MILLY MORE'S LETTER.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

"Aunty Gunter. Job Gunter is my husband. We keep the Anchor Port post-office and a store, and sell groceries and garden seeds, calico, shoes, and medicines, like other folks in our line, when anybody asks for 'em.

When a ship comes in, and the sailors come home to their wives and mothers, trade grows brisk. The housekeepers do their best, and the raisins and dried currants and eggs and butter go off finely, and it's worth while to lay in ribbons for the girls, and smoking tobacco and long pipes for the men.

Jack and Wages make old Anchor Port brisk for a while, but at last he sails away, and all the women seem to ask for will be letters—letters, letters, letters—when they have a right to expect them, and when they haven't all the same.

It's "Please, Aunty Gunter, look over them and see if there aren't one for me;" and it's "Please, Uncle Gunter, it might have got mixed up and overlooked some how;" often and often—God help the poor souls!—after Jack lies at the bottom of the sea, and nothing will ever reach them but the news of the shipwreck. But plenty of letters come after all, and sometimes we have to read them for the folks, Job and I, so we get to know some thing of their lives.

Milly More could read and write herself, but still I always knew when she had a letter from Will Massett. I knew it by the handwriting, and I knew it by her bigshes, and by that happy look in her face. When he came home she bought ribbons and bits of lace by the apronful; and I knew where the packages of candy that he bought were to go to. And I used to keep Job from fishing down in Pulfman's creek of afternoons, because I knew that was where Milly and Will liked to walk. Courting time comes but once in a lifetime, and I always like to see it prosper.

At last he sailed away, second mate of the Golden Dove; and when he came back from that voyage, they were to be married.

It was a sad day when that ship sailed. Mrs. Captain Rawdon and her girls were crying on the shore. Twenty women from the Port and five from the Hill were there to see her set sail.

It was a raw, gray day, and the voyage was to be a long one.

It was under our old sycamore that Will took Milly to his breast.

"Never minding!" he said, "I'll come back safe and sound. I couldn't leave now. I've too much to live for."

And so he did, in spite of that, the Golden Dove went down in mid-seas, and only three men reached Anchor Port to tell how Captain Rawdon and his crew had been lost, at dead of night, in a awful storm.

Captain Kincaid bought the news of Mrs. Rawdon. He stopped at our store to tell about it. A nice old man. A bachelor still, at fifty eight, and as handsome, with his white hair and red cheeks, as a picture.

That was twelve months ago, the night I went into the store to sort things out as I always did Saturday nights. Through the week Job used to get everything mixed up—letters in my tea boxes, candles in the letter box, eggs where they oughtn't to be, and all the place askew. It was a warm autumn night, and Captain Kincaid's vessel was in port, and we had plenty of custom. Job served the people while I tidied up. I found half the last mail in a sugar box, and clothes pins in the ground coffee canister, and I just dumped them out.

"Gather up your letters, Job," said I. "What possesses you, old man?"

And he laughed, and piled 'em up. And I made a vow to myself that I'd keep the sugar box full after that, so he shouldn't use it for the mail.

I had twenty-four pounds of sugar known as "coffee crushed," because it was prepared especially to use in coffee. That was the finest sugar Anchor Hill folks often bought, though I had a little cut and powdered by me, in case Mrs. Rawdon, or Mrs. Dr Speer, or the minister's lady should send in; and I took the paper up and filled it over the japanned box, pouring it in a nice smooth stream, when when who should come running into the shop but Milly More. She was not dressed carefully, and her eyes were red with crying.

She asked for some tea, and while Job was weighing it, she whispered to me:

"Oh! Aunty Gunter, have you looked to-day? Isn't there a letter from Will? He said he couldn't die. I don't feel as if he could. Mighn't he write, after all? Do look."

"My pet," says I, "it's a year ago that the Golden Dove went down. It isn't likely. And He don't let those go that want to, always. It isn't likely dear, but I'll look."

I took the letters in my hand one by one. Many of them would make hearts glad before the shutters were up that night; but none for Milly. It couldn't be expected, of course.

I told her so; but I took her into my little back parlor, and made her sit down there.

I talked as good as I could to her, but what good does talking do?

"Oh, Aunty," says she, "I know it seems as if I was a fool; but I waked up hoping this morning I don't believe he is gone. I can't, I can't."

"When the baby died—the only one we ever had—I thought I never should believe it," said I, "But I had Job; and you have your mother and sister, Milly."

At that she burst into tears, and put her head down on my knee.

"I must tell you," said she. "They want me to marry Captain Kincaid. He's courting me. He fell in love with me the night he brought the news to Mrs. Captain Rawdon; I was there sewing and heard it all. Oh, how cruel to fall in love with a poor girl at such a time! And he asked me to be his wife. And mother and Fanny shall always have a home, he says. And you know how poor we are. And they're angry at me for saying no. And how can I, how can I, when my heart is in the sea with Willie?"

"Captain Kincaid!" I said, and I couldn't say any more; she took my breath away. She was a nice, pretty girl; but the Captain was rich, elegant and stylish. And old family he came of, too. It was an honor for Milly More.

"Not just yet," said I, after a while "Perhaps you'll feel better. He's old I know, but he's a splendid man"

"You too!" said she. "You too!" No body understands. It isn't as if I had made up my mind, like all the rest. Will will always be a living man to my mind. I don't think any one ever loved but me. Nobody understands—nobody."

I kissed her and coaxed her; and I said no word about her changing her mind; but for all that I kept thinking of it in a kind of a maze.

"Captain Kincaid! such a gentleman as that! Old as he was, could she fail to see the honor?"

But when I told Job, says he:

"Jerusalem! Why don't he go after some widder or an oldish gal? Milly is too younz for him. Poor Will! What a pity. They jest suited each other."

I couldn't help it though. Mrs. Captain Kincaid would have things that Milly More could never dream of: silk dresses and velvet cloaks, jewelry, and stuffed chairs in her best rooms, a silver ice pitcher if she chose like Mrs. Captain Rawdon. She might have a carriage, too, and a pair of ponies. And I liked Milly, and wouldn't have envied her her luck one bit; and I didn't wonder at Mrs. More and Fanny.

Once having given me her confidence, Milly didn't stop; and Mrs. More came over to talk about it, too, until at last I fairly up and sided with the old lady.

"Milly," says I; "Will is gone, and you aren't his widow, to wear weeds all your life—not that many do, if they can help it, seems to me—and Captain Kincaid is as good as man can be, and you'll be happy with him. You can't help loving him as much as there's any need to love"

After that she stopped talking much to me. She used to give me strange looks though. I knew all about it. I knew that her heart was in the sea; but Will was gone and why should she refuse what Providence offered?

The Captain staid at the port three months, and at last we worried her into promising to be his wife—old Mrs. More, Fanny and I. She just gave up at last.

"It don't matter much, after all," she said. "I must be going out of my mind, for I never can stop watching and hoping. I shall die soon, I suppose, whether I marry or not."

After that she never spoke of Will, and Mrs. More told me she was engaged; and she wore a diamond ring upon her finger. And the day before the ship sailed she was to marry Captain Kincaid, so that she might go to Europe with him

A year and three months since the Golden Dove went down. Well, no one can tell what changes a little while will bring. I used to hope that I hadn' had much hand in it after all, I thought it over, and remembered poor Will and how he took her in his arms under the sycamore.

But then, you see, Mrs. More's sight had failed, so that she couldn't do fine sewing, and Fanny wasn't of much account except to look at. It was a hard life that lay before Milly. It was good for her to marry Capt Kincaid, and have rest and comfort; wasn't it?

"To-morrow is the wedding," said I to Job. "It's going to be in the church. Miss Salsbury is finishing my silver gray poplin. It sets splendid. We'll have Ben Barns to keep store, and go, won't we? You'll like to see Milly off, won't you?"

"I wish it was Will Massett," says Job.

"Poor Will," says I, and I went on tidying, though it was Friday. I should be so busy next day. I got down my japanned sugar box, never empty since the day I filled it up. And then Job, sorting the letters, looks up at me.

"Never begrudged you anything so much as I do that box," says he. "Best thing I ever put the mail into. This here wooden thing with a slide is a pesky bother."

"Law me!" says I, "if I'd known you wanted it, you should have had it. I did at think you had any plan in it; just stick it on anywhere. I thought you would. I'll empty the box; I've got one that'll do. And I'm glad you spoke before I filled it up"

So with that I spread a big paper on the counter and emptied out the sugar.

It had packed a little, and came out in a sort of cake. There it laid, white and shiny, and on top of it, whiter and shinier, laid *a letter*—a letter with a ship mark upon it, and this superscription:

"Miss Milly More, Anchor Port, Maine, United States of America."

Three months ago—poor stupid!—I had emptied my best coffee crushed in upon it, and there it was.

Three months ago she had come down to me and asked for a letter, and I'd thought her half crazy, and I'd have given more money than there was in the till to have dared to tare that letter open on the spot and read it, though I knew the hand was Will Massett's.

"This can't wait," says I.

"No," says Job, "it can't with that wedding coming off to-morrow."

Then I stopped and thought. Let it lie until it is called for, and she'll be Mrs. Capt. Kincaid, with her silks and her velvets, and her fine house and her carriage, all the same. This comes from a shipwrecked sailor, poorer now than when he went away.

"Perhaps I'd better wait until the wedding is over, Job," said I.

And my old man came 'across the room and put his arm around my wait.

"Nancy," says he, "you and I was young folks once. I used to think something was better than money and fine doings then. And though we old folks may get a little hard—though to be up in the world seems so much, and all that old sweetness so silly, why, it will come back sometimes. You remember how he kissed her there under the sycamore; and—Nancy, we couldn't wait until after the wedding, either of us"

I put my arms about Job's neck, and I kissed him; and then I got my sunbonnet and ran over to Mrs. More's.

Captain Kincaid was there. I stood at the door with my letter behind my back.

"Won't you walk in?" says Mrs. More.

"I—I haven't time," says I. "It's only an errand It's a little singular, Milly, there's a—a—"

"My letter! my letter!" cried Milly "It has come at last!"

How she knew it, Heaven knows. She hadn't had a glimpse of it.

It was the old sailor's story; a ship wreck, a desert island, Wretched months spent in hoping for succor, and a sail at last. A vessel outward bound had picked him up. He would be home in three months.

"Three months!" said Milly. "Oh, how can I wait?"

And then says I:

"Milly, forgive a poor old stupid goose. That letter has been lying under my best coffee crushed three months and a day. And there's a vessel in the offing now."

So it was Will after all, and Job and I went to the wedding with happy hearts. And no need to pay Captain Kincaid either, for he married Fanny More before the year was over.—Ledger

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In Japan the law requires that, when a person cuts down a tree, he shall plant one in its place. In this way the supply of wood is kept up. George Washington owes his country a tree.

Harry, after looking on while his new little sister cried at being washed and dressed the other day, turned away, saying, "if she screamed like that in heaven I don't wonder they sent her off."

A faded female of forty returned last week from Saratoga, and didn't her young brother "catch it" when he said to her: "So, Emma, you didn't catch a husband this year either!" She afterward reluctantly admitted that she had "several nibbles, but mary a bite."

Said a Detroit lady to a small boy whom she found crying in the street, the other day: "Will you stop crying if I will give you a penny?" "No," said he; "but if you'll make it two cents I'll stop if it kills me."

One of the meanest things on earth is to throw a small watermelon and hit a political speaker in the pit of the stomach just as he is explaining the Dred Scott decision.

"Yes, Job suffered some," said an Illinois deacon, "but he never knew what it was to have his team run away and kill his wife right in the busy season when hired girls want $5 a week."

And now comes the supreme courts and decide that any matter written on a postal card that is liable to injure the credit or reputation of any one, is a crime. A few days ago a case was decided in the Ohio supreme court against a man who wrote to an old debtor dunning him for an old account, and in that manner making the transaction public.—Falls City Journal

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The Indian service now costs $7,000,000 for supplies and maintenance.

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