



Entered according to Act of the Parliament of Canada, in the year 1891 by J. P. McNamee, at the Department of Agriculture

No. 3. VOL. I.

Montreal, Wednesday, February 11, 1891.

{ Five cents a copy
\$2.00 per annum, in advance.

MOTHER GRUMPS' VALENTINE.

BY J. MACDONALD OXLEY.

MRS. Scadding was far from being popular with the young people of Intervale. In the first place, she was very unattractive in appearance, being small and bent of figure, sour and wrinkled of countenance, and always dressed in a curious out of-fashioned way that seemed to emphasize, rather than conceal her many deficiencies.

Moreover she made no attempt to be agreeable, living quite alone in a little cottage that stood off from the main street with a bit of garden and lawn in front she kept for the most part to herself, having no friends and appearing to need none. She did not even go to church, in spite of the minister's faithful efforts to persuade her, giving him no better reason for absenting herself than that folks could find their way to Heaven by other roads as well as through the church door, and she preferred to worship God in her own house.

Of course so odd a character could not go long without a nick name in a place that had as many bright boys as Intervale, and so it came about that Mrs. Scadding was better known as "Mother Grumps" than by her right name. In fact the numbers were not few of those who knew her only by her nick name and would have been sorely at a loss as to how to address her rightly were they called upon to do so.

Not only did the Intervale young people instinctively dislike Mother Grumps' appearance, and way of living, but there was an open feud between the boys and her. The little cottage in which she had lived much longer than any of them remembered was situated in a broad and quiet section of the street where they were wont to gather after school for games of ball, and other amusements, and the noise they never failed to make had a very irritating effect upon her, causing her to sally out from time to time and scold them vigorously.

Now her tongue was sharp enough, but it did not

sting as did the rod that seemed never to be out of her hand at such times, and many a boy had felt it upon his back when in pursuit of the ball he ventured too near her cottage, and trespassed on her beautifully kept bit of lawn.

All such trespassing Mother Grumps had strictly prohibited, and she took the law into her own hands as regarded the enforcing of the prohibition. She even went farther than that, and on two distinct occasions confiscated a ball that one of the players, in his anxiety to make a home run, had batted clear over the fence into the midst of her purple pansies.

The result of these strained relations was that when Valentine's day drew near, the boys, whose appetite for mischief had been brought to its keenest state by the restraint imposed upon it during the winter months, took counsel together one dull cold afternoon and determined to get even with their arch-enemy by sending her such a valentine as would be a warning to her to behave better in future.

Long and earnest were the deliberations as to the most effective form which this valentine should take, and sacredly was the secret kept from the parents of the plotters, and everybody else who would be likely to interfere with their dark design. Tommy Stubbs' suggestion to buy the biggest and ugliest sheet valentine with appropriate verses at Ream's, the bookseller, was promptly voted down. Something much more original and impressive than that must be achieved. Charlie Hall's scheme was to club their pocket money together and have a Jack-in-the-Box prepared on a very large scale, and then have it delivered by the express messenger, carefully tied up, some of the boys peeping in through the window to note the effect when Mother Grumps would unexpectedly open the package. The boys were pleased with this idea, and would have adopted it had not Sydney Lewis, a quiet, reserved