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A Valentine Forgery.

It was the evening of February 13. In the library of Squire Clarges the shadows haunted the distant corners and hung heavily over the shelves of books that seemed to breathe forth an atmosphere of intellectuality, while all the light from the reading lamp seemed to center antipodally upon two frivolous young people, Hope Clarges and her youthful fiancé, Ward McWilliams, who were busily engaged in preparing equally frivolous missives for the coming of Saint Valentine's Day.

From a mass of music spread over the study-table they would select such sentimental verses as seemed best suited to each of their friends; and after Ward had carefully transcribed them, with Spencerian flourishes and violet ink, to the slips of crayon paper, Hope would proceed to wreathe each about, in water-colors, with flowers and Cupids and hearts, in an impressionistic style peculiar solely to valentines.

Their labors were about completed when between the parted portières appeared the slender form and sweet face of Catherine Clarges. She was already far into the autumn of youth, but as she came into the circle of light one could see that she was wonderfully like her sister Hope, suggesting but an earlier edition of this volume de luxe beside the study table.

"I have only come to say good-night," she said, declining their urgent invitation to join them. "Ward, I have slipped a little package into your topcoat pocket—please deliver it to your aunt in the morning—it is my valentine to her."

"How like Catherine!" said Ward, after she had withdrawn; "always so thoughtful of others, especially if they be lonely or ill. Hope, my dear, you are your sister's prototype in features, and I see latent possibilities of your developing into exactly such another as our latter-day Saint Catherine."

"And have people impose upon my goodness as they do on Catherine? Oh, no, Mr. McWilliams; I am no candidate for martyrdom. If you anticipate marrying a saint you would better hie at once to Catherine's shrine."

"But it is guarded by a dragon in the person of Mr. Nathan Thorne," protested Ward. "Slay this Libyan dragon and rescue the princess," advised Hope; "it is time he received his just deserts. For twelve years now he has been courting Catherine, giving her every reason to think he loves her except asking her to be his wife. If he intends ultimately to marry Catherine, why doesn't he declare himself, or else withdraw and leave the field to others? If he were but once out of the way, Catherine would quickly see that Judge Severns is much the nobler man. But so long as she is under the hypnotic influence of Nathan Thorne she will continue to wait on patiently until youth and beauty and love are lost to her. Something ought to be done to prevent him from dallying with her affections through another calendar of years."

"To say the least, it is a trying position for Catherine," commented Ward. Then after a moment's thoughtful silence, he suddenly burst out: "See here, Hope; Catherine is already my sister-in-heart, if not yet in-law, and I have a brother's right to protect her. I have an idea by which I think this very literal Thorne in the flesh may be led to explain himself speedily."

bilities of even the obstinate Mr. Thorne. Hope, you would better copy this—you and Catherine write so nearly the same hand that his old eyes will never detect the forgery."

And so the crime of ninety—was committed. The valentine was almost veiled in delicately traced love-in-a-mist. Saint Catherine's flower, and the intricate monogram was so profusely starred with forget-me-nots that the two conspirators feared that only a fond lover's eyes would be able to decipher it.

The postman stopped twice at the Clarges' door on Saint Valentine's Day to leave a letter for Catherine. The first was a proposal for her hand, but not from Nathan Thorne, though his epistle sounded certainly portentous. It was to ask if he might call at an earlier hour than usual that evening, as he had something very particular to speak with her about.

Throughout the remaining hours of the day Catherine went about the house as in a dream. Her eyes sparkled with a feverish brightness, into her cheeks had crept a glow from her vanished youth, and her lips curved into an unconscious smile. She arranged and rearranged the pretty parlor, put flowers on the stands and mantel, and finally went to her room to dress. It was evidently a toilet that required careful consideration, for she did not appear again until after Mr. Thorne's arrival had been announced.

By chance or fate, Hope and Ward, who likewise in the character of a privileged guest had come early, strayed into the starlit conservatory that opened off the reception-room. Absorbed with surmises of what result their most momentous valentine had brought forth, they were unaware of the arrival of its recipient, until, with some trepidation, they heard Catherine's smooth voice in greeting.

Through the intervening greenery they could see Catherine waiting for her delinquent lover to speak. Never had she appeared more beautiful than to-night, though the interested observers; but Nathan Thorne seemed to notice nothing unusual. Twice he made an effort to articulate, but failed miserably. Catherine encouraged him with a smile.

"Ah!" breathed Ward in Hope's ear, "a momentous occasion—we would better absent ourselves."

In the darkness they groped their way to the door communicating with the dining-room, but the lock was turned and no key to be found. "I fear that we will have to be unwilling witnesses to this affair," whispered Ward; "for my better judgment warns me that it would be fatal to Catherine's prospects if we were to betray our presence just now. The duffer was only lacking in courage, but under the stimulus of that valentine he has come nerved up to the proposing point, and any interruption would play havoc with his wits for another decade or so. But while there is a button-hook there is hope," he broke off, jubilantly flourishing the "find"; and he twisted the versatile implement about in the lock silently and dexterously.

"Catherine," the elderly suitor's voice came quaveringly to them, "we have ever been the best of friends." (Catherine's eyebrows arched perceptibly at this use of the word "friend.") "I have always come to you for sympathy and advice whenever I was troubled, and you have as often been able to help me as no other person could. You have been more than a sister to me—" ("Whew! I should say so," ejaculated Ward softly)—"and tonight I have come to ask you to assist me in a most delicate matter." ("There! He's off at a tangent," commented Ward in disgust.) "Catherine, I received a valentine to-day from your sister Hope. I recognized her handwriting at once." (There were two suppressed gasps of astonishment from the conservatory that would certainly have been heard but that the speaker was still struggling desperately with his words, and Catherine was too absorbed with her conflicting emotions to give heed.) "Her valentine told me, Catherine, what I have long wished to know. Coming here week after week and year after year—" ("I should say so! Hurry up now, or I will be calling time," came sotto voce from the thicket of ferns.)—"I have watched Hope develop from infancy into a beautiful womanhood."

"The deuce you have!" exclaimed Ward, dropping his button-hook, but was soon soothed by Hope again to

the work of release.) "Catherine, I know that I am much older than Hope, but I love her—and at times I have thought from looks and words that she returned my regard." (Beyond the ferns there was enacted its pantomime of a scene of stern accusation and of equally emphatic denial of the charge.) "But, Catherine, I dare not tell her—she is so saucy and bright, and has a way of turning all one may say into ridicule—why, Catherine, are you ill?" "No, I am quite well," said Catherine, in a voice so strained and hollow that even Nathan Thorne could not restrain a slight start of surprise. She had grown deathly pale with the pain which her pretty lips strove to repress, and her eyes were deeply shadowed. In agony of heart she thought of all she had sacrificed for this fallen idol—and this was the return!

In the conservatory Hope was struggling to restrain Ward, who, in the heat of his righteous wrath, was determined to rush upon the scene and annihilate Mr. Thorne right there and then.

"Catherine, are you sure that you are well?" persisted her pseudo-lover. "You are so white you alarm me."

"I am perfectly well, I assure you," insisted Catherine with a forced calm. "What was it you were going to ask of me?" Her heart had nearly stopped but she drew herself up proudly in her chair and gazed level at him as one might at the judge who was pronouncing the words of his death-warrant.

"It is this, Catherine—of course, if I had not always been such intimate friends and understood each other so well, I would never have dared to ask you to undertake my wooing for me." Catherine listened in a stony silence while he, taking breath, went on: "I want you to find out for me, Catherine, if Hope honestly meant all that she said in her valentine."

"I will ask her now," interrupted Catherine—a peculiar hardness in her voice, which he had never noticed there before, jarred in unpleasantly upon him, and her whole bearing as she crossed the room seemed to express an unconscious contempt for him.

"I presume she is disgusted with my lack of nerve," he explained to himself as he paced the room. It seemed a long while before anyone came to relieve his suspense. He heard a door in the vicinity of the conservatory open softly (the button-hook had at last performed its burghlarious work) and then the murmur of low and earnest voices in the library beyond. Once he distinguished Ward's louder and angrier tones, and another voice, which he mistook for Catherine's, as though he pleaded earnestly. Then the street door was closed with a bang and he heard Ward run down the stone steps—and he concluded that his suit was prospering.

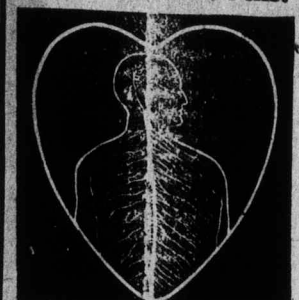
"She has had the good sense to send that young cub about his business," he told himself in glee. He always referred to Ward as "that young cub," while it would not be polite to repeat in what terms Ward had been alluding to Mr. Thorne.

Soon after, Hope, somewhat confused and crimsoned and teary about the eyelashes, came hesitatingly in. With a glad exclamation he started toward her, but Hope indignantly waved him back.

"I have only come to say, Mr. Thorne, that since I am already betrothed to one who has promised to love me faithfully ever after I have lost my youthful charms, you would better wait another dozen years for baby Doris, as she promises to develop the same characteristics which you have admired in turn in sister Catherine and myself."

The fickle lover gazed at her a moment in mute amazement, then a dawning sense of his own blindness, inconstancy and cruelty came over

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him, and, ashamed and degraded in his own eyes, he turned toward the door. But he felt he could not go away forever without one last word with the woman whose patient love and trust he had so flagrantly abused, and on the threshold he turned back to ask:

"Miss Hope, will you carry a message for me to Catherine? Tell her that until this moment I never knew how much I loved her above all other earthly things. And ask her, if she can forgive me the greatest slight a man can offer a woman, in mercy to see me here, if only for a moment."

"Too late, Mr. Nathan Thorne," said Hope, triumphantly; "for Catherine, also, has just regained her senses, and discovered that her heart is where she has always given her respect. She received a proposal of marriage from Judge Severn but this morning—the third since you were first a visitor here—and events this evening have decided her to return him a favorable answer. It will be a truly acceptable valentine to him."

Church in New England.

Great industrial centres everywhere are full of peril, morally, for the young of both sexes. Wherever there are crowded populations temptations become many.

The Catholic Church, ever alert to the dangers of the youth, just now is waging a vigorous warfare in the States to the south of us. In Boston, last Sunday week, Rev. Jeremiah Millerick, of St. Joseph's Church, Boston, asserted that conditions were not worse in London or Paris than in that city.

The sermon was based on the Gospel of the day, in which the parable of seed cast upon stony ground the story symbolizing the fruitage from personal influence and example in the daily intercourse of life. As applied to the West End, Father Millerick pointed to the numerous saloons there and dwelt upon their bad influences.

"Licenses are congested," he added, "in the neighborhood. I note, however, that the owners of these licenses do not live where they do their business. They come here to take the money of the unfortunate who trade with them. Then they live and spend their money in some other quarter of the city, where saloons are carefully excluded."

"Conditions around their own homes are sedulously contrived to protect the young from evil influences. Here, where their money is made, the seed of evil flourishes and its growth is carefully fostered." In Worcester, as well as in Lowell, and other industrial cities, the clergy have been regarding with anxiety the large attendance of Catholics at public dances and are much concerned about the serious results consequent to the practice. They assert that young women are ruining both their moral and physical health and that their knowledge of instances of both results more than sustains the justice of severe denunciation and condemnation. Another point raised is that Catholics excuse themselves for attendance at some of these dances by the allegation that they are held in halls owned by Catholic societies.

These clergymen do not condemn the dance, in itself, which is harmless, but they do condemn with severity public dances with their evil surroundings and they insist that such nondescript affairs, when held in halls owned by Catholic societies, merit a more severe condemnation

than any other, for that very reason itself.

One member of the Worcester clergy declared that there are some halls given over to dancing and other amusements wherein neither parents nor clergy are consulted, and where some of the influences against moral health are extremely bad.

"It would be better," said he emphatically, "that they were burned to the ground than to serve as sources where germs of immoral health are engendered and increased."

It is very difficult when the dance habit is once acquired to keep some young men and women away from the dangerous amusement, even during the holy season of Lent, for they learn to deceive parents under various pretexts in order to attend for a time, and the temptation is so strong that they break the regulations of the Church.

These denunciations of the public dance in general, with special reference to halls owned by Catholics, was made with emphatic vigor and accompanying them were intimations that the truth about the evil effects, which prompted the criticism, is more than sufficient to justify the words of warning and of severe condemnation. Unless there is a change for the better on the part of the vicious element, which now seems improbable, Massachusetts inevitably will be called upon to vote for or against some such measure as the now famous Bishops' Bill of New Jersey. The Catholic Church is dominant in Massachusetts and quite evidently its leaders are on the point of becoming aggressive.

Catholic Writer Enlists in the Navy.

James B. Connolly, a young Catholic writer who is the author of numerous sea tales and has made a specialty of stories of Gloucester fishermen, has, at the suggestion of President Roosevelt, joined the United States navy as a yeoman. He has enlisted for two years and has been assigned to duty on the Alabama, which is going on a cruise for two months.

The President's great desire is to have an American writer do for the navy what Rudyard Kipling has done for the army of Great Britain. It was in October, 1902, that Mr. Connolly first heard directly from President Roosevelt, when he received a very complimentary letter commending him for his originality of style and his good sense in the selection of working material. Shortly afterward Mr. Connolly met the President, and has frequently been his guest in Washington and Oyster Bay.

The best known of Mr. Connolly's sea tales are "Out of Gloucester," "The Seiners" and "The Deep Sea's Toll."

America and the Franciscans.

It is an historically authentic fact that the Franciscans arrived in America with Columbus, that heroic personage having belonged to the Third Order of Saint Francis, says a writer in Annales de la Propagation de

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la Foi (Paris.) The first protector who offered the discoverer an encouragement in Spain was the Franciscan, Father Juan Perez de Marchena, and the first Vicar Apostolic of the West Indies was Father Buyl, provincial of the Franciscans. More than that, the first priest who celebrated Mass in the Antilles was Father Castori de Todi and the first missionary to go among the natives was Father Bergagnon, both Franciscans; while the first to give up his life for God was Father Alexander, a Franciscan, and the first convent at San Domingo was a Franciscan convent. So, then, the Franciscans may be said to have an especial claim to be called the first apostles of the New World, just as the Jesuits may claim to be the first active missionaries of the Far East. Among the Franciscan comrades of Columbus, in the founding of San Domingo, was a Father Remi, a brother of the then King of Scotland. According to a memoir addressed to Charles the Fifth, the success of the priests from the very beginning was unparalleled, an assurance being given His Majesty that they had converted more than twenty millions to the Faith. Father Martino de Valence writes in 1531 that he himself had been instrumental in converting a million to the Faith, while his companions had each converted more than one hundred thousand, especially in Mexico. The Minor Brothers also penetrated into the interior and founded convents in New Mexico, Texas, Florida, California, Virginia and Canada. Till 1822 there were some 200 Franciscan missions in California.

Prize Winners in Diary Contest

Results of the Competition in Which \$200 in Gold is Given For the Best Diaries Kept in

Dr. Chase's Almanac.

If there were any doubt as to the interest taken in this Diary Competition, it would soon disappear at sight of the piles of Dr. Chase's Almanacs which came flooding into these offices during the early part of January. And during the last few days the number of enquiries as to the results reminds us that some time as well as much labor has been required to have the judging carefully and accurately done.

The committee of judges, Mr. J. F. MacKay, Bus. Mgr. "The Globe"; Mr. Geo. E. Scroggie, Adv. Mgr. "Mail and Empire"; and Mr. H. B. Somerville, "The World," have, after due consideration, made the following awards:—

- 1st, \$100 in gold, Mr. and Mrs. Sanford Hoar, Scott Road, Pettitcodiac, N. B.
2nd, 50 " Mrs. Joseph H. Cook, Bechville, Ont.
3rd, 25 " Rev. Jos. H. Chan, Newburgh, Ont.
4th, 5 " Mrs. Joseph Halliday, Williamsford, Ont.
5th, 5 " Mrs. Lucy A. B. Smith, 22 Camb's Street, Vancouver, B. C.
6th, 5 " Mr. James Arthur, North Rustico, P. E. I.
7th, 5 " Miss Eunice Watts, Waterville, King's Co., N. S.
8th, 5 " Mrs. John Banks, Malin, Man.
9th, 5 " Madame Marie Louise Patenaude, St. Mere, Vercheres Co., Que.

Many who did not obtain a prize deserve special commendation for well-kept diaries, while others made the mistake of putting in items from newspapers, etc., instead of entering up everyday events of home life which make a diary both useful and valuable for future reference.

The 1907 edition of Dr. Chase's Calendar Almanac contains 100 particulars of the competition now going on, and if it has not reached you we shall be pleased to send a copy to your address. Edmanson, Bates & Co., Toronto.

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