LOVE AND CHICKENS.

My aunt Lucretia is an old fashioned old maid with a fondness for wearing little black silk aprons and having cookies for breakfast. She still has a complexion like a rose leaf, though I don't dare to say how old she is. Her waist is long and alender and she wears her front hair in quaint little bunehes of curls after the fashion of an old portrait. She has remarkably long thin hands and executes ancient pieces on what she calls the instrument with great skill and precision.

she calls the instrument with great skill and precision.

She adores all sorts of feathered things, especially chickens, though she is afraid that this is not a truly genteel taste. Ministers and plants come next in her affections, and she devotes much time to reading in the winter season, when her duties are lighter. Our home, which is situated in a truly rural district, though accessible to the city by means of the nimble electric car, is particularly adapted to the raising of poultry, especially when one wishes to do it a ter a somewhat secret fashion, as is the way of my aunt. At the front of the house is a sunny old fashioned flower garden filled with cheerful and candid posies, such as petunias, carnations pinks flower garden filled with cheerful and candid posies, such as petunias, carnations pinks and columbines, but at the back is a large grove where sudden spaces of light give purple shadows to the darkness, and hens and mystery reign under the tall pines and amid the feathery clumps of sumac. Here my aunt spends her busiest hours, busy indeed, in the time of year when an old her's fancy turns to thoughts of sitting and young broods peck their way out of the shell and go peeping about to the lead of their fussy, clucking mammas, for even the respectable family cat develops blood-thirsty and piratical instinct when meeting these downy innocents in the solitude alone, to say nothing of the fierce robber cate who invest the woods, and watch from secluded corners an opportunity to spring upon invest the woods, and watch from secluded corners an opportunity to spring upon their prey. Illness, too, enters the chikens' family in the most sudden and usexpected manner, and she has hot flannel and sweet oil constantly at hand, and goes about with a huge club in her grasp ready to hurl at an intruder. During the whole period of brooding my aunt's mind is in a continual state of agitation. In old days before she engaged in chicken raising, it was our delight to sit on the piazza and watch the purple pageant of the thunder storm, as it slowly advanced over the surrounding hills, but now the lovely peace and stillness is rudely broken by my aunt's hysterical sobbing and loudly expressed fear. "Snackle is sitting, and oh deer oh

der! Int't there anything that we can do to prevent it?"

We think it hardly possible that we shall be able to do anything to prevent the thunder storm and she flies to find a poultry book and searches the pages for advice as to action on such occasions, but none is ever found, and she is obliged to bear the decree of fate with hopeless resignation. It a small boy comes sauntering along in the direction of the chicken grove, she is sure he has stones in his pocket and murder in his heart. All the dogs in the neighborhood are regarded with angry suspicion and their owners are rendered indignant by the treatment they receive if they by any chance venture to walk past our domicile. Little girls who venture too near in search of wild flowers are sternly ordered away, and the summer people in search of the truly rural are warned in the most emphatic manner that the grove is private property. But still, as brother Tom is always saying, things might be far worse, for aunt Lucretia is a woman who, without an engrossing occupation, would be likely to have views and advanced ideas and lead the family a dance generally.

My aunt is only visible to the world in the late afternoon. From early dawn until that time she haunts the grove, even when the rainis dripping through the luxuriant spring and summer foliage, but she always puts her flock to bed early, and is then her lady-like self sitting on the pnazza in her black silk or sprigged muslin gown according to the weather, her long, slim fingers busied over some ornamental knitting, while a book lies open in her lap not be evening she often performs on the piano, though an alling chick may be nestled in a bower of cotton in her lap, or some too sensitive orphan be tucked cosily into her pocket, and on rare occasions she goes out

the her lady-like silt or approgram musting come in her halp contained the meaning and people in the evening she often performs on the piano, the common man and the grove draped in its delicate groon folioused and the grove draped in its delicate groon folioused and the grove draped in its delicate groon folioused and the grove draped in its delicate groon folioused and the grove draped in its delicate groon folioused and the grove draped in its delicate groon folioused and the grove draped in its delicate groon folioused and the grove draped in its delicate groon folioused and the grove draped in the delicate groon folioused and the grove draped in the delicate groon folioused and the grove draped in the delicate groon folioused and the grove draped in the delicate groon folioused and the grove draped in the delicate groon folioused and the grove draped in the delicate groon folioused and the grove draped in the delicate groon folioused and the grove draped in the delicate groon folioused and the grove draped in the delicate groon folioused and the grove draped in the delicate groon folioused and the grove draped in the delicate groon folioused and the grove draped in the delicate groon folioused and the grove draped in the delicate groon folioused and the grove draped in the delicate groon folioused and the grove draped in the delicate groon folioused and the groon of the

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there. It was evident that abe had only just left the place, however, for lying open on one of the benches in the midst of the coops was an old book on etiquette which I had often seen in her bookcase. I picked it up, curious to see what branch of etiquette was engaging the mind of my beloved relative just now. The book was opened at this chapter:

On the renewal of an old love affair!

The hero of the old love affair had just arrived when I entered the house once more, and it was with difficulty that I retrained from laughter when my aunt came into the room, and greeted him with politic cordiality, not too effusive, according to the advice in the book, but a gracious-ness tempered with dignity and not a little maidenly reserve.

The hero, himself, was beaming and bland, a little ponderous, perhaps, but ready to make himself agreeable and to have us make ourselves agreeable to him. He was let to aunt Loo chiefly, however, who seemed to entertain him most successfully. She executed at his request the Battle of Prague and the Maiden's Prayer, as a tender reminder of old days, and sang with a good deal of expression, hough rather tremulously, "I wandered by the brookside." He evidently found the music very affecting, but to me, in all aunt Loo's efforts there was either too much or too life music, I could hardly tell which, not being much of a musician myself.

After dinner, it being Friday evening, my ann's visitor suggested that they should go to prayer meeting together as he chapel belwase calling with an insistent and silvery alked lessurely along through the creeping shadows, while the late robins piped to them from the overhanging tree boughs, and the new moon silvered in the rosecate west.

Lorinda, our maid-of-all work, who as a cousin of Almira's and had taken her place, was a methodist, and had gone as way a little way ahead of the pair, and from her I heard this story of the proceeded.

There are always a good many people at the Hill prayer-meeting convinced me. I shall pray for him, but I never wish to

There are always a good many people at the Hill prayer-meetings, the church being made up of good, faithful christians and then there is nowhere else for the

you know, and—"
"I have only just found out that I never wanted to marry him," interrupted my aunt. "That unfortunate evening of the prayer-meeting convinced me. I shall pray for him, but I never wish to see him again."

An 18-year-old Bombay girl, has a pic-ture at the Paris Salon.



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