

THE EVENING NEWS

Saturday, March 4, 1893.

(From Saturday's Monthly.)

THE STORY OF A VALENTINE.

[CONCLUDED.]

"But she could not find a way—she had no rope to throw. Again she tried, one, meaning to do anything else but that, opened the way. At the breakfast table the next morning she recovered from him a magnificent valentine. All at once she saw her method. It was St. Valentine's day. The rope was in her hand. Excusing herself from breakfast she hastened to her room.

To send a valentine to her faithful lover was the apparent thought. But how? She dare not write her name, for, after all, she might be mistaken on counting on his love, or she might offend his prejudices or his pride by so direct an expression of her feelings. She drew out a little piece of paper that Henry had written her many years before. He had named it "Henry" and the little valentine was the only one of its kind that could not succeed in spelling the name correctly. And here was the little old boat that he had given, saying often afterward that it was the best gift he could give to her. The valentine was the only one of its kind that could not succeed in spelling the name correctly. And here was the little old boat that he had given, saying often afterward that it was the best gift he could give to her.

"There was not another word in the valentine. Sealing it up, she hurried out with it, and dropped it in the post-office. No merchant, sending all his fortunes to sea in one frail bark, ever watched the departure and trembled for the result of venture as she did. Spain did not pray half so fervently when the invincible Armada sailed. It was an unuttered prayer—an unuttered prayer. For Henry and she were the last of the little picture boat that sailed out that day, with no other wind but her wishes in its sails.

"She sat down at her window until she saw Henry Gilbert pass the next street corner on his morning walk to the post-office. Three minutes after he went home, evidently in a great state of excitement, with her valentine open in his hand. After a while he went back again towards the post-office, and returned. He had taken a reply!

"Jennie again sought the office. There were people all around with those hideous things that they called love valentines open in their hands. And they actually seemed to think them funny! She had a reply. It did not take long to find her room. And when she saw the picture of a boat, she knew the name of its side read 'Despair.' And these words were added: 'Your boat is the pleasantest, but, understanding that there was no pleasant place upon it, I have been obliged to take passage on this. Slowly the meaning forced itself upon her. Henry had feared that she whom he thought engaged was coquetting with him, and he had written her further with the corresponding word.

"Why not? I am a woman as much right to make herself understood in such a matter as a man? And when the social advantages are on her side, she can make the advantage of them. She drew again the little boat with misapprehension. 'The master's place is vacant.' And quite late in the afternoon the reply was left at the door—I am an applicant for the vacant place. You will take that of master's mate."

"Good," cried the doctor; "I always advocated giving women every liberty in these matters." "But I will keep you, doctor," said Hubert. "That evening Gough was to lecture in the village, and my friend went, not to hear Gough, but to see Miss Jennie Morton at a distance. Somehow, in the stupefaction of revival, he had not thought of going to the house to see her yet. He had supposed his departure and had left her away from her. Knowing her, he would have thought, if he thought at all, that he must proceed with caution. But some time after the lecture began he discovered the Morton family waiting out Jennie. Slowly it dawned upon him. He was near the front of the church in which the lecture was held, and every inch of aisle was full of people. To get out was not easy. But as he thought of Jennie waiting, he became a matter of life and death. If she house had been on fire he would not have been more intent on making his exit. He reached the door, he passed the happiest evening of his life, only to leave to sorrow, for Jennie's father in law and her mother's.

"He has no right to interfere," said the doctor, vehemently. "You see I am by my principles." "You see I am by my principles," said Hubert. "But if I tell the story out I am afraid you would not," said Hubert. "I beg your pardon, doctor, for having used a little craft. I had much at stake. I have disguised this story in its details. But it is true, I am the hero."

The doctor looked quickly toward his daughter. Her head was bent low over her book. Her long hair hung about it like a curtain shielding her all eyes of the other window and looked out. Hubert sat like a mummy. After a minute Dr. Hood spoke.

"Cornelia," she lifted a face that was as white as a sheet. "You are a brave girl. I had other plans. You have a right to choose your own life. God bless you both. But it's a great pity you are not a lawyer. He pleads well." So saying he put on his hat and walked out.

This is the conversation that Hubert repeated to me that day sitting in his own little paragon in Allenville. A minute after his wife came in. She had been presenting her the minor ailments of some poor creature. She took the baby from her arm, and bent over her till that same long hair outlined mother and child from a distance.

"I think," said Hubert, "that you folks who write love valentines make a great mistake in stopping at marriage. The honeymoon never truly begins until conjugal affection is enriched by the holy partnership of love leading to the life of a child. The climax of a love story is not the wedding, it is the birth."

"What do you call that?" asked Hubert. "A love story," said the doctor. "Hope Valentine," added the father, with a significant smile. "And you spell the Hope with an 'A,' I believe," I said.

"You are right," said Mrs. Cornelia. "You've been telling. You think that love story is interesting to other people because you enjoy it so much."

"William, then, knows better call any body names; but William, if the Mayor of the city was to come to me and say 'John, I want thee to find me the biggest liar in all Philadelphia,' I would come to thee and put my hand on thy shoulder, and say to thee, 'William, the Mayor wants to see thee.'"

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