# ABIGAIL JANE'S VALENTINE

By Frank S. Chiswick

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"If a man come to see me Wednesyears an' then"- Prudence Howell's head bobbed vigorously, setting every individual curl in motion. "Well, I'd just like to see one of 'em try it!"

"SI ain't meanin' no harm," put in Abigail Jane gently. "He's just sorter slow; that's all."

"Well, he's kept off every other man that I loved you"for the best part of your life, an' it's his bounden duty to marry you. He loves you, an' you love him."

A faint pink tint crept into Abigail Jane's face at her sister's plain speaking. When Silas Hopkins had first courted her, a charming girl of eighteen, his boyish compliments had brought a warm glow to her face, but the blood courses more slowly at thirty-four.

Si had always meant to marry ber, but somehow he had never told her so. He was a complacent, prosaic fellow. First he had lost his father and had been forced to look after the big farm and the family. Then there had been his brother John to send through college, and Louise's wedding dowry and fixings to arrange for, and his mother to send to the hospital in the distant city for an operation. After awhile, when all these duties were fulfilled, he would have time to settle down and

He had never thought of such a tragedy as Abigail Jane's wearying of long waiting. He had always found her alone Wednesday and Saturday nights, sympathetic in his difficulties, rejoicing in his small successes. Yes, Abigail Jane was the very woman for him to marry-some day when he had

And of course Abigail Jane must understand all this; she was such a sensible little woman. It never dawned upon him that she would like to hear such words from his lips or to walk down the street with her small hand snuggled against his big arm, as Eliza, the milliner's apprentice, did with the butcher's boy.

"How you do take on, Prudence!" she protested. "I ain't beholden to any man to marry me. I'm comfortably fixed. Me an' Si is good friends, an' he likes to come here of evenin's. I ain't expectin' "- The words choked in her throat.

A wave of pity swept over Mrs. Howell. She was sorry she had laid bare the wound; but, a happy matron herself, she chafed at her sister's loneli-

"Well, it's Valentine's day, Abigail Jane, an' perhaps he'll send you some-Maybe he can't put his feelin's into words as easy as my Henry could. Would you mind lookin' in my box while you're at the postoffice?"

Ten minutes later Miss Abigail Jane, with her grandmother's china silk shawl folded over her shoulders, walked down the quiet street to the postoffice. It was her dally custom, whether she expected mail or not. On Friday there would be the county paper in her box and on the 2d and 16th of each month The Advocate and Female Guardian.

This morning she caught sight of a square envelope in the box, and her heart beat wildly as she approached the postmaster's window.

"Here you are," he exclaimed cheerily-"two letters for Mrs. Howell and one for you. Must be a valentine." And he grinned broadly at the joke which had done service with every applicant at the window that morning. A valentine! The word found an

echo in her heart. She clasped the precious missive to her breast and hurried homeward.

"Honest?" cried her sister as Abigail Jane stopped with the Howell mail. "He sent you a valentine? Well, I didn't suppose he had the nerve. You might stop here an' open it."

But Abigail Jane shook her head and fluttered away to her own cottage. No one should share this sacred moment with her. Nervously she tore off the wrappings and with a cry of joy held a photograph of Si at arm's length. Then-but never mind; women have done such things ever since the day of the first daguerreotype.

Once she turned it over and was puzzled by the printing on the back:

Join our photograph club before it is too late and get a dozen like this for \$2.50. LINTON, the Photographer.

When Si came that evening, she looked her daintiest, with soft lace at her throat and a rose from the south window tucked in her brown hair. If Si noticed the little touches of finery. he said nothing. Abigail Jane was always pretty in his eyes.

But he did notice the photograph, and his eyes twinkled.

"Hello! You got a sample too." The pretty pink flush died out of her cheeks. She clasped her hands nerv-

ously. "I - I don't understand what you mean," she faltered.

"Why, Louise has been worryin' the life out of me to send her an' the kids my picture, an' Linton offered me a dozen free if I'd let him use my name lookin' he could get all the trade round here.

"Then everybody in town got one?" The words came slowly. Si was looking at the photograph,

leaving against a huge seashell from the Caribbean sea.

"Yes, a sort of comic valentine."

心态态态态态态态态态态态态态 And his hearty laugh fairly shook the windows, "Wonder if old Miss Thompkins got one. Like as not the married women got 'em too. This is a great joke. Eb, Abigail?"

She had dropped wearily into her small rocker. She hardly heard what

"I-I thought perhaps it might have been just for"

Silas Hopkins wheeled round sudden-\*\*\* ly and stared at her. Two tears rolled down the cheeks, now pale and drawn looking. He frowned, not at the tears, day an' Saturday evenin's for sixteen but at his own thoughtlessness. His eyes were suddenly opened. The complacence, the careless habit of years, fell from him in the twinkling of an eye. Abigail Jane, winking back other tears, almost sprang to her feet, for Si was actually kneeling beside her.

"Abigail Jane," he whispered huskily, "you'd a right to one all by your-"Sorter slow!" retorted Mrs. Howell. self. I thought you knew all along

> "Oh, yes, I knew it, Sl. but I sorter wished"- And this time the tears

"Henry Howell," exclaimed that worthy's wife as she laid down her mending, "I've just got to run over "Well, be careful you don't slip. It's

freezin' tonight," answered her husband, settling back in his chair, Mrs. Hewell's imperative knock at her sister's front door was answered

by Si Hopkins, "Come right in, Sister Prudence!" he exclaimed, shaking her hand warmly. "You're just in time to settle this diswhere I've courted her two nights a week for sixteen years." He was carrying everything before him, and Mrs. Howell nodded her head mechanically. of sewin' to do, an' she's not to be worried with cookin' the weddin' supper. Louise can see to that. An' I wish you'd go down to Springfield next week an' pick out new furniture for the sittin' room an' mother's old room over to my house. I ain't bought a new thing since the girls were married off, an' the place looks too shabby for

my Abigail Jane." Mrs. Howell gasped. "Well. Si Hopkins, you're slow about movin', but when you get started I of 'em, too, by tonight's mail."

Si covered the unfortunate remark adroitly.

"You'll get a better one soon. Abigall Jane an' I are goin' to sit for Linton in all our weddin' finery. An' now hadn't I better help you over home? It's slippery."

"Well, well, Si, you have found your tongue at last! It's the first time I've

house." And with a laugh that belied her sharp words Mrs. Howell kissed the glowing face of Abigail Jane and hur-

## The Action of a Spinet.

The spinet instrument was an improvement upon what was known as the clavichord, the tone of which, although weak, was capable, unlike that of the harpsichord or spinet, of increase or decrease, reflecting the finest gradations of the touch of the player. In this power of expression it was without a rival until the piano was invented. The early history of the clavichord previous to the fifteenth century rests in profound obscurity, but it is said that there is one bearing the date 1520 having four octaves without the D sharp and G sharp notes. The spinet was the invention of the Venetian Spi-

The action is unique. The instrument is similar to a small harpsichord, with one string to each note. The strings are set in vibration by points of quills elevated on wooden uprights known as jacks, and the depression of the keys causes the points to pass upward, producing a tone similar to that of a harp. Springs are used to draw the quills back into position. The keyboard is arranged in a manner after the present modern piano.

## The Value of Knowledge.

To no man is the world so new and the future so fresh as to him who has spent the early years of his manhood in striving to understand the deeper problems of science and life and who has made some headway toward comprehending them. To him the commonest things are rare and wonderful both in themselves and as parts of a beautiful and intelligent whole. Such a thing as staleness in life and its duties he cannot understand.

Knowledge is always opening out before him in wider expanses and more commanding heights. The pleasure of growing knowledge and increasing power makes every year of his life whom had got a place with the firm happier and more hopeful than the

### Veneration For a Single Hair.

Look at the veneration paid in Asia to even a single hair of the beard of Mohammed. This precious relic is enshrined in a monument erected especially for it in 1135, 500 years after the prophet's death. Where it had reposed during the long interval is as for advertisin' his business. I guess great a mystery as that connected with he thought if he could make me good | the holy coat of Treves. But at any rate there it is now, a precious "heir". loom kept in a box of gold and crystal, in which small holes have been bored | caught. for the purpose of admitting water to float the blessed hair, which is done at an annual festival when the faithful from all parts are gathered together.-English Magazine.

DID IT ARTISTICALLY AS WELL.

The Plausible Scheme by Which a Safe Expert Was Fooled and Used by a Trie of Notorious Cracksmen to Get at Their Plunder.

To the man whose shingle bears the inscription "Safe Expert" and whose little shop, not far from the great dry goods district, contains a full assortment of implements for the forcible opening of sefes, the writer said, Would you be well qualified to play the burglar?"

"Yes," said the little keen eyed man, running his fingers through his scant hair reflectively. "I once did play burglar. In fact, I played the star role in a safe cracking enterprise. I was the innocent means by which a wholegleamed like diamonds on rose colored sale house was robbed of several thousand dollars which had been taken in too late in the day to be banked.

"I was in business then in another city. I was sitting smoking at my shop door about 8 o'clock one evening an' see Abigall Jane. Somethin' tells when a messenger boy came with a me this is the crisis of that girl's life." note on the letter paper of a well known house asking me to come at once with my tools to the office of the

"The office was lighted up, and a portly, prosperous looking man sat at a roll top desk, while two clerks, perched on stools, were working at some books.

"'I am Mr. -...,' said the portly one, pute. We're goin' to be married next giving the name of the head of the Wednesday a week, an' Abigail Jane firm. 'Something has gone wrong with insists the ceremony's got to take place the safe, and I want you to open it. at your house, with Henry to give The combination is 6-27-45, but someaway the bride, bein' as she has no fa- thing must have broken inside, for it ther. Now, I want the weddin' here, won't open, and we have got to get some books out of the safe tonight.'

"As I tried the combination which the man had given me he explained that be had locked the safe when he went out 'Abigail Jane declares she has a sight to dinner and was unable to open it when he came back.

"It was one of those 'alum' filled safes, and I suspected rust had done its work inside. "'Nothing to do but drill it open,"

" 'Go ahead,' said the portly one, 'and don't keep me here any longer than you

"With that he turned to his desk, and I worked away unsuspectingly. There was dead silence except when the man at the desk spoke to one or the other must say you're a wonder." Then her of the clerks about some account, and eye fell on the photograph. "I got one the tread of the policeman on that beat could be heard as he passed the office.

"I did not realize until afterward that was working out of view of the passing policeman, for the safe was behind the bookkeeper's desk, but the shades were up and the man at the roll top desk and the bookkeepers could be plainly seen from the street.

"I got out my bits, adjusted the brace, and soon steel was biting steel, been unwelcome in my own sister's but the sound of the ratchet was drowned by the click of the typewriter, for portly party began dictating to one of the clerks as soon as I began drilling the safe. When I thought it all over afterward, it occurred to me that this war to cover the sound of my opera-

> "In half an hour I had a hole in the front of the safe, and a little manipulation got the tumblers into place, and the door swung open.

"'Here you are, sir,' said I, and the portly man came around to the safe. "'Very neatly done,' he said. 'You'd

make a good burglar.' " 'But the sound of the ratchet would

bring the "cops," ' said I. "'True,' remarked the man, and, drawing out a roll of bills, he handed

me \$20.

"'Is that right?' he asked. " 'Quite right,' I replied. 'Shall I come in the morning to fix the safe? "'No,' said he, 'I will have the mak-

ers of the safe attend to it.' "As I gathered up my tools the port ly man directed one of the clerks to get out the books that were needed, and he went back to the desk.

"I trundled back to my shop, meet ing the policeman at the corner, and while I was standing chatting with him the trio came out of the office.

"'You can come down an hour later than usual in the morning,' said the portly man as he climbed into a hansom that had rolled up to the office, and, shouting the name of a well known club to the driver, he pulled

the doors to and was driven away. "Before noon the next day the policeman whom I had talked with and s detective came into my shop.

That was a neat job you did last night,' said the policeman. "'What?' I asked, the nature of the

work I had done not yet dawning on " 'The looting of -- 's safe,' said the

policeman. 'Come along.' "The portly person who employed me to open the safe was a well known burglar who had 'made up' to impersonate the head of the firm, and the two clerks were confederates, one of

to get the lay of the land. "They had taken possession of the office after it was closed for the day, and, not daring to blow open the safe, because that would have made the police swoop down on them, they had boldly sent for me to 'do the job,' neatly possessed themselves of nearly \$4,-000 that was in the safe and were across the Canadian border before the

fice was opened the next day. "I told my story to the magistrate and was released on bonds to appear as a witness when the trio were

robbery was discovered when the of-

"The papers called me 'the innocent burglar,' the name stuck to me and burt my business, and the police were rather attentive to me, so I came here some years ago."-New York Times.

Fielding and "Tom Jones." Notwithstanding the good prices be eccived for his books, Fielding was always more or less in difficulties from his reckless mode of living. "Tom Jones," however, was nearly being sacrificed in one of his impecuations fits for the sum of £25. The publisher fortunately asked for a day to consider if he could risk such a sum, and Fielding in the meantime met Thomson, the poet, to whom he told the transaction. Thomson scorned the idea of Fielding parting with his brains for such a sum and offered to get him better terms, but Fielding felt himself partly pledged. Never did author walt more anxiously on a publisher hoping to be accepted than did Fielding hoping to be

Joyfully he carried his manuscript to Thomson to fulfill his promise. The poet introduced Fielding to Andrew Miller, who handed the book over to his wife to read. She discerned its merits and advised her husband to keep it. Over a pleasant dinner given by Miller to Fielding and Thomson the bargain was made which secured Fielding, to his great delight, \$200 for the story. Miller is said to have cleared £18,000 by "Tom Jones," out of which he paid Fielding from time to time various sums to the amount of £2,000, bequeathing him also a handsome legacy.

refused. He was refused!

#### The Structure of Ferns,

When flowering plants usually make

seed, that is generally the last effort for plant life. The seed is the beginning of the life of the new plant. Ferns, however, only produce spores for reproductive purposes. These spores germinate and go through the same process subsequently that flowers go through in the production of seeds. The spores expand when the germinating time comes and form a flat, green membrane. What are then really the flowers appear on this membrane. As a general rule after these fern flowers have matured the membrane dries up and dis appears. In one family of ferns, however, natives of New Holland, named platycerium, this green blade is permanent and continues to enlarge, becoming really a portion of the plant. Every year a new blade is formed which spreads over the old ones. The large plant is of a totally different character, having the fronds of ordinary ferns.

#### Habits of the Wildest,

To say that a dog can "whip his weight in wildcats" is to pay about the highest tribute to his strength, courage and activity, and there are very few dogs that would care to earn such a tribute if they understood all it implied. Not that a wildcat is of a specially aggressive disposition. On the contrary, he would sooner mind his own business any time than fight. So anxious is he as a rule to keep out of trouble that he has often been accused of cowardice, but he has on so many occasions given evidence of the most desperate courage that it is doubtful if the accusation is a fair one. When wounded or at bay, he is perhaps as dangerous as any creature of his size.

### A Fillet of Beef.

For a fillet of beef, cut two pounds into round slices half an inch thick and sprinkle with pepper and salt. Fry In two ounces of butter seven minutes at the most and brush over each piece with glaze. Place a border of mashed potatoes on a dish, lay the fillets on it with alternate slices of baked tomato and the fried beef fat. Also have a piece of maitre d'hotel butter on each fillet. Fill the center with nicely cooked vegetables and pour around a little good beef gravy.

### Cures For Sleeplessness.

Horace in his satires recommended swimming the Tiber three times! Sir Thomas Browne was accustomed to repeat some verses of a certain hymn. Franklin took an air bath, Sir John Sinclair counted, while Sir John Rennie when engaged upon any public works never went to sleep until his head had been combed and gently rubbed by a soft hand.

A Hard Domestic Knot. "I'm in a deuce of a fix. My wife's got the telephone craze."

"Well?" "If I put one in, she'll swear I'm

weet on the telephone girl." "Certainly."

"And if I don't, she'll say it's because I'm afraid the thing'll expose my duplicity."-Baltimore News.

Rubbing It In. Borem (11:57 p. m.)-When I was a

child, my nurse made me afraid of the dark. Miss Cutting-Oh, that accounts for

Borem-Accounts for what? Miss Cutting-You are waiting till daylight so you can go home.-Chicago

### No Sympathy There.

"I am going to marry your daughter, sir," said the positive young man to the father.

"Well, you don't need to come to me for sympathy," replied the father. "I have troubles of my own."-Ohio State good for 21 days, \$9.00. Journal.

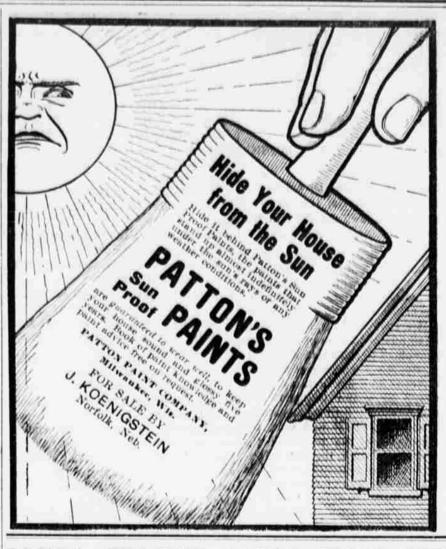
### Unfinished.

"If you kind of keep an eye on these self made men," remarked Uncle Jerry Peebles, "you'll find that lots of 'em \$30.00 per acre. Wild land in Brule think the job's so well done it don't county, \$8.00 to \$10.00 per acre; imneed any polish."-Chicago Tribune.

#### Too Late! Hewitt-My wife loved me at first

sight. Jewett-I'll wager that she is now a believer in second sight .- New York prices, write to Herald.

Single Blessedness. It is better to have loved and lost than to have married on \$50 a month .- Or GARDNER & SEILER, Chicago Record-Herald,



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About five years ago my right ear began to sing, and this kept on getting worse, until I lost my hearing in this ear entirely.

underwent a treatment for catarrh, for three months, without any success, consulted a sum-I underwent a treatment for catarth, for three months, without any success, consulted a number of physicians, among others, the most eminent ear specialist of this city, who told me that only an operation could help me, and even that only temporarily, that the head moises would then cease, but the hearing in the affected ear would be lost forever.

I then saw your advertisement accidentally in a New York paper, and ordered your frentment. After I had used it only a few days according to your directions, the noises ceased, and redw, after five weeks, my hearing in the diseased ear has been entirely retored. I thank you tearlily and help to feman.

Very truly yours.

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HOMESEEKER'S EXCURSIONS to Charles Mix, Douglas and Brule counties, South Dakota, on Tuesday, May 20, June 3 and 17. Fare for round trip from Norfolk, Neb., to Armour,

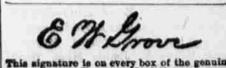
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