

## Father Christmas Playing a Return Engagement



**THAT'S** how someone has described Easter. The good old practice of exchanging gifts at Easter, just as at Christmas, has become more popular each succeeding year, until now it is almost universally observed.

The gift need not be expensive; usually it is some simple bit of Silverware, some novelty, or a dainty piece of jewellery.

A specially selected assortment of gifts suitable for Easter, and others quite as suitable for Spring wedding gifts, are included in a booklet that is now being printed.

Send us your name and we will reserve a copy for you. A post card will do—send it to-day.

**D. R. DINGWALL, Limited**  
Diamond Merchants, Jewellers and Silversmiths  
WINNIPEG

## WESTERN HOMES LIMITED

### Regular Cash Returns

#### SAFETY FOR YOUR INVESTMENT

**Last year 12% was earned on the capital employed by the Western Homes Limited**

Shareholders received 7 per cent.—5 per cent. went to reserve account to produce further earnings and increase the value of the stock.

The Western Homes Limited, incorporated in 1914—in business the past 14 years as Investment Agents, well known and well thought of—loans money on first mortgages—one of the safest forms of investment known—buys mortgages and agreements for sale at advantageous discounts, and builds homes for clients, accepting mortgages thereon as security.

The officers and directors are men of sterling integrity—men you may know personally or have heard of.

Shares in this perfectly reliable corporation are still for sale at par (\$100 per share), although over half the capital stock of \$500,000 has already been eagerly subscribed for. Five-year terms given, no interest; but no more than 50 shares will be allotted to one subscriber. It was voted at the last shareholders' meeting that no Company shares would be sold after this year for less than \$110.

**Investigate this splendid investment opportunity at once. Full information willingly given. Write, or if in Winnipeg, make a personal call at our offices.**

**Western Homes Limited**  
707-708 Confederation Life Building  
M. WILLIS ARGUE  
President and Manager

## Aunt Jane's Love Letters

By Rae Lunn

**A**S a child I had often wondered how a man could have loved her enough to want to marry her. Aunt Jane had described John Whitcomb to me so frequently and so vividly, and his picture—life-size—which hung at the end of the long hall ever since I could remember, had caused his handsome features to be etched on my childish brain. I have spent many, many worshipping hours before it and shed tears of bitter grief that this kindly, benevolent-looking man should have been stricken down in the flower of his youth. How he would have lightened my childhood days! Oft have I lain awake thinking of the kites and whirl-a-gigs that he would have made for me—the jack-knives, tops, pop-guns and the what-not of things that he would have bought me.

The stacks of love letters—hers and his—lay locked in the middle, lower drawer of the old secretary. I have seen Aunt Jane wipe away the fast-flowing tears as she read and reread them, until it seemed to me, that she must have known them by heart.

Aunt Jane was—well, the homeliest woman that of my forty-four years, I have ever known. Her disposition was as acid as cider vinegar and short in temper as her flaky pie crust. Tall, broad of shoulder as an athlete, bony—a chin that protruded several inches over her upper jaw; teeth, crooked and long—real muskrat ones—and hair, thin, fiery-red and wiry. Freckles, some as large as American silver dollars, covered her face, neck and arms and one black and spongy like a mole, sat on the tip of her eagle-crooked nose. Her eyes were of piercing sharpness, small and of an amber color.

Last week Aunt Jane died, making me her sole heir. Her only wish was: that I am to read her love letters—and his—and then, before I open the wax-sealed missive on which she has penned: "To be read by my nephew, John Whitcomb Scott, after my last wish has been fulfilled by him," I am to reduce them to ashes with the life-size portrait of the man, whose name I bear. The silver-framed miniature of him, which has always held a place on Aunt Jane's secretary is to meet a like fate. The ring that she always wore and the watch chain, which bore a lock of her hair and her photograph, I am to have as keepsakes.

Everybody in Denfield knew that these were the trinkets that John Whitcomb had handed to a comrade for Aunt Jane when he had felt Death's hand upon him, forty-four years ago.

"The whim of a homely, lonely, old maid, who has been cheated out of the pleasures of life by grim Fate," I mused as I slipped the faded, lavender ribbon from the bunch of letters that bore Aunt Jane's large, mannish scrawl. The last one was dated November 24th, 1875. The day that John Whitcomb died from yellow-fever.

I have it stamped on my memory, because at that hour for the fifteen years that I spent under Aunt Jane's vigil, she always donned me in my Sunday best and taking me by the hand, as she precisely did every Sunday morning at a quarter to ten, she went to the little chapel at the end of the street, and spent a full hour at the foot of the altar.

I unfolded the yellowed sheet and read:

"My Life. The morning mail brought me your daily letter. I kiss you good morning. . . . My darling, if you could feel the throbs that your words send through my veins, when I see it in your dear, dear hand that you will be with me this week night. Silly one, as though my trousseau has not been ready and waiting this six—nay, this ten months, and as though it wasn't that I should put off our wedding for such pilfering trifles. I kiss your dear lips a thousand times for the kind thought of my comfort. . . .

"How happy I am, having your love and knowing that so many, many girls—handsome, accomplished and vibrating with womanly charm—would throw themselves at your feet. . . . I count the minutes until you shall be with me,

never to be parted until Death—my love, that word, I know not why, sends a shiver through my bones like these northern winds will to your south-tempered body.

"That also reminds me, my dearest, that I am by this mail sending you a shirt-knit by my own hands—for you to put on when you reach New York. You see, my dear John (how I thrill at that name) that already I feel as though you were mine. I wake at night full of fear lest something befall thee.

"My sister Letty has a little boy. I have requested her to name it after you. She is not at all sprightly. . . .

"My love, my life, my all, I look for thee so! Already my pen has put a mark through another day on my calendar, thus bringing you one day nearer to me. I kiss your sweet picture that stands in its own place on my secretary, where my eyes can feast on it every morning on my awakening. My pen refuses to stop, although Old Pete has been at the gate for five minutes. Your wife of a week from to-day sends you her life and awaits your coming with what pleasure I cannot express on this paper. A million kisses. Good-bye, your gawky, homely, Jane."

Tears dimmed my eyes and coursed down my cheeks. "Poor Aunt Jane," I murmured, "with the death of my mother and this terrible blow—for this one letter can make my very soul to feel what you must have suffered—the tortures, the sleepless nights, the heart-aches—" and I buried my face in my hands, my thoughts travelling back to my boyhood days when I had inwardly rebelled at Aunt Jane's sourness.

Musedly, I wondered why she had always been so ready to strike a death blow on my youthful love affairs, nipping them in the bud as severely as she pruned her geraniums in August. In fact it was only of recent years that she had overlooked my marriage enough to pay me a short, yearly visit. My wife called her "a dog in the manger."

John Whitcomb's letters were those of a lover calling his mate. As I read their age-tinted pages my heart suffered that heavy, dull ache that I had suffered as a child. "I really do not wonder that Aunt Jane found any other man distasteful to her. It was this great, overwhelming sorrow that made her so acrid—so peppery," I meditated as I regretfully cut the canvas from its frame and proceeded to carry out her bidding.

"She no doubt had not the heart to leaving the portrait of one so sacred to do it herself, and did not wish to die her, to be treated lightly by strangers," I mused as I watched the flames lick over the strong, high-bred features. When the cinders of destruction had ceased to glow, I took my penknife and gently broke the seal of Aunt Jane's last earthly message.

A creepy sensation swept over me. Have you ever opened such a missive at the dead of night and in a house that is alive with the stillness that smells of death amid the resurrections of childhood memories? I could hear Aunt Jane's stentorian voice calling me to go to bed.

Nervously, I unfolded the sheet of crackling paper and read:

"John,—You can laugh at me now, but I cannot die without confessing to someone. It is terrible—only those who are unfortunate enough to be like me can know what it is to be so homely and with such a temper and disposition. One of the three is bad enough—but all of them!

"I have got much comfort from these letters, for people took pity on me. I wrote them myself. His with my left hand. The miniature I found when at boarding school and I had the painting made from it. The ring and locket were your mother's. Jane Griffith."

Somehow, I could not smile—I wept.

#### Our Frontispiece

The fine illustration in two colors on the front page of this issue of The Western Home Monthly is from a photograph by Abbe J. P. Bell Co., photographers, Lynchburg, Va., U.S.A.