



## IT WAS UNEXPECTED.

A STORY FOR ST. VALENTINE'S DAY.

WHEN my dear Aunt Maud died—she died the very summer I graduated—I was really too heart-broken to care what became of me. Still, I had to be disposed of in some way, so it was decided that I go to live with my brother Richard.

I had always lived with my aunt, had known no other mother, therefore her death was the greatest blow possible to me. And this brother Richard I knew only slightly, and that when I was a mere child. If I had been in a state of mind to care about anything, I should have hated the idea of going very much. As it was, I went without a murmur. I took the journey alone, almost clear across the continent, and subsequently, after many ups and



RECEIVED A TELEGRAM.

down, arrived at Dick's town, a queer little village in South Carolina.

Dick is a moderately young bachelor. He is an attorney-at-law, and has a very fair practice indeed. Anterior to my advent, he had lived by himself in a pretty cottage on the prettiest street, and was rather a central figure, and was quite the most eligible young man about town. He was not spoiled, though. I found him to be a very dear old fellow, and determined in my heart to be to him such a faithful co-operator and satisfactory housekeeper, that he would never need or desire any other.

We got on famously together, so famously that in all probability the last chapter would have found us still there, he a grizzled old bachelor, I a grizzled old maid, had not something occurred which brought about a change.

It all grew out of what happened one St. Valentine's eve.

On this day, memorable above other days, just about an hour after dinner Dick received a telegram to go up that evening to A—a city fifty miles away, to meet an important client. He did not have time to come home, for the train was then in sight, but he scribbled me the following note, which I did not get until nearly night, because the office boy neglected to bring it until that time.

3:10 p. m.

Dear Girl—Have to leave on next train to meet a man in A—. Probably won't get home until to-morrow noon. Spend the night with the Ancient (a dear old lady friend of mine.) Be sure to put that money in the bank before it closes at 4. Don't fail.

DICK.

It was such a bore to lock up at that late hour and go out for the night. I had been such a gloomy afternoon, and looked like it would rain. Altogether I did not feel like it. I was not afraid, though I had never stayed alone all night in a house. And the money—several thousand dollars collected for a client—surely I could not at I put money in the bank that closed at 4. I could not very well carry it with me to the Ancient's, and certainly could not leave it.

I had never heard of any burglaries in the town, but I made up my mind that I would not go to bed that night and leave the money there, because I was sure to be otherwise.

Just as I was about to go to bed, I

servant-girl go early; and sat, neglecting even to light the lamps, before a big oak fire in the sitting-room "thinking up" one of Dick's cases. It was a murder case, that had a great deal of circumstantial evidence leading in various directions.

I soon became deeply absorbed; so deeply that I presently went to sleep at it, and in a dream saw our poor man tried, convicted and actually sentenced to be hanged, and was myself possessed of a frantic desire to attend the hanging in person, my non-appearance being wholly due to the fact that I could not find my shoes, being separated from them for some unexplainable reason.

I woke up suddenly, frightened to find myself enveloped in darkness, relieved only by an uncanny red glow from the fast-dying coals upon the hearth. Everything was so still. Not the smallest sound except the ticking of a little clock in my darkened bedroom, and the clicking of the dying coals.

I was possessed of a strange, sinking fear. I was afraid to move, afraid to turn my head to left or right lest I see something terrifying lurking in the gloomy corners. I was cold, too, and trembling. The room was chilled; I fancied it must be just before dawn.

My fear increased rather than diminished as the moments dragged by. I could hear my heart beating. I soon became enthralled by terror. I had a kind of instinctive animal fear of impending danger. I thought of the money. It was locked up in the cabinet at my right hand, not two yards away. I found myself listening painfully, tortuously. My throat seemed swollen. I swallowed in gulps.

I endeavored to rally my courage, to persuade myself that I had awakened from a nightmare, and was nervous; that there was nothing to fear, and that I was making a baby of myself. All to no purpose. Something was going to happen; something was happening at that moment which would bring me hurt.

I could not throw off the notion. Just then it began to rain—a regular down-fall, as if the bottom had suddenly fallen out of the clouds. I had never known it to rain so heavily. A perfect deluge, and every drop seemed to penetrate my soul. I did not move. I lay back in my cushioned chair helpless, and felt that I could not have raised my hand to my face if my life were the forfeit. Such pouring! I found myself listening behind the rain—behind all the pattering noise—listening for another sound. I had a grotesque idea that the elements and this something that was coming to me, were collocated together, the one to screen the approach of the other.

I was listening with every fiber of



GETTING IN LIKE A BURGLAR.

my body drawn taut. Listening for what? I did not know. Something beyond, behind the rain. Then I heard it. A sound distinct from the rain pattering. A sound emanating from our little drawing-room—a scraping, drawing sound. It came from the front portico. I knew someone was cutting through the Venetian blinds into the house. My faintest doubt vanished soon, when I unmistakably heard the blinds dragged back and the creak as it was pushed up. Someone was entering the house! This person, whoever it was, knew of my brother's ab-

sence. Good heavens! I thought of Henry, our office man. He brought the note—an open note. It was he who caused the delay which prevented my depositing the money. It was as clear as day. I rose rigidly to my feet. In a twinkling my mind was acutely active, and a thousand ways of escape surged through my brain in a moment.

I unlocked the cabinet and grasped the large pocketbook which contained the notes, and thrust it into my bosom. To what purpose I did not know. I retreated into the dense darkness of my own bedroom, where I stood uncertain and shivering.

The windows were too high from the ground to admit of my jumping therefrom without incurring the risk of a broken limb; besides, there was no time. At the first sound of my putting up the sash, I would be detected and overpowered. I heard a heavy tread along the hall. An idea flashed into my head like the incision of a blade. I clutched the money in my bosom and stepped into the empty fireplace. In another moment I was scrambling up the sooty chimney with the agility of a



HELD MY HEAD ACROSS HIS KNEES.

finished chimney sweep, and I kept scrambling until I had made a stronghold for myself.

What went on down below I did not know. In the cessation of the rain I could hear the heavy tread passing to and fro in a search. I knew, for that money. But I, from my lofty vantage ground, could only thank heaven again and again for such a blessed deliverance.

I was so benumbed with cold and fright that I think I lost consciousness, and would probably have tumbled down the chimney but that I was so rigid and so walled in I could not.

The next thing I remember was opening my eyes and seeing the square of wan light above me. Then realizing all, my strength gave way, and I fell heavily striking my head against something which left me senseless for hours. When I came to myself, I was in the arms of a young man whom I had never seen before. He sat upon the floor, and held my head across his knees, while he wiped the blood from my cut forehead with a pocket handkerchief, which every now and then he would squeeze out in a basin of water at his elbow.

I don't suppose there was ever a more terrified young man upon this earth of ours. Imagine an inoffensive young man turning up in a town where an intimate friend lived, coming in on the very train that takes his intimate friend out. Imagine the intimate friend cordially inviting the newcomer to his house, telling him that there was nobody in it, but that he could put up there, make himself lord and master, and get a good bed. Then to make the thing complete, give him the wrong keys by which to let himself in. Imagine this newcomer booming about town until 11 o'clock, then striking out for his friend's abode; overtaken by the rain; at last to arrive at his intended abiding place to discover he has the wrong keys, which necessitated his climbing into the house like a burglar. Imagine him piling into the first bed he comes to, very soon sinking off into the untroubled slumber of the innocent at heart, to be awakened at the peep of day by a something tumbling down the chimney. Not a hobgoblin—that were better—but a young woman, bespattered and grimy, but still a young

woman, and one probably more dead than alive. Imagine it all if you can, for that is what happened to the misguided young man, who held me across his knees and wiped the blood from my broken forehead on that memorable St. Valentine's morning.

Imagine it, and tell me—if men through stupidity don't cause half of all the trouble in the world. We explained it all to each other as best we could, for I was really ill, and quite ready to go off into another swoon.

When the servant girl came he went for the doctor, and Mary got me to bed.

Dick came at noon, and was horrified at what had happened. But the doctor had pronounced me more frightened than hurt; and really, but for the dreadful cold I had caught, and my wounded forehead, it did not amount to anything, and soon became a tremendous joke.

And it turned out that this friend of Dick's, whose acquaintance I made in such an unconventional fashion, was the very client whose money I defended.

And it also came about that—that—he—that I—that we have—we have grown to know each other very well; and Dick—Dick is to look out for another co-operator before next fall; because—well, for reasons best known to myself.



Winds that roam, with a homeless sound,  
Under a sky all leaden gray;  
Ice on rannel, and snow on ground;  
Leafless branches that bleakly sway—  
In winter days, for hearts that pine,  
Hast thou no balm, Saint Valentine!

Where are the crickets' castanets,  
Where are the songbirds' melodic floods?  
Where now slumber the violet,  
Where hide the pussy willow buds?  
Whisper within this ear of mine  
Such secrets, kind Saint Valentine!

Alas! the saint shall never tell  
The mystery of all these things:  
Yet round one his name weaves a spell,  
Charming as waft of elfin wings.  
Whence lads and lassies may divine  
The presence of Saint Valentine.

Kind is he, yes, but old, they say,  
With hair and beard like yonder snow.  
Perhaps young folks would feel dismay,  
Were he to them his face to show.  
When they, with wax or gilded twine,  
Seal missives marked "Saint Valen-  
tine!"

Hush! through the frosty atmosphere  
What steals to earth? A radiant boy!  
Whose eyes do look so sweetly queer  
They make one blush yet fill with joy—  
Ha, ha! Come quaff, in sparkling wine,  
Good health to rare Saint Valentine!

### The First Valentine.

My sister Sue has seven now,  
And Antoinette has nine;  
I wonder if the next will be  
My own dear valentine?

I've watched the postman most all day,  
And now it's nearly eight;  
I go to bed at seven; this once  
Mamma said I might wait.

He's coming 'round the corner now;  
Oh, dear! he's going past!  
No, no! he's coming in to bring  
My valentine at last.

I know it must be mine this time;  
It is! It's 'dressed to me—  
"Miss Dorothea Helen Brown,"  
As plain as it can be.

It's just as pretty as a pink,  
With angel boys with wings,  
And rosy wreaths and ribbon knots,  
And hearts and other things.



"AND LOVELY GOLD LACE ON THE EDGE."

And lovely gold lace on the edge,  
And poetry in line;  
It says: "My love, I love but thee,  
Thy faithful valentine."

My sisters said that valentines  
Were not for little girls,  
Whose dresses did not reach their  
boots—  
Who wore their hair in curls.

But I don't care; they haven't one  
That's half so nice as mine;  
How glad I am I'm old enough  
To have a valentine!

Telephone Infringe Curd.  
Brooklyn bridge officials are awaiting with considerable interest the result of an experiment with telephones which is likely to result in their adoption for permanent use on the structure. The aim of the new plan is to permit telephoning from the cars in motion to the train dispatcher's office at the Brooklyn end of the bridge by a wire which runs up the side of the car to the roof. An ordinary battery is used, and the scheme, if pronounced thoroughly practicable, will be found of great value, particularly in case of accidents, when warning can be sent back almost immediately.

Miniature Craze Is Everywhere.  
The miniature craze is making havoc in the land. Miniatures are everywhere. The newest hair brushes show gold backs with tiny miniatures somewhere upon them. Just where the miniature is placed is apparently of no consequence as long as it is in evidence. Puff balls have their handles capped with a miniature. Odd-shaped miniatures in rims of gold form fashionable cuff buttons, and miniatures adorn the newest inlaid tables.

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