Iron County Register

BY ELI D. AKE.

IRONTON. - MISSOURI.

LOVE'S DAY.

Midway the last of those drear months
That winter knows,
While yet the earth is hidden 'neath
The lingering snows,
And the north wind defiant still
His trumpets blows,
Is set a day as full of sweets
As summer rose.

The tidings of its coming spread
The birds among,
And soon the sturdy evergreens
Are filled with song;
The daintiest thoughts of Poesy
About it throng,
And many precious gems of Art
To it belong.

For oh! 'tis Love, 'tis Love, that says:
"This day is mine—
This day when all true lovers haste,
With eyes that shine
And lips that smile, their hearts to lay
Upon the shrine
Long years to me made sacred by
St. Valentine."

—*Harper's Weekly.*

MOLLY ST. LEGER.

A Valentine Story of Over One Hundred Years Ago.

It was a gray, gloomy day in late October, during the last week of their sojourn at the old family country house on the Kennebec. This ancient house, built of Hallowell granite, was of the Elizabethian style of architecture, with castellated walls and a large square hall down into which you looked from the galleries on the second and third floors, and which opened upon a deep porch altogether delectable in its viney seclusion, so suggestive of tete-a-tetes, moonlight or daylight.

Three connecting rooms fronted the river which flowed at the foot of a rapidly sloping lawn, and from the library window at the south end of this triad of rooms could be seen a lovely river picture framed between tall oaks and evergreens, at the extremity of an opening a quarter of a mile long, at least, cut through the primeval forest straight to the bank of the Kennebec.

This was the work of Downing, who, years before, had cut and trimmed and fashioned these slopes and dells into fair, regular beauty. But time and a proper degree of neglect had brought back a bewitching wildness, a gypsy-like abandon of straggling vines and lawless growths, more fascinating to town-bred girls than the most perfect landscape gardening could possibly be. Three hundred and eighty acres comprised this estate of Fairview, and it once had a deer park of a hundred acres, but that was long ago.

It had now been raining for three days, a steady down-pour, gladdening to the hearts of the country folk, whose wells, owing to the long drought, had long since refused water. Caleb Atkins, coming down from the village as usual, with meat and milk, had expressed to the cook that morning his opinion that the rain was likely to last a "considerable spell," to which statement cook signified her assent with the remark that next week was court week, and it always rained court week.

"Cook has the universally logical feminine mind," observed Beatrix, who had overhead this colloquy while whistling and waiting for Ajax at the hall door. "If it always rains court week, why, then, of course, it's always court week, isn't it? Wonder if Supreme Courts and storms prevail simultaneously over the universe! I'll ask her. Oh! oh! you big, black, wicked, splendid old fellow!" This last to Ajax, who came to her whistle with a bound and a leap, planting his big muddy paws on her shoulders, and staying her remonstrances with a sweeping lap of his huge tongue, which fairly hid from view her piquant merry face.

"Oh, shut that door, do, Trix, and behave in a civilized manner," growled Marjory, from the depths of the Sleepy Hollow chair by the hall fire. She was reading The Fair Maid of Perth for perhaps the twenty-fifth time, and was right in the thick of the tournament wherein fell the sons of Torquil advancing to death with the cry "One more for Hector!"

Whatever of modern authorship the library of Fairview lacked, it was rich in the older novelists, and owned a most sumptuous edition, creamy pages bound in fragrant Russia, of the prince of romantic novelists, Walter Scott.

Instantly turning at the sound of her voice, the big dog sprung into her lap, planting a huge paw, only partially cleansed, on an exquisite engraving of the said tournament and eliciting a satisfactory shriek from her, he plunged upon the sofa whereon Sue was dozing and dreaming, and then dashed up the oaken stair, close followed by the laughing, shrieking girls, casting back glances of intense delight at his success in inaugurating the frolic he so much loved, and having reached the landing on the third floor, stood waving his huge tail and watching with an actual twinkle of his eyes the breathless run of the girls up the last flight.

They were nearer the storm area by fifty feet up there than in the hall below, and the wind and rain seemed to be holding high carnival, whistling in the waterspouts, roaring down the chimneys and pelting pitilessly against the windows and upon the slate caps of the numerous bay and oriel windows. A window to the east looked out upon the ice schooners lying just below, bedraggled and dripping from the tips of their mizzen masts to the water line. An occasional sailor was seen shrouded in oil clothes.

They swung back the door at the end of the long upper hall and peered up the dusky stairway.

"Fascinating, isn't it?" remarked Marjory. "It's a real cosey attic day. Let's go up!"

"Nothing new up there, I suppose?" rejoined Trix. "We've rummaged everything—Madame Heath's brocaded wedding gown and General Heath's queer old uniform, and Major Brockton's kit, in the 1812 war, and Great-grandfather Brockton's wig and gown, and all the old bonnets and mob caps and camlet cloaks."

"And General Heath's delicious old love letter and the letters he wrote when he quarreled with his son Jo, who had the honor of being my great-great-grandfather, you know," said Marjory, with a toss of her gold-brown head.

Meanwhile they were running up the attic stairs and through the center of the attic, skirting the massive chimneys, each one of which could almost have held in its interior a seaside cottage.

The attics were large and high, as the attics of such a house should be, but although tolerably well lighted, were rich in those deep, dark, shadowy corners and recesses, whose ghostly suggestions make one's flesh creep.

There was one particularly dark recess where the low attic of the west wing debouched into the main attic, into which Marjory suddenly disappeared and shortly emerged, her hair festooned with dusty cobwebs, and her eyes blinking as those of an owl suddenly launched into the sunlight might do. She was dragging a small black trunk by its brass handle, said trunk being as cobwebby as her head, and mouldy with the mould of age apparently.

"That is what I call second-sight," she said, swinging it around with the expertness of a genuine baggage-smasher. "I did not know this thing was there—never hear of it before, and should have said I had explored every inch of this enchanted land."

The girls looked at it. It was brass bound and fastened by a solid hook of brass. She touched the hook and the cover flew up, disclosing a mass of papers. The three sighed simultaneously. They had hoped for something more precious, more startling;—a bride's trousseau, perhaps, fragrant with age and attar of rose—a service of untique silver or even a casket of pearls would not have surprised, but merely satisfied them.

"Ah, if it had only been a skeleton!" sighed Marjory. "It's big enough for a small Ginevra;" and she took up a thin flat book which lay on the top and opened it. On the blank page was written "Molly St. Leger. Her album." A yellow paper fastened with a faded blue ribbon dropped from between the leaves of the album. Marjory loosed the ribbon and disclosed a folded sheet.

"And who is this Molly St. Leger who had an album in 1765, and who received valentines in 1768? For as true as you live, girls, this is a genuine valentine, one hundred and ten years old if it is a day, with cupids and hearts and two doves a-cooing. Oh, what a jolly find for a rainy day! It's like reading a page of Walter Scott," said Marjory, who by this time you know as a dear lover of romance.

"Girls! girls! and so you've found it at last," cried out a cheery voice at their elbows. "Every descendant of Molly St. Leger's has to find that trunk sometime and hear her story. But nobody ever finds it till the right time comes, though it may be under their very noses."

"Her story! and who's to tell us, I should like to know?" queried Trix.

"I am," promptly replied aunt Penelope, "and right here. Time and place couldn't be better."

"Wouldn't it be more comfortable by the hall fire?" timidly suggested Sue, who is kittenish in her tastes, and likes to curl up and purr in a cosey corner. But the others, aunt Pen included, scouted the prosaic suggestion.

"Oh, no; right here, with the beating rain just above our heads. It's delicious!" murmured Trix, stretching herself on a discarded rug, with her head on Ajax's shaggy sides. Marjory having sat down in a huge chair with spidery legs which instantly collapsed, lay back comfortably among the ruins while aunt Pen began:

(It may as well be explained here that Fairview is richer in that species of wealth which pertains to attics, than most of even very old family mansions. For after the Boston Fire of 1871 many ancient relics were transported thither for safety, not only those belonging to Molly St. Leger's direct descendants, but also heirlooms of families into which those descendants had married.)

"Molly St. Leger was not a native born American citizen. She was born and lived in a delightful old castle in England—a castle that would do your heart good just to see, Marjory, with real battlements and a turret chamber—Molly's own—the very one from which she fled, not with, but to our ancestor, Abram Hunt. I saw it all last year when I was in England—the old garden with its box two hundred years old, cut into all sorts of queer shapes, peacocks, Greek vases, and maids-of-honor, and its fish-pond with moldy-backed carp as old as the time of William the Conqueror, for aught I knew. The St. Legers came over with William, and are to this day as distinctively French in feature as in name. Molly's portrait shows her to have been a brunette, with black eyes. She was small and slight, with rosy cheeks, and you look like her, Trix.

"Molly's mother died when she was a baby, and she was brought up under the supervision of her father's sister, dowager Lady Dunbarton, as uncompromising a Tory as her father, and unbending in her views on all social matters. Molly's earliest playmate was Abram Hunt, the fifth son of John Hunt, who held the nearest living and who, almost as poor as Anthony Trollope's Mr. Crawley, found great difficulty in providing for so many sons, and Abram was destined to trade.

"The rigid Lady Dunbarton made no objection to the childish intimacy between Molly and Abram, never dreaming that a St. Leger could so far forget her rank as to form an attachment for any one in a lower station, and that Molly should fancy herself in love with a young man destined to trade, was a supposition fit to cause the St. Legers, who had hitherto slept peaceably in the churchyard precincts, to rise from their graves.

"But the fatal discovery was finally made and Molly was forthwith shut up in her turret chamber and ordered to forget Abram instantly. She was further informed that she could not leave her turret till Abram was fairly at sea on his way to Boston, in New England, whither his father had decided to send him. Molly's own maid, Phœbe, was taken from her, lest Molly should win her by her blandishments to carry some message to Abram, and Lady Dunbarton herself took upon her the surveillance of her rebellious niece, and a hard time she had of it.

"But love proverbially laughs at locksmiths and surveillance, and one day Molly's pet dove brought to her window, tucked under his snowy wing, a note from Abram, and this was followed by sundry other notelets brought by the same winged carrier, so that Molly knew exactly the day and hour on which Abram started for America, and he, skirting the castle at a safe distance, saw a tiny handkerchief fluttering from the turret window, and went on his way with high courage and hope in his heart.

"As soon as he was fairly at sea Molly was released from her imprisonment, and both her father and aunt had reason to congratulate themselves upon the excellent, the subduing effect of their course of discipline. Molly, who hitherto had apparently cared for little but the pleasure of the moment, rambling abroad on her pony, embroidering, playing the spinnet or reading, suddenly developed a remarkable taste for housewifery. Like the Greek Penelope, she busied herself of mornings with the maids at their spinning and weaving. She learned the art of bread-making and of ale-brewing, the best methods for the management of poultry and the raising of pigs and calves, and, altogether, promised at last to mature into a thrifty, entirely respectable and proper St. Leger.

"No letters came from Abram. Those were not days of much letter writing, and furthermore, letters coming to Molly through the post must have passed through her father's hands. But Molly had a brave heart and she had promised in her last note to Abram to go to him whenever he should send for her, and that was to be when he was fairly established in business and a proper escort could be had."

"Now, Aunt Pen," asked Beatrix, demurely, "do you consider that an altogether right and proper thing for our revered ancestress to promise?"

"Well," replied Aunt Pen, hesitating between her entire sympathy with Molly and her troublesome conviction that she ought to point the proper moral, "Molly must have done that or else given him up entirely. It was certain her father would never relent.

"Luckily, however," she continued, with a sigh of relief, "we have not to decide that; we have only to do with the story. Two years passed and Molly was then twenty. You know the old custom of St. Valentine's Day? The first one you met after the sun had risen was to be your Valentine for the year. Like many other Saint's days, St. Valentine's Day was held in much more sacred observance by our ancestors than by us. And many a gift had Molly received from Abram in his character of Valentine. If I'm not mistaken there is one in that very trunk, a tiny white silk box painted with white rosebuds, and containing a rosebud. It was the one Abram sent her just before he went away."

Sue, who sat nearest the brass-bound trunk, thrust her hand under the mass of papers, and after a slight search, brought up the box. She opened it. It contained a pinch of dry dust.

"Most things are dust after a hundred years," said Aunt Pen, cheerfully. And she went on. "Well, on the morning of St. Valentine's Day, just at dawn, Molly was awakened by a slight rustling at her window. Her dove fluttered in upon her bed, and under his snowy wing, in the old place, was a note tied with a bit of blue ribbon. Molly loosed the ribbon and down fell the valentine which you hold in your hand, Marjory. Read it, please." And Majory, sitting up among the ruins of the spider-leg chair, read:

"O Molly, Molly, fair and sweet
As is the blithe to-morrow
That brings you to your lover's side,
Far, far from grief and sorrow!
Once more unto your casement, love,
My messenger comes flying;
Fling back the lattice—take him in—
Your Valentine espying.

"Come, come, my Molly, here I wait,
The good ship spreads her sails;
Bearing such precious freight as thou,
She'll fear not storms nor gales.
Good-bye to England's flowery fields,
Her hawthorne, eglantine;
Come with the springtime's hastening bloom,
My life-long Valentine!"

"Our ancestor rhymed better than he drew," remarked Sue, peeping over Marjory's shoulder. "Those cooing doves look precisely like two fighting crows."

"What a delightfully dreadful facility you have, Sue, for taking the poetry out of everything," said Beatrix.

"Silence in the assembly!" said Aunt Pen. "There was another slip of paper, signed by John Hunt, Abram's brother and confidant, saying that a carriage with post-horses would be in waiting the next night, at a certain place, to convey Molly with the greatest possible speed to Portsmouth, whence the ship was to sail on the following day. Her escort was to be John Hunt himself, who, recently married, was going with his wife to seek his fortune also, in that distant New England.

"Molly dropped the valentine and note almost with a feeling of dismay. She was a loyal-hearted maiden, as her truth to her lover shows, and it was not without a deep pang of regretful love that she turned at the door that night and looked her last upon the little turret chamber wherein her twenty happy years had sped. Very sunny and happy she then felt, notwithstanding certain threatening shadows. She left a tender little note for her father, in which she pleaded forgiveness, and dwelt upon her love in such a way as softened his obdurate old heart in spite of himself. And so with her faithful Phœbe, and her tame dove folded in the kerchief at her bosom, Molly sped down the avenue under the fitful light of the waning moon, and turning again at the point where the castle turrets are last seen, looked long and lovingly on the home of her childhood and young womanhood. She never saw it again. For though her father ultimately forgave Molly, and visited her in the New World after the Revolutionary War, she never revisited her old home which her oldest son inherited.

"After some three weeks of buffeting and storms, the ship which carried our Molly sighted Cape Cod, and as she sailed steadily onward through the Narrows into our beautiful harbor of Boston, the first object that caught Molly's eye was not, as now, the gilded dome of the State House, but a tall mast, with a long arm or crane, from which hung a huge iron pot—the beacon 'upon that hill called Beacon.'

"Molly's destination was with a friend of Abram's, who lived on what is now Joy street, in the immediate neighborhood of Thomas Hancock's house, which he afterwards left to his nephew, John Hancock. Molly soon became familiarly acquainted with Dorothy, or Dolly Quincy, afterward the wife of John Hancock, for Abram Hunt was a partner in the firm of which Dolly's father, Edmund Quincy, was senior member.

"In a few weeks Molly and Abram were married, and went to keeping house near Springate, though Molly always had a special liking for Beacon Hill, with its sloping huckleberry pastures and sparkling springs, as being the first place of her residence in New England."

"Huckleberry pastures on Beacon Hill!" ejaculated Sue.

"Sue thinks," said Trix scornfully, "that Beacon street and the Back Bay, as they exist to-day, were a part of the original creation;" and Sue, who lives on Commonwealth avenue, was silenced.

(Aunt Pen, it seems, did not deem it necessary to explain to these girls, who, as native Bostonians, were, of course, familiar with the topography of old Boston, where Springate was. But others may like to know. In or near what is now Spring Lane was one of those springs with which the peninsula abounded, and a fence having been built round about it, with a gate for entrance, the immediate neighborhood was known as Springate.)

"Molly had come to New England in a time of ferment. Echoes of the storm gathering in the Western World had reached the ancestral home, but her father only 'poon, pooh'd, at the bare supposition of a successful rebellion against the authority of his Most Christian Majesty, George the Third. So Molly was greatly surprised and disappointed, I fear, to find that Abram was as arrant a rebel as could be found in the Colonies; bitter against taxation, and ready to follow Hancock and Adams to any length.

"As I have said, her friendship with Mrs. Hancock was warm and intimate, and she assisted at many of her famous codfish dinners, and was present at that historical breakfast when Madam Hancock entertained Admiral D'Estaing and three hundred of his officers, and not having sufficient milk to supply the wants of her guests, sent out her servants to milk the cows pastured on the Common, with orders that all owners who complained should be sent to her.

"Abram Hunt was one of the famous Boston Tea Party, and there is a charming story of Molly connected with it. Although partially disguised as an Indian, Abram wore his white top boots, and after the tea party was over, as he stood by the parlor fire giving Molly, who now sympathized with him in his rebellious feelings, some details of the affair, he shook out from the tops his of boots a quantity of tea which had lodged therein upon the hearth, and then swept it carefully into the fire.

"But Molly noticed that a small quantity of tea still remained in the top boots, and this she removed without Abram's knowledge. The next day Phœbe, whom Molly still employed in confidential matters, took a note to Dolly Quincy, inviting her to take a cup of tea with Molly that evening.

"A cup of tea! The temptation was irresistible even to so determined a rebel as Dorothy Quincy. She came; the tea was made—one cup had been drank and Molly was on the point of pouring out a second when footsteps were heard coming rapidly through the hall. Abram's footsteps, unmistakably—and Molly guiltily hustled the teapot out of sight under the edge of her ample train. But alas! the delicious fragrance could not be so promptly or effectually hidden. Abram sniffed the aroma suspiciously.

"'Molly,' he said with unusal sternness, 'is it possible you are making tea?'

"'How can I,' answered Molly, coloring under his eye, but smiling roguishly, 'when you yourself tipped the last pound into Boston Harbor?'

"But Abram was not to be cajoled. 'Molly,' he said, 'I am not deceived; I know you are making tea. Give it to me;' and Molly reluctantly drew out the tiny teapot from its silken hiding-place.

"Without a moment's hesitation Abram walked to the fire-place and poured out every drop of the precious beverage into the fire, shaking out vigorously the clinging tea leaves. It was with feelings of intense satisfaction, doubtless, that both Molly and Dolly Quincy reflected that they had at least drank one cup of the forbidden tea, though it was many a day before they had another.

"Molly afterward had her full share of the cares and anxieties of the Revolutionary War, for Abram became a Captain in the Continental army and served valiantly and faithfully.

"She was a friend of Lafayette's, and when he made his last visit to America, she was an old woman and Abram had been dead many years. She was living with her son in Roxbury, and she had a strong desire once more to see and take the hand of her old friend. So she came to Boston on a short visit to await his coming. But a few days before his arrival she suddenly died, and as they were taking her home, upon the Dover street bridge the funeral procession met Lafayette's incoming carriage—and so they met.

"Almost any day, girls, you may see the descendants of Molly's carrier dove flying about the Common and above the roofs on Beacon Hill and drinking from the fountains and ponds."

It was a silent group that went in the gloaming from out the attic down to the fire-lighted hall below after aunt Pen's story was done. Marjory still carried the valentine in her hand. The "Fair Maid of Perth" lay upon the rug before the fire, just as Molly had dropped the volume in the beginning of the frolic with Ajax. "I am glad," she said, as she picked it up, "that all romance and poetry is not shut up in books."—*Mrs. Francis A. Humphrey, in Wide Awake.*

THE SKIN.

To What the Color and Discolorations of the Skin Are Due.

The color of the skin is due to "pigment" paint secreted by glands at the bottom of the cuticle, or scarf-skin. On this pigment depends the color that marks different races. Even the fairest of the white race have more or less of it. Its entire absence of it in the negro gives us the albino—sometimes seen on exhibition—with strangely white skin, white hair and pink eyes. This coloring matter is confined to the scarf-skin (cuticle.) The true skin (*cutis vera*) has the same color in the Caucsian, Asiatic and African.

Sometimes the coloring matter, instead of being equally diffused, is increased in quantity in spots and patches; or, failing to be secreted in patches, is augmented in the contiguous parts. In no case, however, does anything more than a slight deformity to the eye result.

The most familiar form is that of freckles. These are confined to persons of fair complexion. Such are often born with a sure tendency to them, so that the appear even in infancy. Others freckle only when much exposed to the sun. Even the former have their freckles intensified by exposure. Both need to avoid undue exposure. The latter may be wholly relieved, but it is not so with the former.

Tawny patches.—These, a yellowish-brown, begin as small round discolorations, which enlarge and become more or less irregular in outline. They do not generally appear before adult age. They are much more common in women. They occur, however in men. In both they may be caused by exposure to the sun, in which case they disappear in winter. In women, they are often due to certain derangements, the correction of which will remove them. The physician can aid their removal by a wash for the skin.

Blanched patches.—These appear as small white dots, which slowly increase in size. Their edges are clearly defined. As they get larger, the surrounding skin becomes darker. It is common among the dark races, and among the dark complexioned of the white race. It gives us the "piebald" negro. No known treatment arrests it. Sometimes, however, it disappears spontaneously, to reappear at a future day.—*Youth's Companion.*

—The very air we breathe becomes a nuisance when it is worked over and jammed through a brass instrument by a young man who is fitting himself to become a member of a brass band.—*N. O. Picayune.*

PITH AND POINT.

—Remembering the poor is well enough; but it is much better to give them something.—*N. O. Picayune.*

—There are several ways to health, including the allopath, the homœopath and the hydropath.—*Boston Transcript.*

—Mamma—Yes, my child, we shall all know each other in heaven. Edith—But, mamma, we can make believe out when some of them call, can't we?—*N. Y. Herald.*

—Bombay husbands cut off their wives' noses for punishment. Thus do we arrive at the knowledge of the important fact that Bombay women talk through their noses.—*Boston Post.*

—The probabilities are that to-day the weather will be [clear]—[stormy]—[cold]—[warm.] We are bound to tell the truth, even if it does cost a little more for type setting.—*Norristown Herald.*

—"Clara, that young man winked at you," remarked a young lady to a friend in a ferry-house. "Indeed! I didn't notice it. I got so used to it when I 'tended a soda fountain that I don't take any notice of winks now," replied Clara.—*Brooklyn Times.*

—When you hear the old veteran with a head like an oyster bowl, telling the old story of the weather back in the twenties, you perceive that, in spite of the progress of invention, there has been no improvement in lying worth mentioning.—*Lowell Courier.*

—Sayings of a sage: The man who desires a fast horse thirsts for goer. The man who designed the days of the week was married, for he made Weddin's-day follow Choose-day. Anticipation is punching a hole in to-day, through which to catch a glimpse of to-morrow.—*Merchant Traveler.*

—Minister (after church)—"You seemed very much impressed by my sermon this morning, Deacon." Deacon (who had dozed through it all)—"Y-yes, I was—er—very much interested indeed; but would you mind repeating the text? The exact words have escaped me." Minister—"He giveth His beloved sleep."—*N. Y. Sun.*

—They were talking over an aged millionaire who had on several occasions given his heirs high hopes—high hopes always dashed by his recovery. "Curious how long the old man lasts!" says somebody, reflectively; "especially when you consider that for the last ten years he has had one foot in the grave." "Yes; but, then, you see, every now and then he changes the foot!"—*French Wit.*

MIKE'S SIGNS.

How an Intelligent Irishman Posed as a Professor.

The writer heard the following story a few evenings since. To him it was very amusing, as well as a good illustration of the aptness of different minds to misconstrue the same facts in quite opposite directions.

Some time ago a learned Frenchman became very enthusiastic on the subject of a universal language for the human race. After much thought and theorizing on the subject he came to the conclusion that the only language that could be universal at the present day must be a language of signs. Being deeply impressed with the importance of this language to humanity, he determined to travel from country to country and teach it in all their colleges and universities.

As it happened, the first country he reached in his travels was Ireland, and the first institution he went to was the University at Dublin.

He called upon the President of the University, and after some conversation with him asked him if he had a professor of signs in his University. Now there was no professor of signs in the University, but the President, not wishing to be behind the learned Frenchman, told him that they had one. The President was asked to be introduced to him. The President was taken aback at this, but told him that he could not see the Professor that day, but if he would call the next day at the same hour he would introduce him.

After the Frenchman had gone the President called his professors together and told them the fix he was in, and told them that one of them must play the part of professor of signs next day. They all demurred and objected to this, being afraid that they might be caught by the Frenchman.

As none of them were willing to play the part, they at last decided to train Mike, the choreman, for it. Mike had lost an eye, and was very sensitive about it, thinking that people were constantly noticing it and making allusions to it.

Mike was consulted, and consented to play the part, providing that the Frenchman should not refer to his defect.

The next day the President and professors dressed Mike up in a good suit of clothes, took him to a recitation-room, seated him alone on the platform, and then retired, for the Frenchman was to see him alone. Before they left him they told him what to do, and that he must not speak.

He replied: "Sure I'll not, if he sez nothin' about me oye."

At the appointed time the Frenchman called, and was ushered into the "recitation-room of the Professor of Signs." The President and professors waited in an adjoining room anxiously for the result. In a short time the Frenchman came back to them, apparently much pleased.

"How did you like our Professor of Signs?" inquired the President.

"Very much, indeed. I congratulate you on your able Professor. I am more than ever convinced that the language of signs is to be the universal language. When I went into the room I held up one finger, meaning there is one God. He understood me at once, and held up two fingers, meaning Father and Son. I then held up three fingers, meaning there are three persons in the Trinity. He replied by doubling up his hand, meaning: And these three are one. I then withdrew. It is wonderful. I am delighted."

After the Frenchman had gone, the President and professors sent in haste for Mike, for though they were pleased at having gotten out of the dilemma, they were very anxious to hear Mike's account of the interview. Mike came in, very angry. "I tould yez he would say something about me oye. The first thing he did was till hould up wan finger, m'anin' I had but wan eye."

"What did you do then, Mike?" asked the President.

"Sure I heid up me two fingers, till let him know I had two fists; an' phat does the durty blackguard do but hould up three fingers, m'anin' we had but three oyes betwane us. Thin I doubled up me fist, and would 'a guv the frog'atin' varmint a welt over his oye, but he comminst a-smilin' an' a-bowin' an' a-scrapin', an' wint out iv the room."—*Harper's Magazine.*

READING FOR THE YOUNG.

"LOST AND FOUND."

"Come, children, come!" cried Mamma dear,
"Two jewels bright and crystal clear
And blue as summer sky
I've lost. Come, search 'neath every chair,
Behind the door, and everywhere,
To find them all must try.

Then Ned and Sam and little Phil
Looked here and there, with right good will,
While Mamma softly smiled.
Then, bending o'er her baby May,
Who on the floor in slumber lay,
She kissed her slumbering child.

And baby's eyes flew open wide.
"The lost is found!" the Mother cried.
"Come, see my jewel's blue!
Such pretty jewels in their case
Of snowy whiteness—baby's face!
May they be ever true!"

—*C. Louise Brine, in N. Y Independent.*

A KING OF WORDS.

A Father's Letter of Advice for Young Men—Strive to Excel in Something, and That in Your Own Line of Business—A Rare Article.

One of the roundest, biggest, most aristocratic words in the language is the word excellent. It is a real king of words. To say that a thing is excellent, is to say more than very good; it is not only very good, but it excels.

Now every man, woman or child worthy the name, desires to excel in something—and this desire is the very salt of ambitions. It preserves and adds piquancy to all other manly attributes. Still, salt must be used with very much discretion. Do you know that we all have a certain sympathy for any one, no matter who he is, who strives to excel in, no matter what?

Thus base-ball men, the bicyclists and the roller skaters—as experts always awake in me a certain admiration. Here is something, say they, in which I can excel, here is room for me, place and opportunity, and they take advantage of it. I wish these young men could have a higher, a more laudable ambition—some time they may have—at present, however, they seek to excel in what offers. I had rather see my boy excel in legs, if he could not in brains. Better be first in base-ball, than second in your line of work.

The world is overrun by men of mediocrity—fair teachers, fair clerks, fair book-keepers, can be had by the ten thousand, while expert men who excel in these callings are rare, and can scarcely be had at any price.

I was sympathizing with a young man who had lost his position by change of business in his house. "I have had four positions offered me at larger salary," he replied. Just think of it, four large houses desiring the services of one young man scarcely of age. I doubt not you know of such young men.

How rare it is to see a young man do his work better than he is paid for, to keep his books not only correctly, but neatly and legibly, to do up his bundles nicely, or keep his goods in nice shape; or, in a word, to do anything better than is expected of him.

A young man is cautioned by the home folks to save and lay up his earnings nine times, when he is once advised to keep ahead in his standing, or technical reputation. To hear young men talk you would think that salary was the one and only object for which they worked. Business knowledge, or professional standing or technical accomplishments they care nothing about—but "what wages be I gettin'."

Now did it ever occur to you that what appears to be the primary consideration with a clerk, is secondary with his employer? Salaries are graded according to work. I fancy I hear a hundred young men jump up and say: "Not with us, they ain't." I reply, Of course not, you are hired only to take the places for which good men can not be found, but when the right man comes he will fix his own salary, and you will be bounced.

Said a wholesale man to me: "We had rather have one man than two, and give him all the salary, but we can't find them." Said President —— of the —— Railroad, to me: "I tell my Superintendents to get young men for brakemen that we can push along up." I find, however, on that, as on other roads, where you see one young man to push up, you see nine scrawny, big-mouthed, impudent loafers at the brakes. His Superintendents are evidently unable to find the right kind of men.

I advise, then, every young man who is unappreciated, and is paid only half he earns, to throw up his place at once; his services are wanted all up and down the street; but be sure what you do.

An insurance man once told me his company made him work on a salary, for when he worked on commission he earned too much; it scared them. A few weeks after he was peddling lightning-rods on commission; he found a company with nerve enough to stand the racket of his sales. Of course in certain houses young men are overworked and underpaid in many instances. A young man of this sort asked for an increase of salary. When it was refused him his mean employer saw with delight that instead of getting dumpy over it he went to work with new zeal and energy. Again a refusal, and again more zeal and work, and again and again, which only fixed the merchant in the belief that the smaller the salary the more work. At the end of three years he went to his employer and said he was going to leave. "No!" said his employer, "I was going to raise your salary the next month." The young man went, and took with him the best clerks, that for those years he had been drilling, and set up for himself next door, and in two years bought his employer's stock at forced sale. An exceptional case? Of course it was exceptional. Such young men are rare, but you see how it was done. He was working for a larger salary than his present salary. He worked to excel.

A young man on a small salary has more incentive to work than he of large pay. A well-paid man can afford to be indolent; not so a man who can barely make ends meet.

You say it is hard to excel nowadays, with so much competition. Hard! You are right, my boy, and hard is a light word. There is no road so rough, hard and discouraging as the road to excellence, and one requires nerve to tread it. And be assured that you will not be crowded or jostled.

But it is often said excellence in a clerk is unappreciated. Possibly, then, here come in self-pride and self-respect. The self-satisfaction of excellence is well worth while. A young man found himself behind a dry-goods counter, and being a man or pride and self-respect, he chafed at being called a mere counter-jumper. So he cut his hair off short, and bought a magnifying glass for seventy-five cents, and went to work to magnify his calling. In two years' time he passed from a $40 clerkship to a $3,000 expert and the New York buyer for the house. Pride and self-respect have a market value. This is another exceptional case. Young men oftener take pocket looking-glasses than magnifying glasses into a dry-goods store. To test this, go up and down the store and ask, not only clerks but employers, questions involving the textures of goods sold, and see how little excellence there is in business.

How many bank clerks know or read anything of the science of banking or the currency questions? "Not in their line"—nor likely to be with many.

And so it goes. Young men plod on five, ten, twenty years along the dusty road of mediocrity to reach what could have been attained in three years across the rough road of excellence.

Excel in what? I hear. Why, in anything; but, far better, strive to excel in something, and that in one's own line of business.

"Well, what can you do, young man, better than any one else?" asked a merchant of a young man seeking a place.

"I can sell goods, sir."

"No, no," said the merchant, sadly, shaking his head; "that is too good to be true."

"Well, if I do just what I say, what salary will you give me?" he asked.

"A quarter interest in the business," replied the merchant, laughing.

The young man looked up and encountered the titter of a score of book-keepers.

"Where is there a nail on which I can hang my hat, sir?" he asked.

In six years he did have an interest in the house. He could and did sell goods, and taught others.

So, my boy, shake yourself, rub your ears and chalk the word excellence in your hat—and I was going to say your parents wouldn't know you when you came home. Whether they do or not, they will be glad to make the acquaintance of what in these days is rare—a young man who excels.—*Chicago Interior.*

GRANDMA'S VALENTINE.

"Lovely" and "Just Too Sweet for Anything" Was What Little Gracie Called It.

Grace had just come in from a walk. She looked puzzled. "Mamma, what *is* a valentine?" she asked.

"What do you know about valentines?" asked mamma in reply.

"Katy bought one this morning," said Grace. "It was a pretty picture, and she said it was a valentine, and then I said: What is a valentine? an' she said little girls didn't know anything about valentines, an' I just thought to myself: I'll ask my mamma."

"Well, darling, we send valentines to people we love dearly. Sometimes we send a picture and sometimes pretty verses."

"Do very little girls ever send valentines, mamma?"

"Sometimes."

"And can I send one, mamma?"

"Yes; to whom would you like to send one?"

"Well, there are ever and ever so many I love dearly—you and papa and Bobbie and grandma and Aunt Caroline"—

"But you must choose one," interrupted mamma.

Grace wrinkled up her forehead and thought. Among so many it was, indeed, difficult to choose. Soon her face brightened. "I'll send one to grandma," she said. "She's way off an' I think she'll be s'prised to get one from me this snowy time. Don't you? And I think I'll write it, too. She'll like it better."

"I think I would write it," said mamma. "You can tell me what to write."

So mamma got out her pen and paper, and Grace wrinkled up her forehead again, and thought. "Tell her I love her dearly, ever, ever so dearly—and I wish I could kiss her and—and she's the dearest grandma—Oh, dear, I can't 'spress myself, mamma. You do it!"

Scratch, scratch, went mamma's pen for about twenty minutes. Then she read:

"I love you, I love you, no tongue can tell,
How much I love you. I love you so well.
I send you a kiss, my grandmamma dear,
I'd give you a thousand if you were just here;
And will you take me, grandma mine,
To be your own sweet Valentine?"

"Oh, it's lovely!" cried Grace. "It's just too sweet for anything," she added solemnly.

Mamma looked up surprised. "Where did you learn to say that?" she asked.

"Oh, Katy said it," replied Grace. "That's what she said about her valentine. She's going to send it to her cousin Mike."

"Well, now," said mamma, "I'll copy this, and then you shall print your name to it, and we'll go out and you shall drop it into the box yourself." And mamma went out with her and lifted her up, and Grace dropped the precious valentine into the green box.

The next day, which was the 14th of February, grandma got it. She opened and read it.

"Dear heart!" she said, "do just listen, father;" and she read it aloud to grandpa. Then she went out into the kitchen and read it to Betsy Jane. And then she put it under the corner of a brass candlestick on the mantel, and every neighbor who came in had to listen to Grandma's Valentine.—*A. Humphrey, in Little Men and Women.*

CHARLES SUMNER.

The Distinguished Senator as a Stamp-Collector.

Charles Sumner was one of America's greatest statesmen, and I found him to be one of the kindest men in the world. He was an ideal American gentleman, was always polite to every one, and I never heard him utter a cross or a hasty word. He had an extensive correspondence and received letters from all parts of the globe. At one time, while I was a page, I had a mania for gathering stamps, and as those on many of his letters were very rare, I asked the Senator if he would kindly put the envelopes in his desk, so that I could get them, instead of tearing up and throwing them on the floor. He said he would save them for me with pleasure, and, sure enough, the next day he came to the Senate with a large collar-box in his hand. He put this in the drawer of his desk, and whenever he opened an envelope with a foreign stamp attached, he would tear off the stamp and deposit it in the box. Several weeks afterward he called me to him and handed me the box, filled with the choicest and most curious collection, saying: "Now, if you will empty the box, I will fill it again for you." And he was true to his word. I have met hundreds of eminent men in my life; none, however, more prominent or with more cares to burden or distract their thoughts than this grand Senator from Massachusetts; yet I think few of them would, under similar circumstances, have gone to so much trouble merely to humor the whim of a boy.—*Edmund Alton, in St. Nicholas.*