of the dinner, and lost faith in himself and because he was sorry for Amelia, and desperate in general, he stood still on the corner of Forty-second street and Broadway, where the crowd surged most thickly, and brushing the snow from the fairies, held the basket high, and cried aloud in sudden hoarse recklessness: "Who wants a fairy? Who'll buy a fairy. . . only twenty-five cents. Who has time to buy a fairy?"

AMELIA tugged timidly at his arm. A few people stopped to stare. Emmanuel Fink squared his narrow shoulders, threw back his head and went on fearlessly, his voice rising above the din: "There's twelve fairies here, ladies and gentlemen. . . little, pretty and kind, guaranteed to teach you a lesson, if you find time to listen."

His voice rose to a shriek. A fat, red-faced man in a fur coat, stopped short. His grisly mustache was frosted with snow. He looked keenly at Fink. Three young girls, pink and white as apple blossoms, stopped; a tired woman in black stopped; an iron faced young man, stopped.

"If you'll only find time," shouted Fink. "Christmas isn't going to run away, if you stop a minute to buy a twenty-five cent fairy." This was his last appeal to humanity, before black suicidal discouragement would cloak and smother his spirit forever.

"Look at them," he cried and held a fairy high, between frozen thumb and forefinger. "Wings and all for twenty-five cents. They're cheap enough. And who am I to sell fairies? Nobody. . . I'm nobody. And who are you to buy? Everybody. . . ! And who are the fairies? Here, ladies and gentlemen, is a familiar fairy, one you have doubtless often met. . . a pleasant fairy to have about the house and in your business, a fairy to introduce to your friends and neighbors who have never seen her. . . the Fairy Truth." He took up another little creature. "We are among old acquaintances. Why buy fairies you already own, you will ask? The answer is simple and practical. That which you already own, grows old and battered about with constant use. Have two on hand. So if you already have this fairy, buy another. She is in all your houses and hearts. You will not deny that. Your faces show how well you know her. She is the secret of your youth. No ugliness with her around, no sour hearts and scolding voices. . . She is the Fairy Kindness. Of course you recognize her. Another?" He lifted a bit of fragile carving and waved it gently. "Who is she? Need I name this one? She has many names. Everyone calls her something else, and invents pet names. When you own her, she has all the qualities of nature, when someone else owns her she seems less beautiful. Take my advice. . . buy her quickly. . . the Fairy Virtue! Ah, here is the youngest and oldest of all. . . younger than the pretty baby in your arms, Madam, older than wisdom, a fairy who needs care, I warn you. She is the plaything of children, often of men, the

cult of women, the relic, the secret, the mystery of the happiness you all seek so desperately. . . the Fairy Love! . . . And now another. . . a fairy you cannot live without, a fairy you will buy at any price, and keep at any cost, a fairy who may or may not turn into any of the others at your will. . . the Fairy Consciousness-of-Self. What a collection, ladies and gentlemen, and all for sale! The chance for which you have been waiting." His voice sank to a whisper; his eyes challenged. "Choose before it is too late, and don't bicker or quarrel over my wares, for though I've given them different names, they're all the same; so no one's cheated."

The fat, red-faced old man with the frosted mustache stepped forward. "Gimme two," he said, and flicked a dollar bill in the basket.

"I haven't a cent for change," admitted Old Fink, turning troubled, excited eyes to this first purchaser.

"Don't matter," mumbled the old man. "It's worth the money." He grabbed two fairies and thrust them in his pocket.

A shabby woman carrying a black valise, pushed timidly forward and laid twenty-five cents in the basket.

Fink handed her a fairy, with a low bow.

An elderly woman fingered and fingered the fairies discontentedly.

She wore cotton gloves, and her nose was long and red and sharp.

"This isn't a bargain show," said Fink. She dropped a fairy, and hustled away furiously.

A young man, good-natured looking, with broad shoulders and a cheerful clear-cut chin, stepped forward. "I'll take one," he said; and added heartily, "You gave them the right sort of stuff, just what they needed." Fink smiled at him, as he patted Amelia and pocketed his fairy.

Eight fairies left! Now there was a rush for the basket. People elbowed one another to get nearer, people laughed and joked and stared kindly at Fink and Amelia. Someone began to auction off the remaining fairies. "Fifty cents. . . a dollar. . . two dollars."

A warm wind of love and understanding melted the snow, and held together the little group beneath the glare of electric lights. Silver jingled merrily. Soon the last fairy was sold.

Then Emmanuel Fink turned his happy old face towards the crowd of his friends. "Thank you," he said. "After all the world's not a bad place, once you get it to listen to you."

He took Amelia by the hand. "The little girl and I can have our Christmas dinner now," he confided to the sympathetic circle. So off in the glittering lights they walked, beneath the frosty sky, in the beautiful snow storm.

"Are you hungry?" asked Fink.

"Yes," whispered Amelia, simply.

"Well, well," mused Fink, "I'd never have thought it possible."

"You can make more fairies now," cried Amelia, skipping along beside him.

"I'll make nothing but fairies," Fink solemnly assured her. "I guess it's what they want," and he smiled again, as if on that wintry night, he had been warmed through and through, enough to last him a long, long while.

Homely Philosophy

It doesn't take money to make fools of some men; but it helps.

Some folks spend enough grieving over spilt milk to buy a cow.

We can forgive any man his prejudices, provided they don't conflict with our own.

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