



—TOWN SIGN.

A MESSAGE OF LOVE.

Now, Mercury wears a suit of gray, And his twisted stick he has given away For a long string over his shoulder. While the feathery wings have left his feet. Yet he hurries along on his daily beat. Though the weather grows colder and colder. He brings me a letter from her to-day. Now what in the world will my lady say? My mind is in wild disorder As I tear the dainty paper apart. When out falls a blood-red velvet heart, With a row of pins for a border! Well, I pick up the pretty, useless thing, And love it, for here did her fingers cling. Yet I cannot choose but wonder Is it an emblem, a symbol true, Will she pierce my heart so, through and through, Till its depths are torn asunder? I think how, a harsh word hurled and stung, I think of a thousand hard, cruel things; For one gains with love, and loses. Then I think of my dear one's sweet, pure face, And my heart again, at her feet I place— Let her plant there just what she chooses! And her pin-cushion—why, without a doubt, The pins were meant to be taken out! How blind I have been, and stupid! So this is the message she sends to-day: She will take each sting from my heart away. And unto the work of Cupid! —Beulah Chandler in Harper's Bazar.

NETTIE'S PARTY.

"Stop! Stop! Wait a minute! I'm going to have a valentine party," shouted Nettie Small, to attract the attention of the girls and boys waiting their lookers, talking and laughing as they way to school. "Oh, what a nice idea!" from the girls. "Hurrah! What fun!" from the boys. "It's going to be well kept! Mamma says we ought to do make somebody happy on that day and all the year; and she's going to help us. She says that each one of us must write on a little piece of paper what he would be willing to do, real truly, you know, and send it to my house before the party, and—well, I'm not going to tell you any more about it." But I'm afraid that the idea was not a pleasing one generally, for on St. Valentine's day only four boys and three girls were present at the party. But they made more noise and fun than a regiment, Aunt Patty said. Mamma Small had prepared the party room, and a little later the door was thrown open. In the center stood Grandma Small's great "Swiss" filled with eight skeins of yarn, the ends of which were held in grandma's hand, and on one side was a table with such tempting dishes of oranges, cakes and goodies as to make the hungry boys cast very longing glances toward it. First the yarn must be wound, and Bob March, being the oldest, was invited to select one from the many threads held in Grandma Small's hand. Then he began to wind backward, of course. What awkward work he made of it! The girls laughed at him. The boys called him old Poky! He dropped the ball, and it rolled around all the table legs. Bob crawled after it, and bumped his head right under the orange dish. Off tumbled the yellow balls, and what a scurrying catch the precious things. The "Swiss" were upset and there was danger of breaking up the party, but fortunately Mamma Small came to the rescue and helped Bob to the end of his skin, where was tied his "valentine." Mamma Small opened it, and read for him aloud: "I will do lame Sally Bonny's chores in the morning!" "Oh, dear—if 'taint too cold!" cried Bob, rubbing his bumped spot and looking rueful, for he disliked to get up early. "If 'taint too cold! No, no! you've got to, anyway, cold or hot, so there!" shouted Tom Parsons. Then it was Tom's turn. He was deft of hand, and soon came to Valentine number two. "I will learn to sew and knit and be handy, so to help mother. She has to work so hard for me!" "Giri-boy! Giri-boy!" shouted Bob. "I don't care, I will—see if I don't!" declared Tom, stoutly. Now Nettie took an end. Her skin was scabby, but her patience held out, and at the end was the promise:

"I will try to keep a soft tongue!" "Good!" cried grandma, sounding his cane on the hearth. Nam, White next whirled the Swifts and not. "I will not quarrel at home and abroad, and keep my hands clean." So the Swifts spun round and dancing and shouting, bringing to Sukey Allen's hand the valentine. "I will waste upon grandma and grandpa without grumbling." To Tim Abers: "I will lead blind Johnny Rich to church every pleasant Sunday." To Mily Flint: "I'm a girl to turn over a new leaf and be so good that nobody will know me no more." "Stick down the corner, Mily!" cried grandma, shaking off his glasses with laughter. Then came the last skein, and fly-away Jack Mills began it. His ball was ossided and "wobbly," the children said, but the promise was straight enough: "I won't kick if another boy tries to crow over me!" How they all shouted! Grandma clapped her hands softly, and grandma drummed his cane harder than ever, making old Dan bark till the room rang. With each "valentine" was given a present—a silk muller to Tim, a work-basket with thimble, scissors and needles to Tom, perfume soap and a nail brush to Nam, and so on. I will not say that there were not some failures, for a year is a long time, but I do know that the children's hearts grew warmer, larger and more kindly in this loving, helpful service to others.—Youth's Companion.

VALENTINE'S PRANKS.

Carrie Careless' History of the Loving Suing—A Picnic for the Girls. Valentines are provided for all. Like the rain, they may descend upon the just and upon the unjust. They are to be found in every style and every variety. Beautiful valentine souvenir spoons are seen, and they are out of the ordinary run of spoons, in that the end of the handle is in the form of a cupid, and cupid's clasp encircle around the twisted wire of which the handle is formed. In the bowl of the spoon fancy letters give forth the legend, "The Saint of Love," and sign the reverse of the bowl there are engraved the initials of her who gives the spoon and her who takes it. Very few people, writes Carrie Careless, go through with the old form of valentine sending, and there is little room, then, for the display of the fancy colored paper with the pretty verse within and figures done in fancy paper work upon the outside. But ever so many people who have not permitted themselves to grow hard and un sentimental love to remember the day by some little token, to indicate that St. Valentine has left traces of his love in their hearts. Perhaps you have heard the legend of St. Valentine, but if you have not, here it is in as small a nutshell as such a saint could be well contained: St. Valentine lived long ago. An emperor ruled him, and the emperor, whose name was Claudius, became very jealous of St. Valentine, or Fr. Valentine, as he was then called. And one day Claudius cut Fr. Valentine's head off, and banished his remains, so that nobody should know that he had been beheaded. "Now, why did Claudius do this?" you ask. Well, he did it because Fr. Valentine became so great a favorite with young people that Claudius was not in their affections at all. "But how did Valentine make himself



—YE OLDER TIME.

such a favorite?" you still query. Why, how, indeed? How do you suppose? How does any man, or woman either, for that matter, become solid with young people? Why, by helping along their love affairs, to be sure, and by giving them every op-

portunity to be alone and talk it over. Now, Fr. Valentine was a born match-maker, and he was always busy making matches. If he saw two young people looking at each other with sheepish eyes, he cast his toga over his head and sat still, never stirring for five minutes. And so Fr. Valentine got himself disliked by the Emperor Claudius, and after Claudius had cut his head off the young people canonized him, and, upon the good old saint's birthday, would exchange lit-



—IN THE KITCHEN.

tle love tokens, just to keep his memory green. The people who had known St. Valentine when on earth told their children about him in after years, and their children told their children's children, and so it has come down to us through many children of children. Do not, then, despise the little bit of sentiment which prompts people to remember each other on Valentine's Day, because of all the festivals of the year it is the one which plays most sweetly upon the heartstrings of all. In the postoffice one sees many a maiden and many a man, many a young man and many a banker stopping for a moment in front of the parcel window to drop in a package, all too precious to be entrusted to the careless hands of messenger and office boys. It is the girls in this progressive age who do much of the giving. The young men do, of course, the greater part of it, but it is not considered unbecomingly for a girl to make her admirers presents of small mementoes, and, therefore, the



—"JACK MUST NEVER SUSPECT IT COMES FROM ME."

girls go to the full latitude which is allowed in this direction. In sending valentine mementoes, the dear girls prefer to disguise their handwriting, because a valentine gift is a love gift, and no mistake about it. And so, with papa's stub pen in hand and one of Jack's big plain envelopes, they direct the little token which carries with it the pretty little message which no man, who is a man at all, would misconstrue or take advantage of.

Cupid's Day.
Sing ho! sing hoy!
For Valentine's day,
When birds their mates are choosing;
When maidens fair
With furtive air
Fond missives are perusing.

The jolly saint
With pen and paint,
Sly Cupid's work is doing;
His skill he shows
In verse and prose,
To help along each wooing.

The postman groans
With aching bones,
And thinks it quite a blunder,
That love-sick swains
Indite such strains
For him to stagger under.

But maidens gay
And widows gray,
And lonely bachelors forlorn,
Still own his power
And bless his hour
When good St. Valentine was born.
—Good Housekeeping.

VALENTINE'S DAY

Oh, Jennie, you! I love you so,
And I'll say just the letter should
I send it from mother, darling, in your
book;
It may be some—some sends it to you.
You've got one for me! Good! Now it
right these.
Perhaps I'll read it—if you'll never tell!
Oh, my! Prunella! How could the fel-
low dare!
And poetry! He really does write well.
The saucy man, to send me such a note,
He says: "Dear maid, I love you best
of earth."
And this: "Upon your charms I ever
dote."
I wonder how much love the fellow's
worth?
"A thousand kisses!" Really, I must use
Strong measures with my gentleman, I
see.
What's this? "A pretty and bewitching
maiden."
And this: "My muse, my dear one, is
but thee."
I won't read one word more! Now, Jen-
nie, do.
That's a good child, and put this in the
crate.
Hold on a moment. Don't let mother
know!
I'll keep it now, though really I would
hate
To have one think I cared for him a bit.
Though he's so complimentary in his
I just pretend to love him—he's got wit.
And that's his one good quality, I think.
You think he's not good looking? Jennie,
do.
He isn't pink faced, like some girlish
boy?
But, say, now, isn't he handsome? It's
so queer
Some girls choose lovers like a pretty
toy!
Who's that just coming up the steps?
Let's peek!
Just draw the blind a little; turn the
shutter!
It's he! I wonder if he'll dare to speak!
But, dear, away; my heart is in a
flutter!
—Gleaned Langstroth Bells.

CUSTOM DYING OUT.

Not so Many Valentines Sent Now as There Were Ten Years Ago. The postoffice gentlemen tell us that they can never look St. Valentine in the face without apprehension. They find it possible to take sustenance on the day dedicated to the saint, and the letter-carriers do not fall down exhausted on the mail bags. Ten or twelve years ago the day was a continuous struggle on the part of all concerned to perform impossibilities. At present St. Valentine's is a very busy day, indeed, but the work can be done without distress. As the custom of sending valentines has declined, that of sending Christmas cards has amazingly increased, until the largest postoffices receive and distribute millions of them during the twenty-four hours preceding Christmas noon. The mighty London office has had to deal with fifteen millions of Christmas parcels, packets and letters, including three tons of registered merchandise. It is supposed that much of the loving correspondence of St. Valentine has been transferred to Christmas, which comes two months earlier. This is the opinion of the postoffice clerks, who seem to think that the mail-producing faculty of man receives and distributes millions of them during the twenty-four hours preceding Christmas noon. The mighty London office has had to deal with fifteen millions of Christmas parcels, packets and letters, including three tons of registered merchandise. It is supposed that much of the loving correspondence of St. Valentine has been transferred to Christmas, which comes two months earlier. This is the opinion of the postoffice clerks, who seem to think that the mail-producing faculty of man receives and distributes millions of them during the twenty-four hours preceding Christmas noon. The mighty London office has had to deal with fifteen millions of Christmas parcels, packets and letters, including three tons of registered merchandise.

His Valentine.
(She'll expect a valentine
Me, to write it—well—here goes;
Let me think. Oh, maiden mine,
If I should to you propose,
(No—hold on—that's too like prose.)
(This may better be.) Sweet Kate,
Could I to your fancy elate
As a monkey scales a gate—
(That won't do—it's not sublime,
And I'm wandering for a rhyme.)
I might breathe a poet's lay
And pour forth my passion thus—
(Well, why don't you?" she may say.
Oh, great Caesar! this is "wuss"
(Than the task of Sisypus).
Fairest Kate, the rose is red—
(Poets sometimes steal a line)
And the pink is sweet. (I'm dead!
Ere I'm barred let me sign,
Soul and send my Valentine.)
—Madeline S. Bridges.

Valentine Vignettes.
A little valentine often goes a long way.
The tailor's valentine is never short and sweet.
The bills we get in valentines are not legal tenders.
The postman has more valentines than he knows what to do with.
The valentine is very lively, considering that it has been dying for so many years.
We have all seen the \$500-dollar valentine, but we never knew anybody who bought it or received it.—Judge.

For a Comic Valentine.
Are Stimulants, Not Foods.
Tea and coffee are not foods. Says an authority: "If this pair of moderate stimulants were lost from off the face of the earth to-day and forever



WHISTLING is the craze of the hour in San Francisco. Some of the city's most fashionable and fascinating young women when these first began to develop their talents for the court, guitar and banjo gave way in turn, the piano girl of the most enthusiastic kind only yielding to her old love. The twenty young women who are leaders in the "gentle art," as they call it—they scorn the epithet "fad"—have been at it for months, having been under the careful tuition of Miss Gertrude Judd, Miss Judd's proficiency was acquired after a course of study superintended by Mrs. Shaw, the internationally celebrated pianist. When a pupil applies to Miss Judd for instruction, her musical ear and register are first tested. Then follows instruction in the art of taking a long breath. These having been passed the pupil is given a simple scale to practice for days at a time, and the devotion with which these San Francisco girls have stuck to this dreary work has been of a kind to indicate that some of them at least are destined to make their mark in the world of determination cuts any figure. Difficult runs, arpeggios and chromatic scales must all be mastered before the pupil is allowed to try "a piece." In speaking to an Examiner reporter about her class, Miss Judd said: "Clever whistlers are like poets in

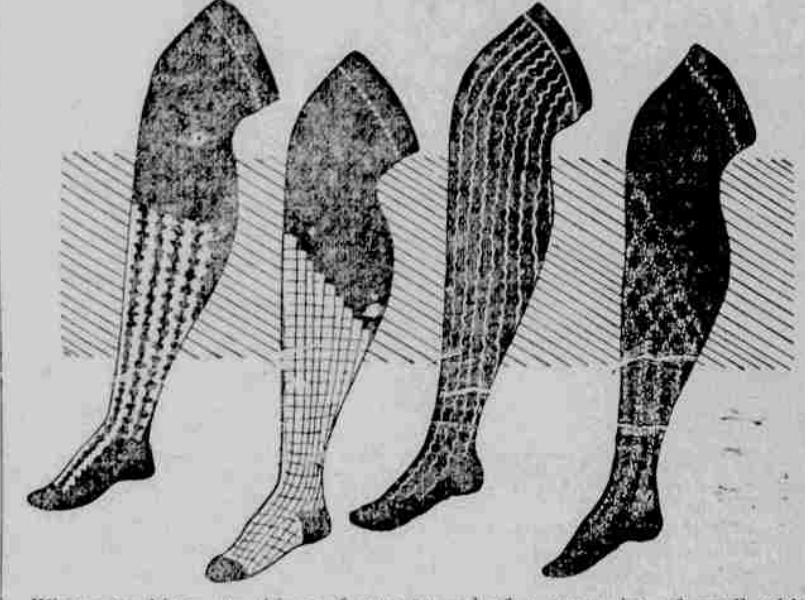
they would not take away an ounce of physical prosperity. They do no good— are simply cumberers of the table and add nothing save expense." This sweeping dictum will be resented by lovers of the fragrant Mocha and the cup which cheers. They may not be foods, but, properly prepared and used in moderation, they are often a grateful, if gentle, stimulant, and serve to impart an agreeable relish to a meal. Leave us, please, these mild indul-



Sartorially speaking, it is dangerous to pour old wine into new bottles. Yet it is such a fascinating thing to do. It begins when economy fires the soul. "Here," you say, "is this brown broadcloth. Everybody I know is also acquainted with the frock in its brown state, but if I get it dyed—and fixed up—"

And then words fail you from sheer admiration of your own scheme. You

SOME LATE STYLE STOCKINGS.



Winter stockings are things of comfort and beauty this year. Black cashmere continues popular, but have their somberness relieved by white this season—white introduced by way of the stripes. Waved stripes are particularly pretty, and give a slender appearance to the limb. Graduated stripes com-

posed of a succession of small white stars are effective, and one of the most charming novelties shows both stripes and diamonds made up of tiny open dots of white embroidery. Checks in gray and white are also smart, particularly so when arranged in bottle effect.



—A LESSON AT THE WHISTLING CLASS.

that they must be born, not made. They must have cast iron lungs, sound health, a favorable mouth cavity formation—sounds grotesque, doesn't it?—and perseverance. The strain on the orbicular muscle alone is considerable. And they must even have good teeth. You can see in my face already the whistle lines. They run in the form of an inverted V, from the nose to the chin. Mrs. Shaw has them. The points I have mentioned, with a lack of nervous affections, a good ear, and the ability to strike the notes you want on the piano.

The New Shoe.
In reply to the question what is the finest and smartest shoe of the season, a fashionable New York shoemaker said: "It is made of dongola skin, a species of goat skin, and very well does this wear. It is the boot which has taken the place of the French kid, and we have this dongola kid glazed, making it thus a little more dressy than the heavy walking boot—now more in demand than ever. We cannot get our orders out for the calfskin boot, and the favorite last is the very pointed toe."

Good Advice.
Mother, when your child goes to a neighbor's house don't ask as soon as he comes home, "What were they doing?" "How were they dressed?" and "Was Miss Jennie's beau there?" Don't, I say. Do you know you are teaching him a habit which will give him the unenviable reputation of a tattler, and perhaps a liar in the end? That is putting pretty strong, but if a child is bright enough to look around, taking in all the details to be repeated at home, is he not bright enough to manufacture and repeat yarns to please his mamma? The habit, once acquired, is hard to break.

"How Old Are You?"
"How old are you, my pretty maid?" I asked, when she was seven. She answered quick, while round her played Sweet smiles as bright as heaven.

"How old are you?" I asked again, When she was seventeen. My question still was not in vain— To answer she was keen.

"How old are you?" once more I ask, Alas! 'twas once too often. It was a vain and useless task Her anger then to soften. —Atlanta Journal.

A mold of jelly placed in a pan of ice water will cool sooner than in an ice chest.