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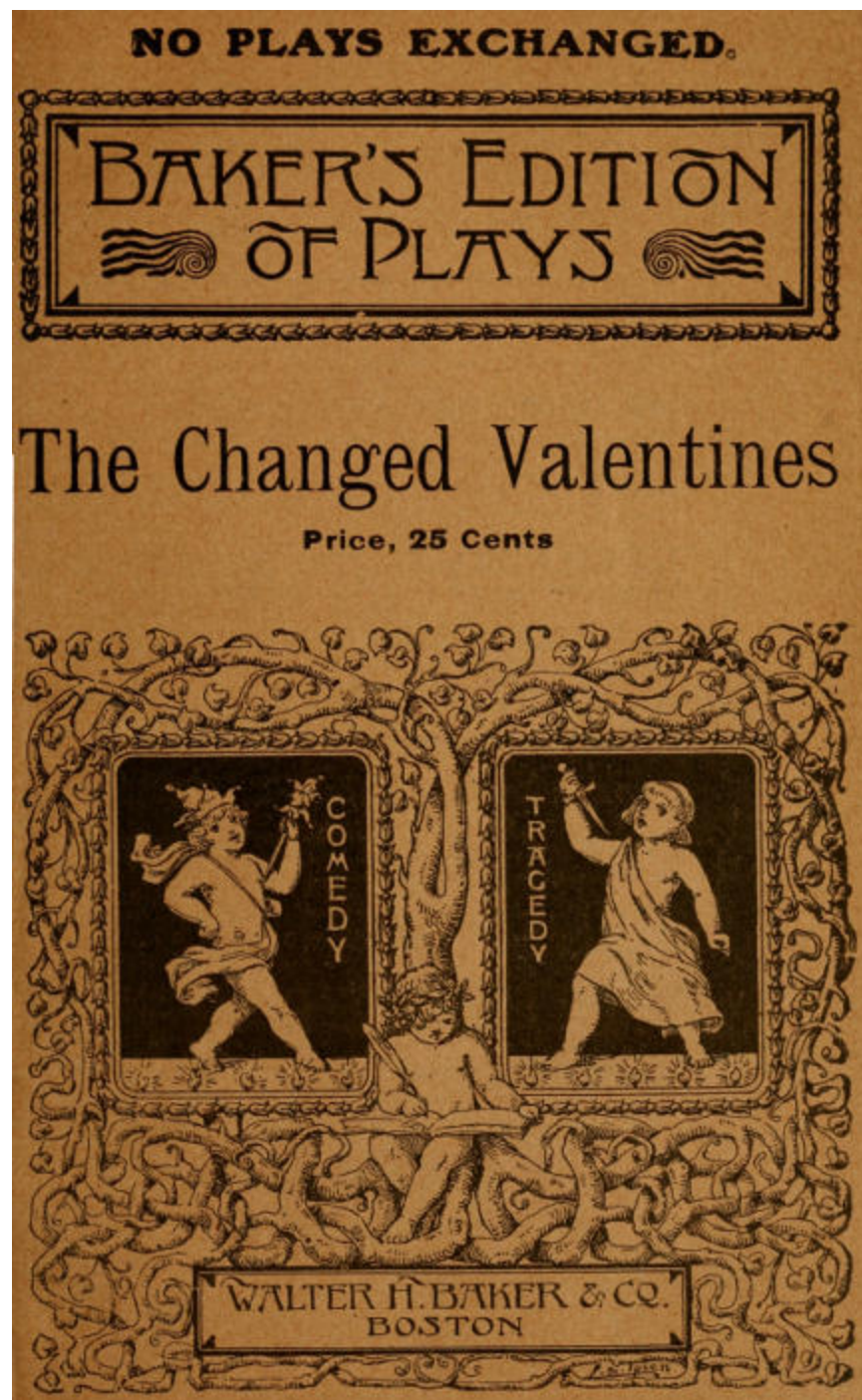
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The Changed Valentines

And Other Plays for St. Valentine's Day

By

ELIZABETH F. GUPTILL

*Author of "A Troublesome Flock," "Little Acts
for Little Actors," etc.*

BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.
1918

The Changed Valentines

And Other Plays

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The Changed Valentines

In Two Acts

The Changed Valentines

CHARACTERS

BOBBY, *the small boy of the family.*

EVELYN }

HELEN } *his older sisters.*

LOUISE, *his younger sister.*

MRS. WINSTON, *his mother.*

BERT, *his older brother.*

MR. BERTRAM ELLIOTT, *his bachelor uncle.*

ACT I

SCENE.—*The setting is the same for both Acts—a living-room or library.*

(As the curtain rises BERT is sitting at a desk, evidently just finishing a letter or note.)

BERT. There! I'll just tuck it in here with the valentine, and let her get both together. *(Does so, and directs envelope.)* Miss Eloise V. Worthington! A pretty name, and a stately one, but somehow I like Winston better. I wonder if she will?

(Finishes addressing it, and sits looking at it.)

Enter BOBBY, in a hurry.

BOBBY. Bert! Frank's out here in his brother's buzzcart, and wants to see you. He says you can ride up-town if you'll get a move on.

BERT. I will that.

(Steps out, comes back through, putting on his coat.)

BOBBY *(with a grin)*. Going bare-headed?

BERT *(putting hand to head)*. Why, I thought I put it on! Run and get it, kid.

(Exit BOBBY. BERT paws around on table, upsetting everything.)

BOBBY. Here's your lid.

BERT. Thanks. Where in the name of common sense are my gloves? I put them here for Mother to mend, last night.

BOBBY. They're sticking out of your pocket.

BERT. So they are. So long, kid.

(Hurries out, forgetting valentine. BOBBY spies it and picks it up.)

BOBBY. Gee! It's a valentine for Eloise. Bet it ain't as pretty as the one I bought. There

won't no silly girl get it, either. I wonder — —

(He starts to take it out of envelope, hears some one coming, and runs out, dropping it. There should be a curtain, apparently separating two rooms, and behind this BOBBY hides.)

Enter UNCLE BERTRAM; goes to desk.

UNCLE B. *(addressing his envelope)*. Well, well! That's the fortieth valentine I've sent Ellen. I sent the first, I remember, when I was a three-year-old, in kilts, and she a baby in little white dresses and blue shoes. Ha, hum! Such is life! Here we are, both middle-aged people, though blest if I feel so! If she'd only answered that twentieth one, I might not have been sending the fortieth. I wonder — — *(He toys with letter.)*

MRS. WINSTON *(looking in)*. Oh, here you are, Bertram. You're wanted on the 'phone.

UNCLE B. *(rising)*. I'll be right there.

(He hurries out, and BOBBY hurries in, and picks up the dropped letter.)

BOBBY *(going to desk)*. Gee! I've thought of the best joke! This ain't sealed, either. I'm a-going to change 'em. Thirty-nine valentines are enough for one lady to get from the same man, anybody'd know! *(Makes the change, and seals both letters.)* There! I guess a "change'll be a difference," as Aunt Emily says, and Eloise oughtn't to care. This one's from Bert, too. Didn't know Uncle Bertram ever signed his name Bert. Jumping frogs! He's coming!

(Hides again, BERT'S letter in his hand. His uncle takes the letter, and sees it is sealed.)

UNCLE B. Funny! I thought I hadn't sealed that. Getting absent-minded, I guess.

(Puts it in pocket, and goes out, whistling.)

Enter EVELYN and HELEN. Both start toward desk. HELEN reaches it first.

EVELYN. Oh, dear, Helen, won't you let me have the desk a minute? I just want to address a letter.

HELEN. So do I, and I'm in an awful rush.

EVELYN. What is it? A valentine?

HELEN. Is yours?

EVELYN. Well, why don't you address it, or else let me have the desk?

HELEN *(rising)*. You may have it, Evvie. I'll wait. *(EVELYN seats herself, toys with pen.)* Well, why don't you do it, if you're in such a rush? *(EVELYN laughs.)*

EVELYN. For the same reason you don't, I guess. Here! *(Hands her a fountain pen.)* You can do yours on the table. Then we won't bother each other.

HELEN. I'll let you see who mine is addressed to, if you will, too.

EVELYN. No, thanks. *(Both hesitate, laugh, and HELEN takes hers to table. Both write*

hastily. A crash is heard, followed by a loud scream, and both girls rush out. BOBBY comes out of his hiding-place, and changes valentines swiftly, sealing both, then darts back as he hears girls coming. They enter.) Katy will scare us to death some day. Did you ever see any one who could get so many tumbles?

HELEN. Or smash so many dishes? No, I never did. (*Takes up valentine.*) Why, I don't remember sealing this.

EVELYN. Nor I mine. I suppose the—the Irish earthquake in an American kitchen put it out of our heads. Want me to mail your letter? I'm going out.

HELEN. No, thanks. I'm going out, too, and this envelope is private property.

EVELYN. H'm! I could make a pretty good guess as to the name on the outside. It's "Pet," of course.

HELEN. Really, it's mean to call Phil that. He hates it so!

EVELYN. Then his mamma shouldn't have named him Philip Etheridge, when she knew his last name must always be Tuttle. Then he is such a pet. I always want to see a big lawn bonnet on those golden curls of his, and see his dear little self in ruffled white dresses, with short socks and blue slippers. Of course the little darling wants a valentine! But I should think he'd make you tired!

HELEN. He's lots nicer than that homely Jack Hamilton. All he thinks of is baseball.

EVELYN. Well, he isn't soft and sentimental, and—mushy like Pet. I don't care to lead a nice little poodle-dog around by a blue ribbon.

HELEN. You'd prefer a bulldog?

EVELYN. I certainly should. Coming out to mail your precious epistle?

HELEN. I am.

EVELYN. Come on, then. (*Both pass out.*)

BOBBY (*coming forth again*). Now maybe I'll have a chance. No, here comes Lou!

(Dives out of sight again.)

LOUISE (*entering*). I saw you, Bobby Winston! What you hiding for?

BOBBY (*stepping out*). I ain't hiding.

LOUISE. Well, you were. Thought you could jump out and scare some one, I s'pose.

BOBBY (*as she seats herself at desk*). Who you writing to?

LOUISE. Nobody. I'm sending valentines.

BOBBY. Valentines? More than one? Helen and Evvie only sent one apiece, and I'm going to send one.

LOUISE. Oh, Bobby, who to?

BOBBY. That ain't good grammar.

LOUISE. And that is, I s'pose. H'm!

(She takes two envelopes and tucks in valentines, and seals them.)

BOBBY. Who you sending 'em to, Lou?

LOUISE. I shan't tell. Go 'way, Bobby, so's I can get 'em done.

BOBBY. Tell me who they're going to?

LOUISE. No siree!

BOBBY. I'll give you my glass agate if you will, Louie.

LOUISE. What you want to know for? To tell somebody, and get me laughed at?

BOBBY. No, I won't tell, honest Injun!

LOUISE. Well, the pretty one goes to Reginald, and the homely one goes to Freddie, 'cause I'm mad on him!

BOBBY. What you mad at Freddie for?

LOUISE. 'Cause he said Valentine's Day was silly, and he shouldn't send one.

BOBBY. Ho, ho! And you wanted him to send you one!

LOUISE. No such thing! He can keep his old valentines, if he wants to. I'm going to send a lovely one to Reginald. He's got sense enough to 'preciate it, maybe. And I got a horrid comic one of a miser, all ragged and thin, gnawing a bare bone, like a dog, with his money all piled up around him.

BOBBY. Mamma doesn't like us to send comic ones.

LOUISE. Don't you tell, Bobby Winston!

BOBBY. What'll you give me not to? My aggie back again?

LOUISE. I haven't got it yet to give back again. Yes, keep it if you want to, but don't tell. If you do, I'll never tell you anything again, so there, now!

BOBBY. Well, I won't, but Mamma wouldn't like it. You know she wouldn't.

LOUISE. Maybe she wouldn't like all you've been up to, either, Sir Robert.

BOBBY. What you know about what I've been up to?

LOUISE. Oh, you have! You have been up to some mischief! Now if you tell, I will.

BOBBY. You can't, for you don't know it to tell, smarty. Say, Lou, let's see the funny one.

LOUISE. It isn't funny. It's just horrid, and I meant it to be. Besides, they're sealed now. Keep still while I direct them. (*She writes. BOBBY gets behind her, and shows wild enjoyment. LOUISE rises.*) There! Now I'll go mail 'em. Have you sent any, Bobby?

BOBBY. Not me. I've got too many sisters to want to send valentines to girls. (*LOUISE goes out. BOBBY seats himself at desk.*) See if I can get mine sent some time to-day. (*Writes.*) I suppose I'd better mail the one Bert forgot. Gee! But wasn't it good! Louise mixed up her own, and she's sent the pretty one to Fred, and the other to Reginald. Good one on her! It seems to be catching. I'll go out and mail mine before anything happens to it. It's a poor day for valentines. Sort of mixy, somehow. Six of 'em, all going wrong! Gee! Mine's the lucky seventh. Wish I was a bumblebee, and could follow some of 'em. Wouldn't it be fun! Well, Papa says a boy ought to be a good mixer. Guess I'm all right. (*Goes to door, and calls.*) Mamma!

MRS. W. (*outside*). What is it, Bobby?

BOBBY (*as she enters*). Here's a letter Bert left on the desk, all addressed and sealed. Shall I mail it?

MRS. W. Certainly. Let me see it, Bobby. (*Takes it, and reads.*) It's for Eloise. A valentine, probably. Mail it by all means, dear.

(BOBBY *runs out*. MRS. W. *tidies up the room a bit, and then also passes out.*)

ACT II

SCENE.—*Same room as before. Evening of same day.*

(MRS. WINSTON *is seated, with sewing*. BOBBY *runs in.*)

MRS. W. What do you think I got in the mail to-day, Bobby?

BOBBY. The paper, probably.

MRS. W. Yes, but something more.

BOBBY. A letter.

MRS. W. Something better and more precious still.

BOBBY. What was it?

MRS. W. A valentine—such a pretty one! Why, I haven't had a valentine for years!

BOBBY. Did you like it?

MRS. W. I certainly did, very much. If I only knew who sent it, I should—kiss him, I think.

BOBBY. You mightn't want to.

MRS. W. I'm sure I should want to, for, you see, I knew the writing on the outside.

BOBBY. You did?

MRS. W. Yes indeed. Thank you so much, dear. It was very nice to receive a valentine once more.

BOBBY. Don't ladies get valentines?

MRS. W. Not usually after they are my age, dear.

BOBBY. But Miss Colwell does, and I heard you say once that you had the same birthday.

MRS. W. So we have, dear, but what makes you think she gets valentines?

BOBBY. I know she does. Uncle Bertram sent her one this morning, and he said it was the fortieth.

MRS. W. Uncle Bertram? Did he tell you that, Bobby?

BOBBY. N-no, not exactly; but he said it, Mamma. He did, really.

MRS. W. To whom, then, if not to you? How did you come to hear it?

BOBBY. He said it to himself, when he was directing it this morning.

MRS. W. Did he know you were there?

BOBBY. N-no. I wasn't there, exactly.

MRS. W. Then where were you?

BOBBY. I was—in there. (*Points.*)

MRS. W. Bobby! You weren't listening?

BOBBY. Well, I couldn't help hearing, could I?

MRS. W. Here comes Louise. Don't mention what you have told me, Bobby. Not to any one. Remember.

BOBBY (*as LOUISE enters*). Yes'm, I won't. Hi, Louie! How many valentines did you get?

LOUISE. Eight. Want to see 'em?

BOBBY. Sure I do. Come on over and show 'em to Mamma.

(*LOUISE passes to side of her mother's chair; BOBBY stands at other side, and they look at the valentines.*)

LOUISE (*showing them*). Bert sent this one, and Uncle Bertram sent this one, and Grandpa sent this one, and Harold sent this one, and Leon sent this one, and Edwin sent this one, and Reginald sent this one.

(*She says this slowly, showing them, and MRS. W. and BOBBY make comments on how pretty they are, etc.*)

BOBBY. Gee! That's a beaut of Reginald's. Bet you're glad you sent him one.

LOUISE. No, I'm not. He bought one for every girl in our class—every single girl! He likes to show off how much pocket money he has.

MRS. W. It's a very pretty valentine, Louise.

LOUISE (*showing last one*). I like this better. Freddie made it all himself, and it's the only one he sent.

BOBBY. 'Tis pretty, but it isn't nearly so swell as Reggie's. Besides, I thought Freddie wasn't going to send any.

LOUISE. He said he wasn't going to buy any, and he didn't.

BOBBY. Gee! And you sent him— —

LOUISE. I didn't either, Bobby Winston. I got those envelopes mixed, and sent him the nice one.

BOBBY. And you sent the other to Reg? Kinder tough, when he'd treated the whole grade to valentines.

MRS. W. I hope my little daughter didn't send a comic valentine to any one.

LOUISE. I did, Mamma, but I shan't again. I should have been so ashamed if Freddie had got it, when he made me such a pretty one.

MRS. W. But how about Reginald?

LOUISE. Oh, Reggie didn't care a bit. He never got a comic one before, and he thought it was funny. He never guessed one of us girls sent it, and you see, it was a miser, and Reggie isn't a bit, you know, so it didn't touch him at all, but— —

Enter EVELYN and HELEN, evidently rather "huffy."

HELEN. Well, you got some, didn't you, kiddo?

BOBBY. I should say she did! Eight of 'em! How many'd you get, Helen?

HELEN. Oh, five or six. What a foolish day it is! Worse than April first!

LOUISE. I think it's lovely. Don't you, Evvie?

EVELYN (*shortly*). No.

BOBBY. Looks as if you two had a grouch. What's up?

EVELYN. Nothing.

HELEN (*scornfully*). Nothing!

EVELYN. Oh, dry up, do! Let your face rest a while.

MRS. W. Evelyn! What sort of talk is that?

EVELYN. Well, I'm sick of her nagging! And everything's gone wrong to-day.

HELEN. I don't see as anything went wrong with you.

EVELYN. I suppose you wouldn't call it so, but why any one should want that simp of a Pet hanging round her, I don't know.

HELEN. Then why did you have him?

EVELYN. How could I help it? He doesn't know enough to see when he's turned down. I did everything but slap his pretty face for him, but nothing would penetrate that rhinoceros hide of self-esteem. Bah! He makes me sick!

HELEN. You looked like it. I saw how earnestly you were talking to him.

EVELYN. I certainly was.

BOBBY. Gee! Evvie's stole Helen's beau, and Helen's mad!

HELEN. No such thing.

MRS. W. That will do, Bobby. I have never seen any signs of Evelyn's fancying Philip. He isn't her style.

EVELYN. No, he isn't. I detest sissy boys, and always did. Helen can have him and welcome.

HELEN. Then why did you send him a valentine? No wonder you wouldn't show me the address!

EVELYN. It wasn't to him.

HELEN (*hotly*). You're— —

MRS. W. (*interrupting sharply*). Helen! I hope neither of my girls is going to forget that she is a lady.

HELEN. Well, she did send him one.

EVELYN. I did not!

HELEN. I heard him thank you for it in two lines of poetry.

EVELYN. And if you'd played eavesdropper a little longer, you'd have heard me absolutely deny it. I told him I only sent one, and that not to him, and advised him to talk to the one to whom he sent the volume of poetry and the white roses.

HELEN. And he said you were the prettiest. I hate you both, so there!

(Throws herself into a chair, and begins to cry.)

EVELYN. Truly, Helen— —

HELEN. Don't talk to me. I saw the address on the envelope, and so did Freda and Myrtle, and we all recognized your writing. No other girl in school makes a P like yours.

EVELYN. It was a very good imitation, I'll admit. The work, no doubt, of some one who thought it a very good joke to play on me. Just wait till I see Mr. Jack Hamilton, that's all. It was a neat little stroke of business to be out of town to-day. I could shake him with a will.

MRS. W. But why should a valentine make such a disturbance? It's just boy and girl fun at your age.

BOBBY. Helen don't think so. She's awful spoony on Mr. Philip Etheridge Tuttle.

MRS. W. That will do, Bobby. Don't be vulgar.

LOUISE. Well, he always walks to the corner with her, and to-night he didn't. He came with Evvie.

BOBBY. Came after her, you mean, trotting behind like a little poodle-dog whose missis goes too fast for him, and she and Helen have been fighting ever since.

HELEN. Well, she knew he liked me, and she's always pretended not to like him, and he's always thought she was pretty, and so, when she sent him the valentine— —

EVELYN. When she sent him nothing! If he tags me to-morrow I'll tie a blue ribbon on his neck, and hitch it to a little chain, and lead him round like a nice little toy dog. You see if I don't!

HELEN. Just to show every girl in the school that you've captured him! Well, I'll see that they know how you did it.

EVELYN. I'm about tired of being told I—twist the truth.

HELEN. I'd say it stronger, if Mother'd let me. You may think it, instead. I saw you address that envelope this morning, and you refused to let me see the name—you know you did!

EVELYN. Well, so did you. What was the matter with the one you sent him, I wonder?

HELEN. I wish I'd never sent it. All I've got from him to-day at school is a nod and a stare. He's mad about something, and you're to blame.

MRS. W. How about the roses and the book?

HELEN. Well—he sent them before he got Evvie's valentine.

EVELYN. I never sent him any!

MRS. W. That will do, girls, both of you. Helen, if things have gone to this point I am glad I have found it out in time. I knew he was a rather sentimental boy, but I thought him harmless as an associate, and he was poor Fanny's boy, so I have encouraged his coming here—having no mother. But this— —

EVELYN. Oh, Helen isn't quite as foolish as she seems, Mamma. She's just jealous because he thinks me pretty. As if I cared what he thought!

HELEN (*sneeringly*). Yes, as if you did!

MRS. W. Here's Bert coming. If you don't want to hear of this foolish quarrel for the next six weeks, you'd better stop it. Bobby and Louise, not a word about it. Remember now.

Enter BERT.

BERT. Good-evening, every one. What's the matter, Helen? (*Throws himself into seat.*)

HELEN. Nothing. What's the matter with you? You look glum as an oyster.

MRS. W. Didn't things go well at the office to-day, Bert?

BERT. Oh, yes, about the same as usual.

LOUISE (*going up to him, and smoothing his hair*). Was somebody mean to you, Bertie?

BERT (*taking her on his knee*). Just a bit, maybe, little sister. See here! (*He takes a dime from his pocket.*) If I gave you this what would you do with it?

LOUISE. I'd buy a little dolly at the ten-cent store.

BOBBY. A dolly! Gee whiz! I'll bet you've got twenty now.

LOUISE. But we girls, seven of us, are going to have a sewing society, and we're going to buy some little dolls, and make a whole outfit for them, and— —

BOBBY. Pretty outfit it'll be, I guess. You can't sew.

LOUISE. I can, too, a little, and besides, Eloise is going to show us how.

BOBBY. Oh, it's her get up, is it? Then Bert'll give you the ten-cent piece, sure.

(*BERT does so, and she hugs and kisses him.*)

LOUISE. You're just the dearest big brother! But what makes you look so sober? Does your head ache?

BERT. A little, I guess. Perhaps, if you smooth it, it will make it better. (*She proceeds to do so.*)

BOBBY. Got any more of those little shiny fellers that you want to give away, Bert?

BERT (*teasingly*). Why, let me see— — Why, what's come over Uncle Bertram? Never heard him come in like a college boy before. (*Enter UNCLE BERTRAM. He goes straight to BERT, and shakes his hand heartily.*) Glad to see you, Uncle, truly; but why pick me out for this particular grip?

UNCLE B. Because you've done me the greatest possible favor. I shall owe my happiness the rest of my life to you, Bert.

BERT. To me? Say, Uncle, is it a joke, or have you gone nutty, or what? I haven't seen you since morning.

UNCLE B. No, I know it, but you've done a great thing for me, just the same. I'm—I'm going to be married.

ALL (*together*). Why, Bertram! Oh, Uncle Bertram! Who to? Why, Uncle!

BERT. Glad to hear it, I'm sure, but I don't see what I had to do with it. I didn't propose to the lady for you, I'm sure.

UNCLE B. That's just what you did, boy, though you didn't know it. And she wore the white rose, all right.

BERT. Oh, she did? Well, I don't know how you came to know of it, but if Eloise wants to marry a man twice her age because he has a little money, she's welcome, for all me. I—I congratulate you, Uncle Bertram.

UNCLE B. Good grit, boy, though it isn't true, one bit of it.

BOBBY. What isn't? Aren't you going to be married?

UNCLE B. I certainly am, and so is Eloise, I fancy; but not together. I'm to marry Miss Ellen Colwell, my boy.

MRS. W. Ellen? After all these years?

BERT. Not Eloise? But the rose?

EVELYN. And how did Bert propose for you, when he didn't know anything about it?

HELEN. Do keep still, everybody, and let Uncle Bertram tell it. It sounds awfully mixed up to me.

BERT. Yes, explain, do, Uncle. You've got me guessing for fair.

UNCLE B. Well, you see, to really explain, I'd have to go back twenty years.

HELEN. Oh, do, Uncle. It sounds so romantic.

UNCLE B. Romantic! Idiotic! That's what it was! Well, you see, when I was a youngster only three years old, Dr. Colwell came to town to practice, and bought the home where Miss Ellen lives now. We lived on the same street then, and Mother took me with her when she went to call, and I fell in love with her on the spot.

BOBBY. With your mother, or the doctor?

UNCLE B. With the doctor's baby, little Ellen. She was a bit of a thing, with a white dress and a blue sash, and blue shoes, and she had big blue eyes that just matched, and little soft, yellow curls, and she called me "Boy." It was the first word she had ever tried to say, her mother told me.

LOUISE. Miss Ellen's hair is brown.

UNCLE B. So it is, Louie, but it used to be yellow. Well, from that day on we were playmates, and I sent her a valentine that year. In fact, I have every year. I sent my fortieth this morning.

BERT. But I don't see—

UNCLE B. Hold on, Namesake. Wait a bit, and you will. Twenty years ago I sent one in which, in the best verses I knew how to make, I asked her a question—*the* question; and I

asked her, if the answer was yes, to wear a white rose in her hair, and to sit in the bay window as I went home that night.

BERT. Why— —

UNCLE B. Yes, I know, my boy. We're much alike, and history repeats itself. If it hadn't—well, to go on, she didn't do it, although I had had some white roses delivered there that afternoon. It seems now that she didn't get the valentine at all. It went astray somehow. She thought I had forgotten, and didn't care, and I thought the answer was "no," and it made a difference in our friendship. Though we have been friends, the old intimacy was gone—and—well, we've lost twenty years.

MRS. W. Oh, brother!

UNCLE B. We're going to make them up, Eva, don't you forget it. Well, to-day I sent my fortieth valentine, and the same thing happened. It went astray. At least she hasn't got it yet. (*BOBBY gives a start, and claps his hand to his pocket, but no one seems to notice. UNCLE B. goes on.*) She did get one, though, in rhyme, which, strange to say, asked her the selfsame thing. Don't blush, my boy! And as she always gets a box of white roses on this particular day, when I came home to-night there she sat, in the bay window, with a white rose in her hair! I couldn't believe my eyes, but I went in, and it's all right. We're to be married in six weeks, and I've you to thank, my boy, and when you and Eloise are married, you'll get a check for one thousand dollars for a wedding present.

BERT. But I don't see how she came to get my letter, and I should have thought she would have known it wasn't hers.

UNCLE B. Why, you called her Ellie—my old pet name for her, as well as yours for Eloise, it seems, and you signed it Bert, which every one always called me till I had a namesake nephew.

BERT. But I directed mine all right, and—no, I didn't mail it, I do believe. I went off in a rush with Frank, and left it on the desk.

MRS. W. And Bobby found it there, and I told him to mail it.

BERT. And did you mail it, Bobby?

BOBBY. Why— —

EVELYN. He didn't! He forgot it. I saw him start just now, and clap his hand to his pocket. I bet it's there now.

BOBBY. No, sir.

UNCLE B. Can't be, because Ellen got it.

BERT (*rising, and grasping BOBBY, who is trying to sneak away*). Come here, my beloved little brother. Let's see what you have in your pocket.

(He seats himself, BOBBY between his knees, and proceeds to go through his pockets, in spite of his endeavors to get away.)

BOBBY. You let me go.

BERT. Directly, my dear brother, directly. Ah, here we are! (*He takes letter from BOBBY'S pocket.*) That's my letter, sure. Now, young man, why didn't you mail it?

BOBBY. I meant to, truly. But I forgot.

EVELYN. Let Uncle Bertram open it, Bert. I'll bet a box of candy *his* valentine is inside. There have been queer doings with valentines to-day, and I believe Bobby's at the bottom of the whole thing. Hold him tight while I investigate, or rather while we all do. Open that, Uncle Bert.

BERT (*passing it*). Yes, do, Uncle Bert. My letter isn't inside, that's sure, since Miss Ellen got it. No, no, Sir Robert, stay right here. Your elder brother is very fond of your company just now.

BOBBY. Let go! You're twisting my arm!

BERT. I won't hurt as long as you don't try to get away, but here you've got to stay just now. How about it, Uncle?

UNCLE B. (*who has opened letter and looked inside*). It's mine, all right, boy. (*To BOBBY.*) Now, young man, how about it? Who changed them around, and when?

BOBBY. How should I know? I found this on the desk and asked Mamma if I should mail it, and she said yes, and then I forgot to, that's all.

BERT. But how came Uncle Bertram's letter in this envelope?

BOBBY. How should I know? Stop that! Mamma, he's hurting me.

MRS. W. Yes? Well, I should advise him to keep on doing so till he gets to the bottom of the mystery.

HELEN. Yes, make him tell. I'll bet he did it.

EVELYN. Might as well own up, Bobby. You'll have to in the end.

LOUISE. There wasn't any letter on the desk when I wrote mine. Oh, Bobby, did you change mine? If you did, I'm glad, Bobby, truly I am.

BOBBY. I didn't though, truly, Lou. You did it yourself. I knew it, though, but I thought I'd keep still. I wanted to find out if Reggie Westcott could get mad. He's such a girlie boy!

LOUISE. Well, he didn't. But I'm glad Freddie didn't get it. I'm glad they got mixed.

UNCLE B. So am I, girlie. 'Twas a good mix up for me, but I'm sure other hands tampered with mine.

BERT. And mine. Now, young man, how about it?

BOBBY. About what?

BERT (*taking him across knee*). About this.

(*Gives him a spank.*)

BOBBY. Ow! You hurt.

BERT. Good. I'm going to make each one a little harder than the last. Will you tell me how and when you changed those letters? No answer? Very well.

(*Spanks again.*)

BOBBY. Mamma, make him stop.

MRS. W. Not until you tell the truth about it, Bobby. A joke is a joke, but a lie is a lie,

and I'm certain you do know. Answer truly, now. Don't you?

BERT (*spanking again*). Answer your mother, young man.

BOBBY. Gee! How can I answer when you're hurting me?

BERT (*standing him between knees again*). Now I'm not hurting you. Answer Mother.

BOBBY. Answer what? Oh, don't take me that way again. I'll answer. Yes, Mamma, I do know. I only did it for fun. Bert left his when he went off in a hurry, and I was going to look at it— —

BERT. Well, that's cool.

BOBBY. I just wanted to see if it was as pretty as the one I had for Mamma, and Uncle Bert came in quick, and I didn't want him to catch me looking at it, so I dodged behind the portière. And he talked out loud to himself, and said it was the fortieth one he'd sent her, and I just thought thirty-nine was enough to get from one man, and I wished I could get a chance to change 'em, just for fun, so when Uncle Bert was called to the 'phone — —

UNCLE B. So that's when you did it! I thought I hadn't sealed that envelope!

BOBBY. So I slipped yours out, and Bert's in, and sealed it, and dodged back. Then I fixed the other back there. They weren't valentines, though, either of 'em—just poetry, with a fancy border, but both of 'em begun "Dearest Ellie," and ended "Yours forever, Bert," so I don't see why one wasn't as good as the other. Bert's was the best, though, really, 'cause any one could understand it, but yours was just rhymes and long words, without any sense that I could see.

BERT. You little scamp! Don't you know it's dishonorable to read other folks' letters?

BOBBY. They weren't letters. They were valentines. How was I to know that men were so silly as to write letters that way? When I want to get married I shall just walk up to the one I want and tell her so.

UNCLE B. Right you are, Bobby. If I'd done so, I'd have been a married man all these years, instead of a lonely old bach.

BERT. I believe he's right myself. I'm off to try my luck. If she says "No," the whole family will know I'm jilted, thanks to my small brother. Wish me good luck, mother mine.

MRS. W. Indeed I do, my boy. Never fear. If I have read Eloise's eyes aright lately, we'll congratulate you in the morning.

(BERT goes out, all the rest calling "Good luck" after him.)

EVELYN (*cornering BOBBY*). And now we'll probe a little deeper. If you don't answer my questions, I shall tickle you without mercy. You were behind there when Helen and I came in?

(BOBBY hesitates. EVELYN tickles him.)

BOBBY. Stop, Evvie, do stop. Yes, I was there.

EVELYN. And you changed them when Katy fell, and we ran to the kitchen?

BOBBY. Yes. I knew how you hated Pet, and I thought it would be funny to make you

send him a valentine. So, of course, I had to send Helen's to Jack.

HELEN. Of all the mean kids!

EVELYN. You see, Helen, I wasn't as mean or as silly as you thought, or as Phil thought, either. You may explain to him if you choose.

HELEN. Well, I shan't. Any one as fickle as that isn't worth it.

MRS. W. I'm glad you see it, little daughter. I really think that, as so much good has resulted from Bobby's playing Cupid, we will have to forgive him this time, but he must never do so again.

BOBBY. I won't, Mamma, truly I won't.

UNCLE B. I don't suppose you ought to be paid for a naughty trick, but that pony you've wanted so long is yours, my boy, next Saturday.

MRS. W. No, not for a month, Bertram. Bobby must be taught a lesson.

BOBBY. All right, Mamma. I deserve it. But thank you, Uncle Bert. You're a brick!

UNCLE B. And now, little girlie, what do you want? A pony, too, or a big dolly?

LOUISE. I want to be the little flower girl.

UNCLE B. So you shall, bless your heart! And Helen and Evelyn shall be bridesmaids.

LOUISE. And maybe Eloise'll let me be hers. I'll be two flower girls.

EVELYN. Two weddings! And one twenty years delayed! Well, I guess there's something doing in this family, and all because of Bobby and the changed valentines!

CURTAIN

A Romance of St. Valentine's Day

In Three Acts

A Romance of St. Valentine's Day

CHARACTERS

PAULINE, *a schoolgirl.*

POLLY, *her great-aunt.*

MR. AMOS HILL, *her aunt's former lover.*

ACT I

SCENE.—*A plain, old-fashioned room. The essential piece of furniture is an old-fashioned sewing table, what is known as a Martha Washington table, and is quite generally imitated to-day. They were small and square, with leaves that turned down, and two drawers.*

(GREAT-AUNT POLLY is seated by the table, looking at a collection of valentines, post-cards, etc., such as the young girl of to-day receives. PAULINE is seated a little way from her.)

AUNT P. Very pretty, Pauline, I'm sure, and a great many of them for one little schoolgirl. I don't really like the post-cards, though, dearie. It doesn't seem just right to send a valentine unenclosed.

PAULINE. Oh, it's quite the thing, now, Aunt Polly. Everybody does it.

AUNT P. It's a style I do not care for, my dear.

PAULINE. But it saves money.

AUNT P. The difference between one cent and two is not very wide, is it?

PAULINE. No, but when one wants to send a lot it means a good deal, unless you are flush—and I never am.

AUNT P. Send a lot? What do you mean, my dear?

PAULINE. Why, every fellow wants to send one to every pretty girl he knows, of course.

AUNT P. A Christmas card, perhaps, but a valentine! That should be for one only, my dear.

PAULINE. How odd! Why, I sent twenty-five, myself, to the nice boys I knew.

AUNT P. Twenty-five! Oh, my dear! You didn't!

PAULINE. Sure I did! Why not? Is that the way they sent them in your day, Auntie? Seems to me they were rather narrow.

AUNT P. No, indeed, my dear, but a valentine meant something then. A young man sent but one, and that went to the lady of his choice. The girls did not send any. We would have thought it immodest. But girls do many things to-day that would not have been tolerated in my day. A girl, then, was supposed to be a lady.

PAULINE. Instead of a madcap tomboy? Well, I plead guilty, and throw myself on the mercy of the court. I just love to be a tomboy, and I'm going to be one a long time yet. No "one valentine" sentiment for me, or one boy, either, for years to come.

AUNT P. Well, perhaps you are right, yet many of my girlhood friends married at sixteen, and nearly all of them were married by the time they were twenty, that is, of course, those who married at all.

PAULINE. And why didn't you, Auntie dear? Didn't you ever like any one well enough?

AUNT P. Yes, dearie, I did. I don't suppose any woman lives to be thirty without liking some one well enough to marry him, if circumstances came about right. But there! They don't always do it. Would you like to see my old valentines, Pauline?

PAULINE. Oh, I would, so much, Auntie dear!

AUNT P. (*opening top drawer of stand*). Well, dearie, here they are. No post-cards among them. Most of them came from the same one, as you see. This is the last one he ever sent me.

PAULINE (*opening it*.) Did he die, Auntie?

AUNT P. No, he didn't die, dear. He's alive still. He got angry at me, that's all. Talk of girls getting in a huff over nothing! Boys aren't far behind, let me tell you.

PAULINE. And did he marry?

AUNT P. No, he is single still.

PAULINE. Then he cared, you see. How romantic! Why didn't you try to make up with him?

AUNT P. It isn't the lady's place, my dear, to run after a man.

PAULINE. Well, I like that! Well, if ever I'm fond of a man, I'll run after him and hold him, if necessary, till I know what he was mad at. Or did you know, Auntie? And was it something that couldn't be made up?

AUNT P. Why, I suppose I did know, dearie—but it seemed such a slight thing to anger him. My cousin came that Valentine's Day. We had been brought up almost like brother and sister before I came to this town. It was fine sleighing, and he took me over to Wrentham for the night. His mother was there, just for the day and night, and the young girl whom he was to marry. When I came home, next day, I asked my mother for my mail. She replied that there wasn't any. "But there must have been a valentine," I said. "Amos always sends me one." "I know," she answered, "but this year he didn't. He called, though, last evening, and seemed much put out that you were not here. He went off as stiff as a poker." Of course, I thought he must be angry because I went sleighing with Timothy, though I thought it a bit far-fetched, as we were only old friends, and so were Timothy and myself. "But," I thought, "I'll explain when he gets over his huff, and it will be all right."

PAULINE. And didn't you?

AUNT P. No, dear, I hadn't the opportunity. Next day his mother came over to tell us that he had gone away. She seemed to think I was to blame, somehow, and she never was nice to me again, and it was more than a year before Amos came back, and then he was just coldly polite when we met. That was the end of my little romance, dear, for though there were others who found me fair, somehow I couldn't seem to care for any of them. You see, dearie, Amos had won my love, though he didn't know it, and so— — (*Pauses.*)

PAULINE. And he has it yet! Oh, Auntie, how romantic! And does he live in town still?

AUNT P. Yes, but I meet him seldom, and we merely say a "How-de-do" in passing. Excuse me, dearie. I think I will go up-stairs a few minutes, while you look at my old keepsakes. I cannot imagine how I came to let you wheedle this old story from me. Please do not refer to it again.

PAULINE. No indeed, Auntie. Thank you for telling me. (*AUNT P. passes out, and PAULINE proceeds to investigate drawer, soliloquizing as she does so.*) Such quaint little valentines! I like them, though! And nearly all in the same handwriting—that of the faithless Amos, evidently. Yes, this one is signed A. H. A. H. A is Amos, of course. A. H. Could it be Mr. Hill, I wonder? "A. Hill," he has it on his sign. He's old, or rather old—

sixty, I shouldn't wonder, and he's a bachelor. I'll bet he's the one! Mean old thing, to bring tears to the eyes of my little great-auntie after all these years! (*Puts valentines hack in drawer, and shuts it rather vigorously, letting one drop, unnoticed, to the floor.*) Men and boys are queer creatures, anyhow. I'm glad I'm a girl! And I'm glad I live now, instead of forty years ago. Why, I got more valentines, I do believe, to-day, than Aunt Polly has in all her life. Why, I dropped one! (*Picks it up.*) Amos was a little fellow when he sent this, I guess. (*Opens it.*) No, this is from the Timothy who seems to have been the villain in the little pastoral comedy. What a cute little verse!

(*Reads.*)

“Dear Polly, though you're far away,
Think of me on Valentine's Day.
I wish I could see you, so sweet and prim.
That's all. Good-bye, from Cousin Tim.”

(*Tries to open drawer.*) Why, what makes this drawer stick so? (*Pulls till drawer opens with a jerk.*) Why, of all things! How came that box in there? It wasn't there a minute ago! It looks like a little drawer. I do believe it's a secret drawer, that has somehow fallen down! And here—why, I do believe here's another valentine from Amos that was never opened. It is sealed and addressed, but I don't believe she ever got it. And that, I'll bet, made the trouble! I wonder—yes, I will, I'll mail it and see what comes of it. I'll call Auntie, first, and show her the drawer. No, on second thoughts, I won't hurry about that. Here's to mail Amos' last valentine, and then I'll run down to the office later, when the afternoon mail comes in, and get it. Wouldn't it be romantic if things came out story-book style, and I was the Cupid who had a finger in the pie? (*Goes out.*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*Office of MR. AMOS HILL.*

(*AMOS seated in office chair, tipped back, soliloquizing.*)

AMOS. Valentine's Day once more! Strange I can't get it out of my head! Just forty years since Polly jilted me! Why, I wonder? I never did understand. I was so sure that she cared for me—but there! Womankind is fickle. She never married, though, nor I either, big fool that I was! I couldn't seem to help comparing every girl I met with her, and they suffered by comparison, and so here I am, a bachelor of sixty, wanting nothing but the one thing I never shall have—a wife and home of my own. (*Puts a card photograph, such as were taken forty years ago, back into desk.*) There, little Polly, go back to your resting-place, while I go back to work and try to forget you. (*Does not close drawer, but looks up as knock is heard.*) Eh? What? Come in, whoever you are. (*PAULINE enters.*) Polly! (*Gazes in surprise at her.*) Who in the world are you?

PAULINE. Oh, I'm Polly, just as you said, though most folks call me Pauline.

AMOS. But who are you? I thought—

PAULINE. You thought I was Aunt Polly? Do I look like her?

AMOS. Is Miss Polly Dennison your aunt?

PAULINE. My great-aunt.

AMOS. Then you're Angie Dennison's girl?

PAULINE. Yes, I'm Pauline Waldron, and I'm visiting at Aunt Polly's.

AMOS. But what brings you here?

PAULINE. I'm playing Cupid. (*Catches sight of picture.*) Oh, is that Aunt Polly? What a dear, old-fashioned little girl! May I see it closer?

AMOS (*passing it rather reluctantly*). Won't you sit down?

PAULINE (*seating herself*). What a sweet little face! How old was she?

AMOS. Eight, I believe!

PAULINE. What beautiful wavy hair! And so long! But what a narrow ribbon she had on top!

AMOS. Yes, little girls didn't have more ribbon than hair in those days. She had fine eyes, too.

PAULINE. Yes, and has yet. But what a queer little dress, with its plaited trimmings, and a lace bib! And the sash is wide enough to make up for the hair ribbon, I'm sure. Oh, do give it to me!

AMOS (*taking it hastily*). Certainly not. It's a keep-sake. And now, my young lady, you will oblige me by forgetting that you have seen it.

PAULINE. Oh, I couldn't forget it, it's so quaint and dear!

AMOS. I don't see as it is so quaint. A dainty little girl, in a very pretty frock, I think. Much prettier than little girls wear nowadays. Please forget it.

PAULINE. You shouldn't use slang, Mr. Hill.

AMOS. I didn't, I assure you. I only implore that you will not mention having seen what was never intended for your eyes.

PAULINE. I won't, indeed. You liked Aunt Polly, then?

AMOS. Certainly. We were playmates and schoolmates from that time on. That was taken just after she came to this town. You look very like her at your age, my dear.

PAULINE. So much so that you called me Polly.

AMOS. Did I? Excuse me. And now, my dear little girl—I mean young lady, what can I do for you?

PAULINE. Just answer a few questions. This is Valentine's Day; you know, and I've been playing Cupid.

AMOS. Indeed? And what did you wish to ask me? If it was ever legal to play Cupid, I think it is on Valentine's Day.

PAULINE. If—if any one finds a letter that was evidently intended to be mailed, and it hasn't been, is it right for that person to mail it?

AMOS. Why, certainly. It's the proper thing to do, my dear.

PAULINE. Even if it has been lost a long time?

AMOS. I should think so. You see, you have no right to open it, so you would not know the writer, and thus could not return it to him, so the only thing to do is to mail it.

PAULINE. So I thought. But you see, this one has been lost for forty years.

AMOS. Forty years? Are you sure? Perhaps the one to whom it was addressed has moved, or is dead. It is a long time, my dear.

PAULINE. No, he hasn't, and she isn't, so I mailed it. But I think I know the writer. Ought I to tell him about it, too?

AMOS. Why, it might be well to do so. It is an unusual occurrence, to get a letter that was written to one forty years ago. I think you had better tell me the whole story.

PAULINE. I believe I will. I was showing my valentines to Auntie to-day. Oh, do you know, I believe that letter was a valentine. Did you ever lose one?

AMOS. Never. A valentine forty years old will be rather stale, I fear. Perhaps the lady—I believe you said it was a lady—may have been married for years to some other man. She may be a grandmother now, and may laugh at the effusion of the callow youth of the olden time.

PAULINE. She won't, I'm sure. And she isn't a grandmother, for she never married. She has been faithful to a faithless lover all these years, and I believe that lost valentine is at the bottom of the whole trouble.

AMOS. Indeed, just how, may I ask?

PAULINE. Why, he had always sent her one, every year, since they were children, but that year he was mad about something, and he didn't send her any. That is, she has always thought he didn't, but I believe he did, and that that's the letter I found to-day.

AMOS. And where did you find a letter forty years old, that had never been mailed? It may cause strange misunderstandings now, child. Perhaps it would have been better to have asked my advice before you mailed it.

PAULINE. I'm asking it now. Mr. Hill, did you send Aunt Polly a valentine forty years ago? Think back carefully, and see if you can remember.

AMOS. I can remember quite distinctly, my dear. I did send your aunt one that day—the last one I ever sent her. I have reason to remember it quite plainly, my dear, on account of the answer I received.

PAULINE. The answer? But you couldn't have got any answer, for she thinks the last one you sent her was forty-one years ago. She never got that other one, so how could she answer it?

AMOS. I certainly thought she did, and negatively, at that. But—my dear, do you mean that you think you have found that letter—that valentine, which I never knew had been lost? Where, and how?

PAULINE. Why, Auntie let me see her old valentines, and when I'd put them away, I found I had dropped one. And the drawer stuck when I tried to open it, and I jerked it, and somehow knocked down a little drawer that must have been above it, and in it lay the letter I told you of. It was addressed to Aunt Polly, and sealed, and had a three-cent stamp on it, but it had never been opened.

AMOS. Because she didn't care to open it, my dear. I happen to know that she got it, for her grandmother took it from my hand that morning, and said she would give it into her own hand. And you see, she must have had it, for it was in her own secret drawer.

PAULINE. I don't think she knew about the drawer. And I know she didn't get it, for she told me so to-day, and her eyes were full of tears.

AMOS. Polly cried?

PAULINE. Yes. She loved you, I'm sure, and thought you were angry with her because she went over to Wrentham with her cousin.

AMOS. With Tim! Good land, child, I shouldn't have been jealous of Tim! But why didn't she explain? Good gracious! If she didn't get it, there was nothing to explain!

PAULINE. And you went away next day, and she didn't see you for a year.

AMOS. Yes, but—oh, what a hopeless, foolish tangle! And you mailed that letter, child? Has she got it yet?

PAULINE. No, I shall go to the office before I go back. Oh, I believe she was going to the milliner's this afternoon, so probably she'll get it herself.

AMOS. And she'll read it—for the first time—after forty years! See here, little girl, I'll be over to-night for the answer, but don't you tell her I'm coming.

PAULINE. But you never go there.

AMOS. I did once, and I'm coming again. To-night, you understand, and I want you to give me a clear coast for half an hour or so, will you?

PAULINE. Of course.

AMOS. Maybe I'm an old fool for my pains, but that letter asked her a question—the question, and told her I would come that evening for my answer, and I'm coming. If she gets it to-day, to-night is the night to call, and I'm coming, if I get turned down for my pains. I thought she went away to get out of having to say no. And to think I wasted forty years! Well, there's no fool like an old fool, and Polly's got to answer that question. Wish me luck, little girl.

PAULINE. Indeed I do! And Aunt Polly does care, I know. I'm glad I meddled.

AMOS. So am I. Though I can't understand about that letter. Going? Well, you look in the office this evening, and you'll find the finest valentine this town affords, addressed to Cupid. Good-afternoon.

PAULINE. Good-afternoon.

(Goes out. He takes out the little picture again, and gazes at it.)

AMOS. Love is eternal. Love is always young. Maybe I'll end my days in a home of my own, after all! Dear little Polly!

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE.—*Same as first scene. Evening.*

(PAULINE seated, with some bit of embroidery, or other fancy work. AUNT P. is seated, also, as curtain rises, but during the conversation moves about a good deal, rather nervously.)

PAULINE. What's the matter, Aunt Polly? What makes you so restless? Don't you feel well?

AUNT P. Yes, I think so. I—I'm nervous, I think.

PAULINE. I didn't know you were ever nervous, Auntie.

AUNT P. Why, I'm not, as a rule, Pauline. I don't know what is the matter, I'm sure.

PAULINE. Hadn't you better go to bed, Auntie, and sleep it off?

AUNT P. No, I couldn't sleep, I'm sure.

PAULINE. You haven't had bad news, have you?

AUNT P. Why, no, dear, not exactly.

PAULINE. Not exactly? You've had some news then that disturbs you?

AUNT P. Yes, my dear, it is disturbing news, really. It's almost as if some one had risen from the dead; and I don't understand it, and I don't know what to do or say.

PAULINE. Could I help you any, Auntie dear?

AUNT P. No, I think not, dearie. I must think it out alone.

PAULINE. Do you mind if I run over to Grace's a few minutes?

AUNT P. Oh, don't, dear, don't. Stay with me. Some one might come in.

PAULINE. Are you expecting any one?

AUNT P. N-no, not exactly. That is—no, of course not.

PAULINE. Why, Auntie dear, if you were a young girl, I should say you were expecting a visit from your young man.

AUNT P. But as I'm not, but an old woman of fifty-eight, you know it can't be any nonsense of that sort. Remember, my dear Pauline, I am your great-aunt.

PAULINE. Not so very great, either; just the dearest little auntie in the world. And you don't seem a bit old. Why, your hair isn't hardly a bit gray. Besides, there was Mrs. Atherton, in our home town, was married just before I came here, and she was sixty-three.

AUNT P. She was a widow, dear.

PAULINE. What difference did that make? They said that Mr. Buffinton was her first lover, but that her father had separated them, and every one was glad to see her married.

AUNT P. Very nice and romantic, dear, but, as I said before, she was a widow, and that makes a great deal of difference. If she had been a maiden lady, every one would have called her silly, and laughed at her.

PAULINE. I don't see why.

AUNT P. Nor I, dear, truly, but the fact remains that they do. It would take quite a strong-minded woman to face it. I couldn't, I'm sure.

PAULINE. But, Auntie— —

(Stops abruptly, as bell rings.)

AUNT P. Some one is coming! I— —

(Rises, but sits down hastily, as she hears steps.)

AMOS *(entering)*. Well, Polly, I've come for the answer to that letter.

(PAULINE slips out.)

AUNT P. Why, Amos, aren't you a stranger? How do you do?

AMOS. I'll tell you how I'm going to do. I'm going to have an answer to that letter.

AUNT P. What letter? Do sit down, Amos! You make me nervous.

AMOS *(seating himself)*. Well, I've sat down. Now how about the answer to that letter?

AUNT P. That letter?

AMOS. Yes, that letter. It's no use to fence for time, Polly. I'm going to have an answer. Didn't you get a valentine letter from me to-day?

AUNT P. Amos, you never sent that letter to-day. It was old. It looked old, and it had a three-cent stamp. Three-cent stamps have been out of use thirty years and more.

AMOS. Then you did get it?

AUNT P. Yes, but I don't understand it, and I'm all upset about it. It was like a voice from the dead.

AMOS. It was, Polly, a voice from the dead past. That letter should have reached you forty years ago.

AUNT P. Did you write that forty years ago, Amos? And why didn't you send it? Why send it now, after all these years?

AMOS. I did send it, dear heart. There's a mystery about that letter that we will talk about later. Just now I want my answer.

AUNT P. Your answer, now?

AMOS. Yes, now. Polly, dear, I've waited forty years for my answer. Isn't that long enough to keep a man waiting?

AUNT P. But, Amos, forty years changes things.

AMOS. It hasn't changed my love for you any. I've tried to down it for forty years because I thought I'd got my answer. But have that answer I must and will.

AUNT P. But, Amos— —

AMOS. Let's go back a bit, Polly. You used to like me when we were little playmates, now didn't you?

AUNT P. Yes, of course. You were the nicest boy I knew.

AMOS. And when we went to the old Academy together. You liked me then?

AUNT P. Why, yes, of course, Amos.

AMOS. And if you'd got that letter when you were meant to get it, you'd have said yes; now, wouldn't you?

AUNT P. Why— —

AMOS. You would, Polly, now wouldn't you? Come, own up; it's forty years past.

AUNT P. Why, yes.

AMOS. Then you'll say it now. You've just got it, and I've come for my answer, as I said I should. Isn't it yes, Polly dearest?

AUNT P. But, Amos, I'm an old woman now.

AMOS. And I'm an old man. I'm sixty.

AUNT P. I'm sure that isn't old! For a man, I mean.

AMOS. Then fifty-eight isn't old—for a woman. Polly, I've everything but the thing I want most. I've no real home. I'm lonesome, dear. I've been lonesome for forty years—forty years that the locusts have eaten. Must I always be lonely, Polly?

AUNT P. But think what people would say, Amos.

AMOS. I don't care what people say, Polly. I only care for you, and to know that you care. And you do care, Polly, I know. Else why have you kept single all these years? Besides, if you didn't care, you'd have said no and you haven't said it. You've fenced. Polly, you did care. Don't you care any longer? Tell me!

AUNT P. Y-yes, Amos, I did care.

AMOS. And you've got over it? You no longer care? Ah, you can't say no. Say yes, Polly. Forty years is a long while to wait for an answer.

AUNT P. That's it, Amos, those forty years. It looks so ridiculous.

AMOS. Ridiculous, nothing! I'm waiting to hear that yes, Polly. And I shan't go home till I hear it.

AUNT P. Well—yes, then.

AMOS. Oh, Polly, my girl, to think I didn't hear that forty years ago! We've lots of time to make up.

(Kisses her.)

AUNT P. Do stop, Amos; Pauline will be coming in! What will she think?

AMOS. Well, as she is chief-conspirator, she won't be surprised, so cheer up, my dear. Pauline ran out to the post-office. I hear her coming now. *(Calls.)* Come here, you little niece of mine, and congratulate me.

PAULINE *(coming in)*. Is it true, really? Oh, Auntie dear, I am so glad! *(Kisses her, then goes to AMOS and kisses him.)* Thank you, Uncle Amos that is to be, for my lovely valentine. And I'm glad you got the right answer.

AUNT P. Pauline! Did you know?

AMOS. Didn't I tell you she was chief conspirator? She brought it all about. You shall

be bridesmaid, Polly girl, and choose what you please for a gift.

PAULINE. That will be lovely. When is it to be?

AMOS. Soon.

AUNT P. Oh, no, not very soon.

AMOS. Yes, soon, very soon. Good land, Polly, isn't forty years long enough?

AUNT P. But what had you to do with this, Pauline? And where has that letter been all these years?

PAULINE. Why, you see, Auntie, when I put the old valentines away I dropped one, and when I tried to open the drawer it stuck. I jerked it hard, to open it, and when it opened — — (*Opens drawer.*) Look! That's what I saw, and the letter was on top.

AUNT P. Why, how did that box come there? It looks like a drawer.

AMOS (*pulling the drawer out, and looking in*). It was, Polly, a secret drawer, just above this one. Evidently this had to be taken entirely out to reach it, but one support has come loose, so it dropped into the other drawer.

AUNT P. (*taking secret drawer in her lap*). I never knew there was a secret drawer in this table. Why, Amos! They're Grandmother's things! The ones we never could find! Here's her gold beads, and her gold thimble, and Grandpa's watch, and—this was Uncle Robert's little shoe—he died, you know, when he was a year old—and this box is full of hair—Father's curls, I do believe! That's all. No. (*Lifts paper in bottom of drawer.*) This is her marriage certificate! We knew there was a secret drawer in the desk, where she kept money. She showed that to Father about a year before she died. But this—and how did my valentine get there? How did Grandma get it before it was mailed?

AMOS. That's plain enough. She ran in that morning to show Mother a new patch-work pattern. The letter lay on the desk, and she chaffed me about it. Then she offered to play Cupid, and put it into your own hand. Thinking you would get it earlier that way, I consented. So when I called that night, and you were not at home, I thought it was a kind way of saying no, and went away to get over it. I couldn't, though, and came back a year later, as you know. But why your grandmother didn't give it to you, I don't see. She was always a woman to trust.

AUNT P. I understand that part of it. When she got home I had gone with Tim, and it was that night she had a shock, Amos. She never spoke again, and died a week later.

AMOS. And if I hadn't run away on the first train the next morning I would have known it, and might have mistrusted that you didn't get it! Oh, the years that the locusts have eaten! That was one of her own expressions, you remember.

AUNT P. But why didn't you bring the letter to me, Pauline, instead of to Amos?

PAULINE. I didn't give it to either, Auntie. I mailed it. If I'd given it to you, you'd have read it, and cried over it, and treasured it, but you'd never have let—Uncle Amos—see it or know of it, now would you?

AUNT P. Not at this late day. It would have been equivalent to a proposal from me. But I would always have treasured the thought that he did love me, after all. That I had not given my love unsought, something which has shamed me to myself all these years.

PAULINE. And if I had given it to you, Mr. Hill— —

AMOS. Uncle Amos is good enough, Polly girl.

PAULINE. If I had given it to you, Uncle Amos, would you have mailed it?

AMOS. No, I should have thought it too late.

PAULINE. So you see I did the best possible thing, and the letter reached the right one, and the result is all I hoped for.

AUNT P. But how did you know about it, Amos?

AMOS. Oh, the mischievous Cupid came and told me after she had mailed it, so— —

AUNT P. So you thought I'd expect you?

AMOS. No, I didn't. But the chance was too good to let slide. I'd never had an answer after all, and I came for it, as I said I would. I got it, too, just the answer I wanted. 'Tisn't every man who has to wait forty years for his answer. And now, Pauline, what is the shortest time required to rig up a wedding gown? A week?

AUNT P. A week! The idea!

AMOS. I'm talking to little Polly. Isn't a week long enough?

PAULINE. I think you'd better give her two.

AMOS. Two it is, then, and not a minute longer. Order your rig out, little girl, the nicest and prettiest you can find, and I'll pay for it. You deserve it. And you're to be our adopted daughter, and spend every minute your parents can spare you with us. We'll have a motor, childie, and anything else we want, and Polly and I will do our best to make up the forty years we have lost.

PAULINE. Oh, I'm so glad I did it! I didn't hardly dare! It sounds like a romance.

AUNT P. It is! To think of a lost valentine turning up after forty years!

CURTAIN

The Queen of Hearts

The Queen of Hearts

CHARACTERS

THE QUEEN OF HEARTS.

HER MAIDENS, *eight girls*.

ST. VALENTINE.

HIS ATTENDANTS, *eight boys*.

LITTLE SIR CUPID.

THE FAIRY.

THE QUEEN'S PAGES, *two small girls*.

ST. VALENTINE'S PAGES, *two small boys*.

COSTUMES

Dress the QUEEN in a white robe, cut like a Grecian robe, with flowing sleeves. It has a border of golden hearts, cut from gold paper. She has a girdle of heavy gold cord, with a heart at each end, also a tiara of lighter gold cord, surmounted by a heart of gold. She carries a sceptre of gold, surmounted by a heart. Choose a pretty girl for the part.

HER MAIDENS are in pale blue and silver. The dresses are made from crepe paper, with double skirts, full waists, and large sashes. The waists have Dutch necks and short puffed sleeves. Trim the neck, sleeves and both skirts with silver tinsel. The stockings may be blue or white, the slippers white or black. The hair should be flowing, held back from the face with a band of blue, edged with the silver, tied in a bow at the side, little silver hearts dangling from the ends of the bow. On the upper skirt, or tunic, is a row of silver hearts. Each carries a scarf or ribbon about two yards long, and four or five inches wide. These may be of some sheeny lining material. Point the ends, and hang a silver heart from each end, and from the centre. When the scarfs are not in use, they are thrown over the head, and hang down, in front, over the shoulders. They may be blue, to match the costume, or pink, of a shade that will harmonize with the blue.

ST. VALENTINE wears a long, white robe, girded with red and decorated with red hearts. He has a long white beard, easily removable, also a red cap or hood, to which is sewed long white hair. He carries a large, handsome valentine.

HIS ATTENDANTS wear long red robes, girded with white. Each carries a valentine.

HIS PAGES are two tiny boys, in white robes, with red girdles. All these robes should be so fashioned that they may be quickly and easily thrown off. Underneath all are dressed in court costumes, of red and white—long hose, puffed trunks, doublet or tunic, belted in, and puffed sleeves.

THE QUEEN'S PAGES are tiny girls in white, fluffy dresses. One has a big sash and hair ribbon of pink, also stockings to match. The other has them of blue. They have also bows at the shoulders, with short loops, and long ends. The blue ribbon has golden hearts attached to the ends; the pink one has silver hearts.

THE FAIRY is all in fluffy white. Her dress is made of mosquito netting, very short and full, with a full empire waist. White ribbons of varying lengths hang from the folded girdle, also from a band which encircles the low, round neck. To each of these ribbons is fastened a tiny silver bell. The sleeves are merely deep ruffles, cut in points, to each of

which is sewed a bell. The slippers have rosettes, with the bells. Around the head is a white band, to the lower side of which the little bells are fastened. To the centre of this, in front, is fastened a silver star. Her wand is white, with a silver star at the end. Below the star are several streamers, with the bells.

CUPID is a tiny boy, in a short, scant slip of pale pink, over very short white trousers or trunks—short enough not to show. The slip is cut straight, with low neck and no sleeves. A drapery of white mosquito netting, passing over left shoulder, and under right arm, nearly covering slip, gives a fleecy, cloud-like effect. He has little wings of pale pink, and wears no shoes nor stockings. He carries a little silver bow and a golden arrow. A quiver holding two or three more arrows may be slung from his right shoulder, and hang at his left side.

SCENE.—*The Palace of Hearts. The throne, in the centre background, is a chair, set upon a raised dais, the whole draped with purple. Upon the floor, in the centre of the space left before the throne, draw a large circle. Divide it into eight parts, by lines crossing at centre. Draw a smaller circle inside the other, having for a radius one-third the radius of the larger circle. The little drill or dance by the QUEEN'S MAIDENS is done on this diagram. Deck background with gold hearts.*

(Curtain rises on MAIDENS, standing at either side of throne, baskets of flowers in their hands.)

FIRST MAIDEN.

Oh, where is the Queen? Why so long delay?
She should not be late on her natal day.

SECOND MAIDEN.

Hark! She is coming! We ready must be
To join the procession, and bow the knee.

(MAIDENS pass to entrance, form double line, between which the QUEEN, her PAGES holding up the court train, passes. The MAIDENS then fall into line, two and two, behind them. The procession should pass entirely around platform, and to C. back. Then, while the QUEEN and PAGES pass down one side, to C. front, the MAIDENS pass down C. and form aisle to throne, up which the QUEEN passes. When she reaches the throne, she seats herself, the little PAGES seating themselves on the dais, on either side. MAIDENS arrange themselves on either side, and sing "Hail to the Queen." The music is that of "Little Stars" in "Festive Songs for Little Singers.")

HAIL TO THE QUEEN

All hail¹ to her, our lovely Queen, the fairest in the land.
 We joy to be her Maidens true, before her throne to stand.
 We welcome² her with glad accord, to her we bow³ the knee.
 Our hearts⁴ are hers in love and truth, and evermore shall be.

CHORUS

Hail⁵ to our fair Queen! Hail to our fair Queen!
 Hail⁶ to our fair Queen! The lovely Queen of Hearts.

(Rise during interlude.)

On this, our Queen's own natal day, we've sought in fairest bow'rs,
 And bring,⁷ as birthday offerings, these baskets of fair flow'rs.
 We're bound to her with links of love—with Love's own silver chain.
 Yes, we are hers in love and truth. Long⁸ may she live and reign.

CHORUS

(Motions)

1—Baskets in left hands. Raise right hand high. 2—Right hand out, toward Queen. 3—Sink on one knee. 4—Right hand on heart. 5—Wave right hand high, through line. 6—Raise right hand high as possible, hold through line. 7—Hold baskets, in right hands, out toward Queen. 8—Raise baskets high, in right hand. In singing second chorus, they do not kneel. At 5, swing baskets, high, through line. At 6, raise them high to right. Hold to end of line. At close of song, they march in front of throne, and lay baskets on lower step of dais, leaving room for Queen to step from throne.

QUEEN.

Thank you, my maids. They are offerings rare.
 Never were blossoms more sweet and fair.
 But I somehow am sad on my natal day.

THIRD MAIDEN.

We will dance, to drive dull care away.

DANCE OF THE MAIDENS

(The music should be joyous and rather quick, the step a light, tripping one. Refer to diagram.)

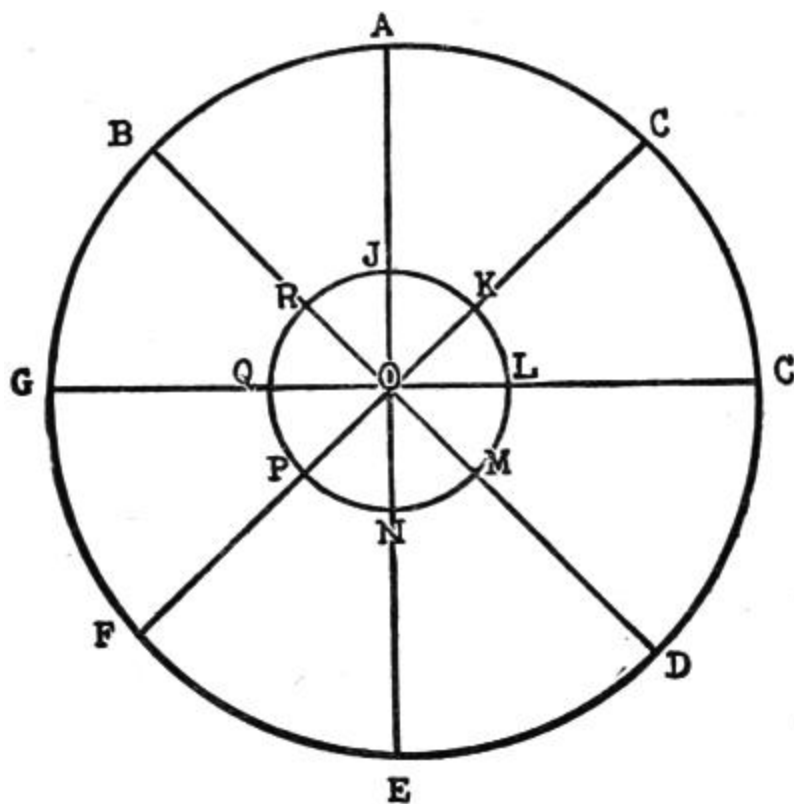


FIG. 1. Meet in front of throne, and form single line. March down to A. First girl passes down line to E. Next girl passes to O, then to D; third girl to O, then to F, others to C, G, B and H, all first passing to O. Last girl remains at A. During this figure they hold scarfs above head in both hands.

FIG. 2. Each girl tosses end of scarf to next girl. March entirely around circle.

FIG. 3. Face centre, raise scarfs high, still held as in fig. 2, trip sidewise around circle.

FIG. 4. Recover scarfs. Hold them in both hands, right hand high, left low, and march in, along lines, to inner circle. March around inner circle, scarfs in right hands nearly meeting, high in centre, like spokes of a wheel, march back lines to places again.

FIG. 5. Hold strips high over head, turn around in places, once and a half times, bringing faces to centre again.

FIG. 6. Girls at A and E march up lines to meet at O, cross scarfs, march around, then march up to J and N, where each raises scarf above head, turns completely around, and then marches on to A and E. Girls at C and G repeat this figure, then those at B and F, and lastly those at H and D.

FIG. 7. All march completely around circle, swinging scarfs.

FIG. 8. Girls at A, E, C and G march to inner circle, then around it, then halt on J, N, Q and L, and toss ends of scarfs to each other. Raise them high. Remaining girls march down lines, pass between girls, and march in tiny circle inside. They then pass through, between J and L, and march in circle outside them, then pass in again, between J and L, and wind in and out. Repeat this winding, but first girl stop when she reaches R, next one on P, third on M and last on K. Toss scarfs, and raise.

FIG. 9. Scarfs so held, all sidestep around this inner circle, then lower arms and recover scarfs. Step backward to places on large circle.

FIG. 10. Hold scarfs in both hands, dropped easily at sides. Turn as if to march around circle. First girl marches down to J, along inner circle to K, up line to B, along outer circle to C, in on line to L, along to M, and so on, till she reaches A again. As she passes down first line, second girl moves from H to A, next girl from G to H, and so on, all moving up one place. As first girl moves up second line, girl now at A moves up first line, all others moving on one place. As second girl passes up second line, third girl moves down first line, and so on. Each girl performs the whole figure, which is much easier than would appear from description, as each simply follows the one ahead of her, keeping the proper distance between them.

FIG. 11. March completely around circle. Then, led by girls at A and E, half turning each way, march on circle, and up E O and down A O, to centre. Here, leaders cross scarfs, march around, then on to C and G. Next ones do the same, and so on.

FIG. 12. March on, on circle, to B and H, marking time, to allow all to complete fig. 11; then march down lines to F and D, crossing at centre, then on, to places on circle.

FIG. 13. March completely around circle, face centre, march in to inner circle. Girls at J and N raise scarfs, step to centre, back around each other and to place again. Girls at Q and L repeat this; then girls at R and M; and lastly, those at K and P. March backward to large circle.

FIG. 14. Run in to inner circle, waving scarfs, then around inner circle, still waving.

FIG. 15. Girl at J stands still. Girls at R and K run up to B and H, followed by those at Q and L, while one at J steps to centre, and those at P and M move up, and follow, J and N, stepping to P and M. As each reaches B or H, she runs to her place at side of throne, till all are in place.

QUEEN.

'Twas very pretty, my maidens fair.

(A knock is heard.)

Bluebell, go and see who's there.

(PAGE with blue ribbons goes out and steps quickly back again.)

BLUEBELL.

I think it's a boy, but he's got wings.

QUEEN.

A fairy, or one of those elfish things?

BLUEBELL.

I really don't know. He's pretty and pink,
Too little to do any harm, I think.

QUEEN.

Well, say he may enter, but not to stay.

(BLUEBELL goes to entrance again, and CUPID skips in.)

Well, well, little fellow! Who are you, pray?

CUPID *(bowing low)*.

May I tell my tale in song?
It will not take me very long.

QUEEN.

Ay, sing. But tell us who you are,
And if you've journeyed from afar.

(CUPID sings. Tune: "The Rill" from "Festive Songs for Little Singers.")

CUPID'S SONG

I'm Cupid, brave and wild,
Half fairy and half child,
I'm dancing here
And dancing there,
To greet me, earth has smiled.
I've wings, on which I fly,
Up to the sweet blue sky,
I travel far
To many a star,
When no one else is nigh.

CHORUS

Winging, winging,
Swift o'er land and sea,
Singing little songs of love
Where'er I be.

With silver bow so true,
And golden arrow, too,
I aim my darts
At people's hearts.
Look out! I may shoot you!
In earth or worlds above,
Where'er I may rove,
The heart, you see,
Once hit by me,
Will surely fall in love.

CHORUS

QUEEN.

Methinks you're a mischievous child, indeed.
Of you, in this court, we have no need,
For mankind never enters here,
So none can fall in love, 'tis clear.

CUPID.

The fair Queen of Hearts should find her a mate.
To die an old maid is a dreadful fate.

QUEEN.

Not so, Sir Cupid. A virgin to stay,
Is the fate I wish for, now and always.
Besides, I have no mate, you see,
For no mere man is worthy me.

CUPID (*sings to the tune: "Campbells Are Coming"*).

He's coming, he's coming, ha, ha, ho, ho!
He's coming, although you may not think so.
On Valentine's Day there's a mate for each lassie,
And one for the fair Queen of Hearts, ho, ho!

QUEEN.

Now, wee Sir Cupid, please depart.
Although so small, yet you are male,
And none of that sex is allowed
To stay within my kingdom's pale.

MAIDENS.

Oh, he's so pretty and so pink,
Please, dear Queen, let him stay!
He's just a darling baby!
With him we'd like to play.

CUPID.

Yes, let me stay a while, and rest!
I promise to behave my best.

QUEEN.

Well, stay, child. You have winning ways;
And with no men-folks here,
You cannot do much mischief
With your arrows, that is clear.
Hark! Hear that silvery, tinkling sound,
And that rap, so light and fair,
It sounds like the touch of a fairy's wand.
Rosebud, see who is there.

(PAGE with pink ribbons goes to door, and returns.)

ROSEBUD.

It is no boy this time, fair Queen,
But the dearest fairy. May she come in?

QUEEN.

Yes, bid her enter.

(ROSEBUD goes to door, and FAIRY flits in.)

Lovely fay,
What seek you in my courts to-day?

FAIRY *(sings to the tune: "The Fairies," in "Festive Songs for Little Singers")*.

I'm the dainty little fairy
 That's called Tinkle Bell.
 To your court, fair Queen, I flitted
 Just to wish you well.
 It was whispered 'mong the fairies,
 'Twas your natal day,
 So our queen, with happy greetings
 Bade me haste away.

To the Queen of Hearts a message;
 Little Tinkle Bell,
 You must carry very swiftly.
 'Tis a gift as well.
 Tell her that to her I'm sending
 My best gift to-day—
 The best gift in earth or heaven;
 And it's on its way.

QUEEN.

What can it be?

CUPID.

I think I know.

FAIRY (*frowning at him, and raising finger in warning*).

Nay, impertinent child!
 How can you think so?

(*FAIRY flits about, tinkling bells. She flits up to CUPID, and remains by him. While the attention of the court is taken up with the next admittance, he aims at the heart of the QUEEN. It is not necessary to shoot, in fact, he had better not. In each case, throughout the play, he merely aims. Whenever there is opportunity the FAIRY and Cupid whisper together, unnoticed by the rest, and CUPID aims at every girl in turn, even the little PAGES.*)

QUEEN.

Another knock! Who this time?
 Go see, my pages fair.

(*Both BLUEBELL and ROSEBUD go, but come running back.*)

BOTH.

It's boys! It's boys! And an old, old man!

QUEEN.

Tell them to go away, quick as they can.

(PAGES go to door again, remain a minute or two, then return.)

BLUEBELL.

He says his name's St. Valentine.

ROSEBUD.

He claims this natal day of thine.

BLUEBELL.

He says he of this day is King.

ROSEBUD.

And that he's come a gift to bring.

QUEEN.

Well, bid him enter, but alone,
Since he this day claims for his own.

(They go to door again, and return.)

BLUEBELL.

He says his attendants must come, too.
He will not enter, unless they do.

QUEEN.

Then tell him he outside must stay.

(They go to door and return.)

ROSEBUD.

The old man will not go away.
He says a gift so fair he brings,
It's worthy of the wisest Kings
Or fairest Queens.

QUEEN.

Are they young and fair,
The attendants that are waiting there?

BLUEBELL.

They look sad and sober. Their robes are queer.

QUEEN.

For a brief space of time they may enter here.

(PAGES go to door again, and return, followed by ST. VALENTINE, his PAGES holding the train of his robe. The ATTENDANTS follow, two and two. He stands before throne, his ATTENDANTS on either side.)

QUEEN.

I hear you claim to be a King;
And that a gift to me you bring.

ST. VAL.

E'en so, fair Queen. St. Valentine
Am I. This day is surely mine.

QUEEN.

But 'tis my natal day as well.

ST. VAL.

Much happiness doth that foretell.

QUEEN.

But where is the gift you bring to-day?

ST. VAL.

'Tis my heart I bring. Accept it, pray.
'Tis a gift most rare—this that I bring.
You're Queen of Hearts, but I am King.

QUEEN.

St. Valentine is ages old.
Though Love's a great gift, I've been told.
I am too young to mate with thee,
Though thou best King on earth might be.

ST. VAL.

And if I were not? Were I young and gay,
Fair Queen, would you say "no" to-day?

QUEEN.

Why, really, I like thee passing well,
Though the reason why I could not tell.
Why, yes. It's a safe little word to say,
Since you are so old, good saint, to-day.

ST. VAL.

Love can make the heart grow young, and make the face grow fair.
And the Fairy Love stands in thy court with Cupid, over there.

QUEEN.

Love? Why, her name is Tinkle Bell.

FAIRY.

Fair Queen, my name is Love, as well.
So, Valentine, shed all disguise,
And stand forth, young, before her eyes.

(As she speaks, she touches ST. VAL., then the PAGES, then she flits to either side, and touches all the ATTENDANTS. As each is touched, he throws off his robe, ST. VAL. shedding cap and whiskers, also. These are carried out by the PAGES. Have some one at entrance to take them.)

QUEEN.

Why, can this be St. Valentine?
Young, handsome, gallant, straight and fine?

ST. VAL.

It is, indeed; and now, fair Queen,
Thy promise true thou must redeem.

QUEEN.

'Twas won by fraud. Thou wast not true,
And so I cannot wed with you.

ST. VAL.

It was no fraud, but the power of Love,
The fairy all other fays above.

FAIRY.

Fair Queen, he is truly worthy of you.
He is brave and noble, tender and true.

BOYS (*sing to the tune: "Autumn Leaves," in "Festive Songs for Little Singers"*).

Noblest King in all the world, St. Valentine!
True and tender, brave and good—St. Valentine!
Faithful lover will he be,
True eternally to thee.
Take the gift he brings to thee. 'Tis divine.

Share thy royal throne with good St. Valentine.
Fortunate art thou to have his love as thine.
With him thou wilt happy be,
Sorrow never dwell with thee.
If you're his, fair Queen, you see, and he's thine.

QUEEN.

Truly thy courtiers love thee well,
And noble things of thee they tell.
Truly, my heart inclines to thee.

ST. VAL.

Then give that heart, fair Queen, to me.
I'll guard it as my greatest treasure,
And make my trust to seek thy pleasure.

QUEEN.

I yield. Thou takest what is thine own.
There's room for both upon my throne.

(QUEEN moves aside, and ST. VAL. seats himself beside her. His PAGES seat themselves by BLUEBELL and ROSEBUD, and the ATTENDANTS move into place beside the MAIDENS, so that all are in pairs.)

CUPID (sings, tune as before. At beginning of sixth line, FAIRY joins in, and they sing rest of verse and chorus together).

My aim was good and true!
Fair Queen, I aimed at you.
My golden dart
Has pierced your heart—
Those of your maidens, too.
In earth, or realms above,
Wherever you may rove,
Of gifts so fair,
Both rich and rare,
The best of all is love.

CHORUS

Winging, winging,
Swiftly on our way,
We brought you this fairest gift,
Thy natal day.

QUEEN.

Ah, Cupid, in mischief thou'rt bound to be!
'Twas the opening wedge—admitting thee.

CUPID.

Art thou not glad? Tell me, fair Queen.
Dost wish thou'dst banished me from the scene?

FAIRY.

And the little Fairy, Tinkle Bell?
Art sorry that she came, as well?
And all these visitors of thine,
Including brave St. Valentine?

QUEEN.

Nay, ye are welcome, every one,
As well as he who shares my throne.
Of all fair gifts, from east or west,
I'm very sure that love is best.

ALL (*sing to the tune: "Easter Day," in "Festive Songs for Little Singers"*).

In all the world there's naught so dear,
 There's naught so rich and rare,
 As this fair gift her natal day
 Brought to our Queen so fair.
 For you may search the whole wide world,
 North, south, or east, or west;
 You ne'er can find a sweeter gift.
 True love is surely best.

CHORUS

True love is best, 'tis surely best,
 The heart's most earnest call.
 In north or south, in east or west,
 The fairest gift of all!

'Tis love that makes the world go round,
 That guides it on its way.
 'Tis love that builds our homes so dear,
 Love that shall live away!
 'Tis love that keeps the heart e'er young.
 With us through life 'twill stay;
 And last through all eternity,
 For love must live for aye.

CURTAIN

(The curtain should rise again, to show the wedding. The CLERGYMAN, in the robes of the Episcopal church, waits at the altar, where is also ST. VALENTINE, his ATTENDANTS near. The bridal procession should enter at one side of the back, if possible, pass down to the front, across to C. front, and up C. to altar. CUPID and the FAIRY should precede the procession; next should come one of the tiny PAGES, with the ring on a velvet cushion. BLUEBELL and ROSEBUD follow, as flower girls, then the QUEEN, followed by her MAIDENS, two by two. No change is necessary in any of the costumes but to add a long veil of mosquito netting to the QUEEN'S costume. At the altar, ST. VALENTINE meets her, and they arrange themselves as for the ceremony, the BRIDE and GROOM kneeling before the CLERGYMAN. The curtain may fall on this tableau, or they may rise, and march out, to the wedding march, if desired. Of course, in this case, the order will be changed somewhat.)

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