

the form of a schedule, so that each letter was to be just a little more pronounced in its declarations of attachment than its predecessor, until about the ninth or tenth epistle, Jack was to propose in regular form, to be accepted, and in the next letter, to suggest a day for the marriage.

Jack found it very difficult to keep his face straight while all this was being arranged, and on several occasions Lydia had to remind him that the matter in hand was serious and required attention. "Now," that young lady would say in an admonitory fashion, "you must not put any nonsense in your letters or old Plummer will smell a rat. You must write just as if you really loved me and I will do the same in my answer."

Jack had rather a high opinion of his own ability as a business correspondent, but when it came to writing love letters to a young lady, even with the help of the complete letter writer, he found himself rather at a loss. The terse and direct style which suffices for a communication relating to an over due account will not answer when one of the fair sex is to be addressed on the state of her heart and Jack had to write and re-write the first letter of the correspondence a great many times. In this he had to pave the way, as it were, for a fuller avowal of attachment to be made at a later day, so that some skill and the exercise of judgment as to the correct expressions to use became necessary. Still on the whole it must be admitted that Jack considering his inexperience, wrote very excellent love letters and he improved greatly as he proceeded. Indeed Lydia often declared at a later

day that she did not believe it was in Jack to write so well.

When Mr. Jack Halsey had succeeded in fairly writing out the first letter of the series to his own satisfaction he took it to the Post Office. This he did with a view to fairly put old Sill on the track of the correspondence at its very inception. The little dried up post-master stuck his weazened face out of the window as he took the letter and made a great show of civility:—

"A fine day, Mr. Halsey; seasonable weather," said the old man.

"Good enough," replied Jack, rather stiffly as he turned away, leaving the post-master staring at the address on the letter which he held in his hand; it read:—

MISS LYDIA BAKER,
FREEPORT
N. B.

"Well I swan," said Plummer reflectively, "writing love letters is he?" With this Silvanus closed the window very carefully and locked the door of his inner office. It is to be presumed that about that time he found something that pleased him very much for when he became again visible to the public he wore on his face a highly self-satisfied smile.

Lydia Baker's reply reached Jack in due course and he read it with a great deal of interest. It was the first letter he had ever received from a young lady and he was forced to admit that there was something agreeable in being addressed as "Dear Jack," even although he knew that it was all in fun. In his first letter Jack had expressed a desire to correspond with her and in the reply Lydia very graciously, but with more maidenly reserve than Jack had expected,