

Aunt Mollie Valentine.

St. Valentine's Day, so eagerly anticipated by all the young people in the house, had come, and Aunt Mollie sat by the fire in her own room, reading a valentine.

The postman, a short time before, had left a number of valentines, among them one for Aunt Mollie. It had been handed around from one to another, speculated upon, laughed over, and then Mrs. Norcross (without noticing the exchange of glances between her mischievous daughter, Fan, and Sam Reynolds, Fan's most devoted admirer, and also the aider and abettor of all her jokes) called a servant and sent the missive up to Aunt Mollie's room.

The young people were all so busy with their own valentines that Aunt Mollie was left to read hers in peace. She looked long at the direction, as many of us do, wondering who wrote it, before she broke the seal, but, as she read it, the color came to her cheeks and the light and sparkle to her eyes, which shone as they had not done for many a long year.

What she read was no valentine, but a letter from Col. Sargent. He wrote that he had long loved her, but, having had a sister and niece to support, had had no time to marry; but now he was free, and he entreated Aunt Mollie, if she had any love for him, and was willing to marry him, to let him know it at the earliest opportunity.

The letter fell from Aunt Mollie's fingers as she gazed into the fire, while her thoughts flew back into the past. How well she remembered when she first knew Col. Sargent; he was a friend of her brother-in-law, and was at their house almost every day; in many of their excursions and gayeties he had been her escort. Handsome and agreeable, kind and attentive, was it any wonder, she thought, that she, a girl of twenty, had lost her heart to him? She thought over all their pleasant intercourse so many years ago, and tried to remember some word or act that betrayed a warmer interest than the brotherly affection he had always professed for all the family. Alas! she could remember none—nothing but the sharp pang of sorrow in her own heart when he told them all he was going away to India to be gone for years.

He had always been her hero, and although she had schooled herself to indifference, and had never betrayed her secret, and on his return from India, a few years ago had met him with only a friend's welcome, yet she knew now what had made all other men seem small in her eyes. Aunt Mollie had refused several good offers, to the surprise of her friends, and was now an old maid of forty, with nephews and nieces growing up around her, quiet, reserved and lady-like, and somewhat domineered over by her eldest niece, Fanny Norcross, as wild but as good-hearted a little thing as ever lived.

Aunt Mollie looked into the fire, and became thoughtful. "What has made him love me, I wonder, and when did it begin, and why did he keep it to himself, and treat me so indifferently, starting me with an offer?" It was all a puzzle; Aunt Mollie had to give it up. She read the Colonel's letter again; there was no mistake about it; he said plainly he loved her, and wished to marry her, and would like an immediate answer.

"Well," said Aunt Mollie to herself, "why not? Why shouldn't I marry him? If he loves me as he says, why shouldn't I accept the happiness offered me? Oh, if this had only happened years ago!" and Mollie gave a sigh as she thought of the past lonely years; but the loneliness would all be gone now; there was some one who loved her.

So Aunt Mollie wrote her answer to Col. Sargent with a bright smile and blush that it was a pity no one saw. She told him she would be his wife; and not only that, but with a candor most women think unnecessary, she told him how happy his letter had made her, and how long she had loved him, and finally that she would be at home the next evening, and happy to see him.

Then ringing the bell for a servant, she sent the letter to the postoffice. At tea-time, when Aunt Mollie made her appearance, her valentine had been forgotten in the more absorbing topics of the sleigh-ride for that evening, and a tea-party for the next, so she could think her own thoughts undisturbed. The next evening they all went off to their tea-party, after vainly coaxing Aunt Mollie to accompany them.

the evening," said Joe, who was a privileged character. Fan laid down her knife and fork, and, for the first time remembering the valentine, turned crimson. Could Aunt Mollie have told Col. Sargent what she had done? She never doubted that Aunt Mollie knew she had doubted to write it.

Aunt Mollie, remembering last evening and the diamond on her finger, which she had concealed for a time, smiled and blushed, and Mrs. Norcross looked at both in astonishment. As soon as Joe had left the room she exclaimed: "What is the matter with you both? Fan looks confused, and you, Mollie, look so happy. What has happened, and what has Col. Sargent to do with it all?"

"Only this," said Aunt Mollie; "that Col. Sargent wrote to me, and asked me to marry him; that I accepted him, that he spent last evening with me, and that this," holding up her hand, "is my engagement-ring."

This was too much for Fan. Bursting into tears, she exclaimed: "Oh, mother, mother! the Colonel did not write that letter at all. Sam Reynolds and I wrote it just for a joke, because Aunt Mollie said it was so many years since she had received a valentine. I never thought she would answer it."

Mrs. Norcross was more angry with Fan than she ever had been before, and after questioning and scolding her, sent her sobbing to her room for the remainder of the day, to reflect on the enormity of her offense; and then Aunt Mollie, who had listened, but who had not spoken one word to Fan, took off her engagement-ring, and asked Mrs. Norcross to see the Colonel when he called, and explain everything to him.

"And tell him," said poor Aunt Mollie, with quivering lips, "that I acknowledge his great kindness to me, but I cannot accept such a sacrifice."

Then Aunt Mollie went up to her room, threw herself face upward on the bed, and when the Colonel called a few hours afterward, she was in a burning fever. I think myself the fever must have been in her system before, for fevers are not developed so rapidly. But Aunt Mollie was ill for weeks.

Mrs. Norcross did not enjoy her interview with the Colonel, as it was her child who had made the trouble; but the Colonel was very kind made excuses for Fan, said he would not give Aunt Mollie up, and took the ring only that he might have the pleasure of putting it again on Aunt Mollie's finger.

It was a long time before Aunt Mollie could see him, and longer still before the Colonel could make her believe he really loved her. But she did at last consent to marry him, and that naughty, mischievous Fan is a prime favorite in the Colonel's house.—Eliza Graham in N. Y. Weekly.

Reminiscence of Lincoln. We copy from advance sheets of Scribner's Monthly the following passages from "Personal Reminiscences of Lincoln." by Noah Brooks:

to military affairs, but as to his personal conduct, alluding particularly to certain traits of character which, the president intimated, became faults when made too prominent. It was just such a letter of loving counsel as a father might write to a son—a letter to be forever prized by its recipient. Some weeks after this was written I accompanied the President to the army of the Potomac, then lying at Palmouth. We were entertained at Hooker's headquarters. One night, Hooker and I being alone in his hut, the general standing with his back to the fireplace, alert, handsome, full of courage and confidence, said laughingly: "B—, the President says you know about that letter he wrote me, on taking command; then he added, with that charming assurance which became him so well: 'After I have been to Richmond I am going to have that letter printed.' It is a good letter; it is a pity that it never was printed."

The Betting Mania of California. Californians have an inherent, inordinate desire for betting. It almost amounts to a mania. If they are not disposed to fight ye tiger play poker, or bet their coin on any game of chance, they are sure to exhibit their propensity for betting in some way, and they will go their whole pile on anything, no matter how preposterous. "I'll bet you \$10 that man's name is Snider," said one Californian to another as a man who was an utter stranger to both passed by. "It's a go," said his companion. Inquiry was made, and the wager lost by the man who proposed it. Up in one of the mountain towns a stagecoach tipped over, and it is related, as the passengers were tumbling down a rocky embankment into a gulch, a fellow shouted: "I'll bet the drinks for all of us that half of us get killed." The bet was taken, but the casualties were not fatal. A doctor reported that a well known citizen who was at the point of death would not live twenty minutes longer. "I'll bet \$5 that he will," said one of his friends.

The wager was accepted, and the stakes were scarcely put up when the report came that the man was dead. "Do you give it up?" asked the man who won. "No," was the reply; "I'll now bet \$10 that he isn't dead." The bet was taken and about that time the doctor reappeared. "Is the man dead, doctor?" the question was asked. "Yes, dead as Julius Caesar." "Then I've lost again," was the reply. "Now I bet \$20 that he won't go into a five foot six coffin. I want to get square if I can." I could give other illustrations of this betting mania which have come under my observation fully as assured, but these must suffice. The betting is not confined to any class or nationality. It is characteristic of all Californians, from the oldest to the youngest. It is not strange, therefore, that the professional gambling fraternity is numerous in the state. I have been at a small country hotel in an interior town, and of the fifteen who were seated at the dinner table I was told that seven of them were regular gamblers.—San Francisco Cor. Boston Journal.

The White Czar. BY HENRY W. LONGFELLOW. The White Czar is Peter the Great. Batyushka Father Dear, and Gosudar, sovereign, are titles the Russian people are fond of giving to the Czar in their popular songs. Dost thou see on the rampart's height That wreath of mist in the light Of the midnight moon? Oh, hie! do you give it up? It is not worth of mist. It is the czar, the White Czar, Batyushka! Gosudar! He has heard, among the dead, The artillery roll overhead, The drums and the tramp of feet Of his soldiery in the street; He is awake! the White Czar, Batyushka! Gosudar! He has heard in the grave the cries Of his people; "Awake! arise!" He has rent the gold brocade Whereof his shroud was made; He is the risen! the White Czar, Batyushka! Gosudar!

From the Volga and the Don, He has led his army on, Before the Ben rule, Over desert and mountain pass, The Czar, the Orthodox Czar, Batyushka! Gosudar! "The Bosphorus shall be free; It shall make room for me; And the gates of its water-streets Be unbarred before my feet. I say it, the White Czar, Batyushka! Gosudar!"

"And the Christians shall no more Be crushed, as heretofore, Before the Ben rule, O, Sultan of Istanbul! I swear it! I, the Czar, Batyushka! Gosudar!" —The Atlantic. A Double Surprise. While Mr. and Mrs. Enright are agreed upon most all other subjects, they do not exactly agree as to how tramps should be treated. That is, they didn't until yesterday. His heart was tender enough for him to say: "Every time you feed a hungry person you lay up treasures in Heaven." "I can't have them annoying me, and I won't!" was her spunky reply. "Does it annoy you to have a hungry man ask for food?" "Yes, it does!" "I'd be only too glad to feed and converse with a score of them," he continued. "I'd like to ask them of their past deeds and future intentions; find out if they realize that there is another world; put new and better thoughts into their minds. Oh! Hannah, be good to the unfortunate!" "I'll fix you, old man!" she said to herself, as she leaned back to rock, and she meant to do it. Next morning, when he had been gone an hour, a tramp called and asked for a sandwich. The fellow was invited into the parlor to warm and wait for dinner. At ten o'clock there were three in there. Half an hour later she smilingly seated two more. About noon, while waiting for her husband to arrive and ask them of their future hopes and fears, and chucking over her scheme, she heard one tramp calling out: "Let go my hat!" "Give it to him!" shouted a second. "Rah for me," screamed a third, and then the crashing and smashing drowned their voices. The whole crowd fought across and around the parlor, out into the hall, and two or three were being dragged down the front steps as Mr. Enright came up. "No other of us. Go for him!" yelled a big tramp, and the good man was hit on

the ear, pitched into the snow and didn't come to until a dozen camphor bottles had been collected. He entered the house leaning on his wife's arm. They stood in the parlor door and gazed on the panorama. It was gorgeous. "How much treasure in Heaven do you think has been placed to our credit this morning?" she mildly inquired. He slowly reached for the camphor bottle, and took a long sniff, and replied: "Hannah, let us feed the poor—we are the poor!"—Detroit Free Press.

Simple Cures. S. B. PECK. An advertisement in a New York paper lately brought to my mind many cases that had been related to me of remarkable cures by very simple remedies, some of which were taken stealthily without the knowledge or against the protest of the attendant or nurse, but always gratifying to the palate of the patient. The first I shall relate occurred long ago when cold water was not allowed in fevers. The patient had a person "to watch with him," who was directed to put hot stones to his feet to promote perspiration, but was not to allow him water to drink, "for that would counteract the good effect of the heating process." These stones were heated in the fire and partially cooled in a pail of water kept under the bed.

The watcher went to sleep, and the willful patient regardless of consequences, managed to crawl out of bed and without goblet or cup, drank slyly his fill from the pail, got back to bed and quietly slept himself into a profuse sweat, after which he rapidly recovered. A man sick unto death and nearly given up by his physician, was called on by the latter in the morning, who expressed himself highly pleased with the good effect of the medicine he had left, and congratulated him on his appearing much better.

"Yes," said the patient "I have been much better since I drank that stuff in the cupboard." The stuff he had covertly drank turned out to be vinegar from a pickle jar! A little girl whose disease baffled the skill of the family physician, and who grew worse in spite of all his skill was called on by him as the family were sitting down to breakfast, and as the mother never hurt me, but set gratefully in my stomach. They were fresh from the garden. Now I prefer as a matter of taste the more luscious fruits.

I will relate but one more singular cure, though there are others on my mind. This was related to me by Dr. Strong, an old physician of Hartford, Conn., some fifty years ago, as an occurrence in his practice. A little girl was pining, moaning and shrinking away in flesh, without any other symptoms of disease, when he was sent for. The case perplexed him and he asked the mother if the child had been denied any food or other thing that she seemed to long for. She reluctantly admitted that the child had asked for tobacco.

A small quantity was given her which she ate greedily, from which date her recovery was rapid. For the rationale of the case I can only surmise that she had tasted the weed before, and if it then produced nausea and now satisfied her craving, it was not the first case of the kind. Physicians owe much to accidental discoveries, and it is wise and humane in them to note these peculiar cases, not presuming that in all, or even a majority of subjects, the same treatment of apparently similar ailments will produce similar effects. The stomach and all the viscera being beyond our sight, and much of them effected by all that is introduced to them, the cause of many internal ailments, and the effect of food and medicine upon them, will doubtless ever remain mysterious.

Homes for the Poor. Harper's Magazine. Miss Octavia Hill's "organized work among the poor" proves to be the one lever by which order may be brought out of chaos. It is impossible to give a full picture of her labors, but the main features of her work will be understood, we think, if we should suppose a lady of our acquaintance to buy one of the worst dens at Five Points or in North street, and become the landlady of such tenements, taking her chance of the thieves and cut-throats who haunt these localities. No go-between is employed, the lady calls weekly for her own rents. She gives no charity, but by her attempts to give the people work and to further their welfare inspires confidence in her sympathy.

This is Miss Hill's plan, and the details of her success are worthy the profound study of every man or woman who desires to help the needy and unfortunate. Philadelphia is the paradise of working-men. That city seems to bear the palm not only comfortable tenements, but for co-operative companies, which work to great advantage to the laboring classes. Not one of the smallest of the good ends achieved by the Centennial Exhibition was a more extended knowledge of the humanity and wisdom of Philadelphia in this particular. The phrase "poor working-man" is hardly known in that favored city. Mr. Josiah Quincy, who has labored most earnestly for a better condition of the working people, says he was long ignorant of the cause of this desirable state of the laboring men of Philadelphia, until he discovered that there existed within its limits five hundred loan and building associations.

Apart from these tenement-houses for the poor, there was started in Boston, in April, 1872, the Boston Co-operative Building Company, in order to ascertain, by what methods, profitable enough to be readily followed, comfortable and healthy dwellings for working people could be furnished in and near Boston. Three such experiments, namely, the hiring, the buying, and the building of tenement houses, have been entered upon. Perhaps

the most interesting act the corporation has performed is the hiring of a place called the Crystal Palace. This building was selected "as the abode of filth, robbery, drunkenness and prostitution. Under the rule of the company the following excellent results have been obtained: The building outside, instead of being a disgrace to the street by its filthy look, has a neat appearance. It has changed its name, and now instead of the name of contempt 'Crystal Palace,' it is styled the Lincoln Building. Before corporation entered, riot, murder and arrests for drunkenness and family broils were of constant occurrence. All is now changed. The trade of the police is virtually gone. The chief of the district reports that during two months he heard of no complaints there. The grog-shop that had existed from the time of the erection of the building was swiftly swept away. A Holly-tree Coffee house has taken its place. The basement tenements taken were shut up immediately after the company took possession. Very large shafts have been cut through all the doors, with ventilators above them, and rooms that have never had light and air have now a sufficiency of both."

Going Into Partnership. Mrs. Nottingham, being unable to get the means from her husband to supply her necessities, at last informed him that she should resume her profession of teaching, so as to be as independent as she was before she was married. "You're not in earnest, my dear?" said Mr. N. "Of course I'm in earnest. Why not? Do you suppose I intend to go on in this way, begging and praying for every farthing I spend? I've been independent once, and I can be so again."

"No; but look here!" Mr. Nottingham had risen, and was pacing up and down rather uneasily. "My wife can't go to teaching! What is it that you want?" "What I can earn!" proudly retorted Mrs. Nottingham. "But put it into words."

"Well, then, look here," said Mrs. Nottingham; "I have always done my own work and sewing. Considered as a cook, I demand three pounds a month; as a seamstress, one pound; as a housekeeper, four pounds; as your wife, and the lawful mother of your children, at least ten pounds more. And then I shall not consider myself properly compensated."

"Whew-w-w! Let me see—it's nearly twenty pounds a month!" "I consider my services as worth that at least," but if you would rather hire a housekeeper I will prosecute my original idea of opening a select school."

Mr. Nottingham walked up and down the room once more, ruffling his hair into porcine fashion with his fingers. "I'll consult Uncle Wetherbee," he said. "Very well," said Mrs. Nottingham. "I am quite willing to abide by his decision."

Uncle Wetherbee, a bronzed-visaged ex-sailor, who was comfortably smoking his meerschaum up-stairs, was summoned at once. He came down—rather slowly, on account of a wooden leg—"D'ye want to know my opinion?" said Uncle Wetherbee, when they both had finished. "Certainly," said Mr. Nottingham. "Of course," said his wife. "Then look here," said Uncle Wetherbee: "matrimony's a copartnership of joys and sorrows, and it ought to be of no more as well. My advice is, Nephew Nicholas, that you divide even with your wife."

"Divide even!" blankly repeated Mr. Nottingham. "Or, better still," went on Uncle Wetherbee, "take one-third of the money yourself, lay aside one-third for household purposes, and give the other third to Phoebe."

"Yes, but, uncle—" said Uncle Wetherbee. "There it is. And I've nothing more to say." And off he stumped up-stairs again. Mr. Nottingham looked at his wife. His wife looked back again at him. "Well?" said Phoebe. "I will try it!" said Mr. Nottingham. "It seems a wild idea, but Uncle Wetherbee is a remarkably sensible man. Yes, I'll try it!"

Mr. Sangster, "but they had had another offer that morning—of cash down! and had considered it their duty to Mr. Falkirk to close with it. Very sorry—but perhaps they might suit Mr. Nottingham with some other piece of property."

Mr. Nottingham went home, sadly disappointed. "What's the use of trying to save money?" said he. "I'm going to give it up, after this!" "I don't agree with you there, my dear," said Mrs. Nottingham. "I've been saving money for the past three years, and I've found it pays!"

"You have?" said the husband! "Of course I have. Do you suppose that I spent all the money? Not a bit of it. I put the best part of it out at interest, always following Uncle Wetherbee's advice in my investments, and I have bought a house with it!"

"What house?" "Mr. Nottingham's eyes opened wider and wider. "The Falkirk house," said Mrs. Nottingham, her cheeks and lips dimpling all over with satisfaction. "I completed the bargain to-day. My dear," stealing one arm around her husband's neck—"how do you think I have held up my end of the business partnership?"

"Better than I could have done myself, Phoebe," said Mr. Nottingham, with a curious moisture coming into his eyes. "My plucky little wife, I am proud of you!" "It was your money, Nicholas," said the wife, in a faltering voice. "But it was your prudence and economy that stored it up, Phoebe."

"Then you don't regret the terms and articles of our partnership?" "Not in the least!" answered Mr. Nottingham, fervently. So the young couple moved into the Falkirk house when 1st of May came round, and the cosiest room in the house, with a south window and an open fireplace for a wooden fire, was reserved for Uncle Wetherbee.

And Mr. Nottingham is never tired of telling his friends how his wife bought the place with her share of the partnership profits. "The most charming woman in the world," says Mr. Nottingham.—Danbury News.

Insanity Among the Higher Classes. Having referred to the bearing of the habits of one large portion of the population upon the manufacture of insanity, we pass on to the consideration of the relation between higher grades of modern society and mental disorder. It has been observed in institutions into which private and pauper patients are admitted, that the moral or physical causes of lunacy are more frequently the occasion of the attack with the former than the latter class. This is not always accounted for, as might have been expected—by there having been less drink-produced insanity among the well-to-do patients, for, in the Royal Edinburgh Asylum, where this disparity strongly comes out, there is even a higher percentage of insanity from this cause among the private than the pauper lunatics. The history of the daily mode of life of many members of the Stock Exchange would reveal, in the matter of diet, an amount of alcoholic imbibition in the form of morning "nips," wine at luncheon and it dinner, difficult to realize by many of less porous constitutions, and easily explaining the disastrous results which in many instances follow, sooner or later, as respects disturbances of the nervous system, in one form or other. In fact, by the time dinner is due the stomach is in despair, and its owner finds it necessary to goad a lost appetite by strong spirits ending with black coffee and some liquor. When either dyspepsia or over-business work is set down as the cause of the insanity of such individuals it should be considered what influence the amount of alcohol imbibed has exerted upon the final catastrophe, as well as the assigned cause. But whatever may be the relative amount of insanity produced among the affluent and the poor, of this there can be no doubt, that certain mental causes of lunacy, as over-study, and business worry, produce more insanity among the upper than the lower classes.—Popular Science Monthly.

Strong Butter. "Why is it, my son, that when you drop your bread and butter it always drops butter side down?" "I don't know; it hadn't order do it. The strongest side order be uppermost, hadn't it ma? and this is the strongest butter that I ever did seed." "Hush! hush! it's some of your aunt's churning." "What! did she churn it? The great lazy thing!" "Your aunt?" "No, this yer butter." "Why, my son?" "To make the old lady churn it, when it's plenty strong enough itself. Don't you think so, ma?" "Be still, Zibi; it only wants working over to be good!" "Well, if I's you, when I did it, I'd put in lots of molasses."

"You good for nothing! I've eaten a great deal worse in the most aristocratic boarding-houses."

"Well people of rank certainly ought to eat it."

"Why people of rank?" "Cause it's rank butter."

"You varmint you! What makes you so smart?" "The butter has taken the skin off my mouth, mother."

"Zibi, don't lie! I can't throw away the butter."

"I'll tell ye, marm, what I'd do with it keep it to draw blisters. You orter see the flies keel over and die the minute they touch it; it's astonishing."

"Well, my son, if you keep on lying at this rate, you will keel over some day, and go to a place to hot for butter. Now wash your face and come to supper."

A Cincinnati court is to decide whether a baby can be held for debt. A young woman put her child to board with a widow at two dollars a week. Recently she desired to get it back, but the widow refused to give it up until four dollars were paid to balance the account. The mother asks for a writ compelling the restoration of the baby.