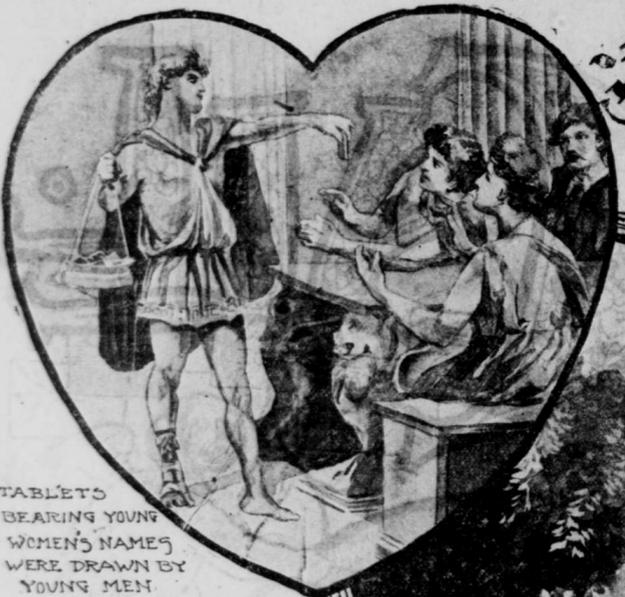


How Cupid's Holiday came to be called St. Valentine's Day



TABLETS BEARING YOUNG WOMEN'S NAMES WERE DRAWN BY YOUNG MEN.

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St. Valentine's Day, which falls on February 14, had its origin with the Romans, who, a great many centuries before Christ, held great feasts, known as the Lupercalia, in honor of Pan and Juno. During February, at which tablets bearing young women's names were drawn out of a box by young men. Each person drawing became the faithful attendant of her whose name he had drawn until the next Lupercalia. The close association thus engendered often resulted in marriage. There was a popular superstition at that time, which, indeed, still finds credence in the minds of many people, that birds selected their mates on the fourteenth day of February, and it was for that reason that the Romans held their matrimonial lottery in connection with the ceremonies of the Lupercalia on that date. It was because the early Christian fathers found their hardest task in the conversion of the heathen to be to persuade them to abandon their heathen festivities that they endeavored to divest all such observances of heathen solemnity, while retaining all their social aspects and associating them with some persons or things pertaining to the church. They replaced the Lupercalia with St. Valentine's day, therefore, thus retaining the date of the ancient festival and connecting it with Christianity through a great saint, who suffered martyrdom in the third century. He was first beaten with clubs while a priest at Rome, where his remains now rest in the church of St. Praxedus. So this excellent man never either directly or indirectly bore any relation whatsoever to the observances and ceremonies peculiar to the day devoted to him. The good churchmen found it impossible to persuade the common people to entirely abandon any ceremony to which they had become deeply attached. Despairing, therefore, of abolishing the matrimonial lottery of the Lupercalia, they modified its form, and endeavored to give it a religious character by substituting the names of particular saints to be drawn as valentines instead of the names of men and women. From this ancient usage is derived the custom, still occasionally observed in some Catholic countries, of selecting on St. Valentine's day for the ensuing year a patron saint who is called a valentine. But the young men and maidens finding little amusement in drawing out the names of dead and gone saints, soon relapsed into their old custom of drawing each other, and even at the present in many of the rural districts of England and Scotland it is customary on the eve of St. Valentine's day for the young people of both sexes to draw lots for a valentine. As the men draw from a bag containing the names of the maidens, while the latter draw from one containing the names of the men, it generally happens that each person has two valentines, but the young men regard themselves much more strongly bound to the valentine they have drawn than to the one who has drawn them. If, as sometimes happens, a young man and woman should each chance to draw the other it is regarded as absolutely certain that they are destined to wed and must, under any circumstances, permit their attentions or affections to center elsewhere. During the reign of Charles II, as we learn from that most interesting and curious record of the domestic life of that period preserved for us in the diary of Mr. Pepys, married people were equally eligible with single ones for the lottery of St. Valentine's eve, and any one chosen for a valentine was in honor bound to give a present to the person choosing him or her.

On St. Valentine's day, 1667, Mr. Pepys writes: "This morning came up to my wife's bedside (I being up dressing myself) little Will Mercer to be her valentine, and brought her name written upon blue paper in gold letters, done by himself, very pretty, and we were both pleased with it. But I am also this year my wife's valentine, and it will cost me £5; but that I must have laid out if we had not been valentines."

On February 16 of the same year—two days later—he again writes: "I find that Mrs. Pierce's little girl is my valentine, she having drawn me, which I am not sorry for, it easing me of something more that I must have given to others. But here I do first observe the fashion of drawing mottoes as well as names, as that Pierce, who drew my wife, did draw

self, very pretty, and we were both pleased with it. But I am also this year my wife's valentine, and it will cost me £5; but that I must have laid out if we had not been valentines."

Again, alluding to the obligation resting upon a chosen valentine to give a present to the person choosing, he writes of the celebrated Miss Stuart, afterward Duchess of Richmond: "The Duke of York, being once her valentine, did give her a jewel worth of about £300; and my Lord Mandeville, her valentine this year, a ring of about £200." In February, 1668, he makes the

following entry: "This evening my wife did, with great pleasure, show me her stock of jewels, increased by the ring she hath made lately as my valentine's gift this year, a Turkey stone set with diamonds. With this and what she had ere that she hath above £150 worth of jewels of one kind or other; and I am glad of it, for it is fit the wretch should have something to content herself with."

Good Mr. Pepys here uses the word wretch as an endearing term. Admirers of Sir Walter Scott will remember that he also alludes to this custom of giving valentine presents, and will readily recall the passage in the "Fair Maid of Perth," in which he describes the little St. Valentine's day gift which the mighty armorer, Henry Smith, had prepared for his valentine, the good and beautiful Catherine Glover: "It was a small ruby cut into the form of a heart, transixed with a golden arrow, and was inclosed in a small purse of links of the finest work in steel, as if it had been designed for a hauberk to a king. Round the verge of the purse were these words:

Love's darts
Cleave hearts
Through mail shirts.

"This device has caused the armorer some thought, and he was much satisfied with his own composition, because it seemed to imply that his skill could defend all hearts saving his own."

In many parts of England and Scotland it is still customary, as it has been for many centuries, for young men and women to regard as their valentines the first person of the opposite sex whom their eyes behold on the morning of St. Valentine's day, and they have the right to claim the said valentine with a kiss which he or she is in honor bound to accord without resistance or remonstrance of any kind. Scott in his novel of "The Fair Maid of Perth," already quoted, beautifully describes the manner in which the beautiful Catherine Glover thus claimed the bold armorer, Henry Smith, as her

RULES FOR MILITARY CONDUCT IN THE FIELD ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS AGO.

SOME curiously interesting matter has lately been unearthed from an old order book of the Twentieth Regiment, the "Middin boys," now the Lancashire Fusiliers, which emanated from the heroic soldier Wolfe when colonel of the regiment, about 1759. Their bearing upon military conduct in the field makes them very distinctly topical just now, says the London Express.

"Whoever shall throw away his arms in an action, whether officer, non-commissioned officer or soldier (unless it appears they are so damaged as to be useless), either under the pretense of taking up others that are of a better sort or for any other cause whatsoever, must expect to be tried by a court-martial for the crime."

"The death of an officer commanding a company or platoon shall be no excuse for the confusion or misbehavior of that platoon; for, while there is an officer or non-commissioned officer left alive to command, no man is to abandon his colors or betray his country."

"Neither officer, non-commissioned officer nor soldier is to leave his platoon or abandon the colors for a slight wound. While a man is able to do his duty and stand and hold his arms it is infamous to retire."

"The battalion is not to halloo or cry

out on any account whatsoever, although the rest of the troops should do it, until they are ordered to charge with their bayonets; in that case, and when they are on the point of rushing on the enemy, the battalion may give a warlike shout and rush in."

"The soldier who takes his musket from his shoulder and pretends to begin the battle without orders will be put to death that instant. The cowardice or irregular proceeding of one man is not to put the whole in danger."

"The soldier who quits his rank or offers to fly is instantly to be put to death by the officer who commands the platoon. A soldier does not deserve to live who will be reputed a coward and a fugitive, and will be tried for his life."

"If a non-commissioned officer or private man is missing after an action and joins his company afterward unhurt, he will be reputed a coward and a fugitive, and will be tried for his life."

"If we attack a body less in extent than the battalion, the platoons under the wings must be careful to direct their fire obliquely so as to strike the enemy. The officers are to inform the soldiers of their positions before the action begins where they are to direct their fire, and they are to take a good aim to destroy their adversaries."

"There is no necessity for firing very fast. A cool, well-levied fire, with the pieces carefully loaded, is much more destructive and formidable than the quickest fire in confusion. (The soldiers are to take their orders entirely from the officer of their platoon, and he is to give them with all possible coolness and resolution.) The misbehavior of any other corps will not affect this battalion, because the officers are determined to give the strongest proofs of their fidelity, zeal and courage, in which the soldiers will second them with their usual spirit."

"The men should consider that they are upon the point of entering into a war for the defense of their country; that a drunken, vicious, irregular army is but a poor defense to a State; but their virtue, courage and obedience are a sure guard in all assaults. They should, therefore, always be ready to perform their part with honor and spirit, and not give themselves up to any excess or irregularity. In times like these both officers and soldiers should particularly exert themselves in every part of the duty, and show their country that they deserve its esteem and admiration by their zeal, fidelity and valor."

The principles on which the British soldier should fight vary little to this day from those inculcated by General Wolfe.

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valentine after he had saved her from dishonor by his great valor and strength on St. Valentine's eve. The English poet Gay also alludes to this custom as follows:

Last Valentine, the day when birds of kind
Their paramours with mutual chirping find,
I early rose just at the break of day,
Before the sun had chased the stars away,
Afield I went, amid the morning dew,
To milk my kine—for so shout housewives do,
The first I spied—and the first swain we see,
In spite of fortune shall our true love be.

Shakespeare also alludes to this custom in "Hamlet," where poor Ophelia sings:

To-morrow is St. Valentine's day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window
To be your valentine.

The custom of exchanging amatory addresses between valentines on St. Valentine's day, to which I have already alluded, is a very old one. Many of the old English poets, such as Chaucer and Spenser, have left some quaint models of this style of composition. Lydgate, famous in England as a poet long before the invention of printing, also wrote many valentines, and the same is true of Athelstane Wade, an Anglo-Saxon poet of the time of Richard I. One of the latter's productions has been preserved and rendered into modern spelling, and is as follows:

All I would have thou art,
Deep in the inmost recess of my heart
A sacred niche is thine,
And when from thee apart
I long to call thee valentine.

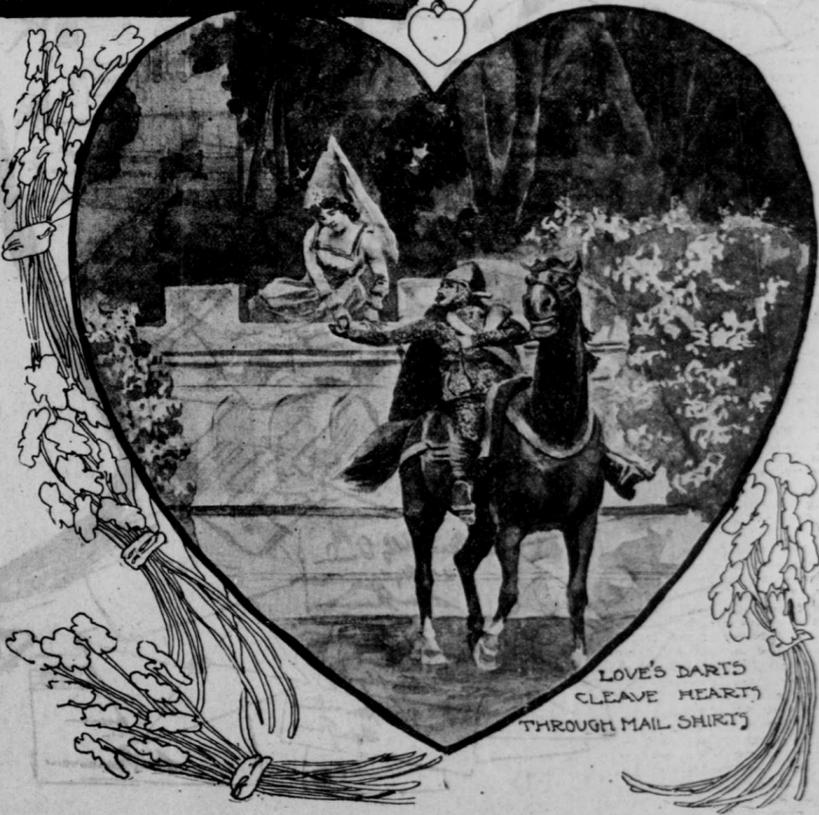
In many parts of England they have a little rhyme which children go about from house to house singing on St. Valentine's day and being rewarded with cakes and small sums of money, of which the following is a transcript:

St. Valentine, St. Valentines
Curl your locks as I do mine—
Two before and one behind,
Good morning to you, Valentines.

In our own time and country almost the only usage of St. Valentine's day that is retained is the sending of the printed and painted valentines of the stationers' shops, and even this custom—perhaps after all more honored in the breach than the observance—seems to be fast dying out. Postmasters all over this country testify that the number of these missives passing through the mails has steadily diminished for several years past. This falling off began with the introduction of Christmas, New Year and Easter cards, the number of which transmitted by post has increased just in proportion to the diminution in valentines. The reason is obvious. A sentimental valentine, the only one for which the word is not a misnomer, can only have proper significance when it passes between persons of opposite sex. A Christmas, New Year or Easter card, on the contrary, is universal in its applicability. It is equally appropriate and acceptable from mother to daughter, from sister to sister, from lover to sweetheart, from friend to friend. Good wishes on any of the festive occasions named, Christmas, New Year's day, or Easter, may very gracefully and appropriately be sent by anybody to anybody, and the popularity of these three classes of cards bids fair to extinguish even the last remaining American observance of the day devoted to the honor of good St. Valentine.

One of the oldest usages in connection with St. Valentine's day is the giving of gifts. In the oldtime lottery of St. Valentine's day the young men and young women drawing each other were required to exchange—"Valentine gifts."

AMY N. STOCKTON.



LOVE'S DARTS CLEAVE HEARTS THROUGH MAIL SHIRTS