

entered into. It is a unique service, and its rewards are great. But let the daughter never forget that hers is always the post of auxiliary. However truly she may become the real center of the family circle, however much she may lead the household into new interests—always her aim and just ambition—it is as a daughter that she must do it, and along the methods recognized in and characteristic of her parents' household. Few women can make for themselves any larger opportunity.



St. Valentine's Day in Olden Times

By Alice Morse Earle

The observance of St. Valentine's Day is now confined to the sending of valentines by children, and, among vulgar folk, of so-called comic valentines in futile derision. Yet it is a festival which has been honored by poets and observed by lovers for centuries.

In Pepys's Diary we find many allusions to the valentine customs of his day; and it seems that not only sentimental verses but substantial gifts were given as valentines. Pepys gave Martha Batten, one year, "for a Valentine" one pair of embroidered and six pairs of plain white gloves that cost forty shillings. Another year his cousin Turner told him she had drawn him for her valentine; he straightway bought her "a pair of green silk stockings and garters and shoe strings, and two pairs of jessimy gloves, all coming to about 28s." The expense troubled him (as spending money always did) when he had to lay out five pounds for a valentine for his wife. He shows plainly the customs of the times in his entry on Valentine's Day, 1665:

This morning comes Dickie Pen to be my wife's Valentine and came to our bedside. By the same token I had him brought to my bedside thinking to have made him kiss me; but he perceived me and would not, so went to his Valentine—a notable stout witty boy.

Again he writes:

This morning came up to my wife's bedside little Will Mercer to be her Valentine, and brought her name writ upon blue paper in gold letters, done by himself very pretty, and we were both well pleased with it.

Not only boys but men boldly intruded into Madam Pepys's bedchamber, and were "challenged" by her. We find in Sir Thomas Browne's letters, and even in Governor Winthrop's of New England, similar references to "challenging" valentines. Gloves and ribbons were valentine gifts everywhere in Great Britain.

Shakespeare refers in "Hamlet" to the universal belief of his times, that the first unmarried man seen by a maid on St. Valentine's morn would become her husband.

To-morrow is St. Valentine's Day,
All in the morn betime,
And I a maid at your window
To be your Valentine.

Herrick, in his "Hesperides," speaks of the practice of divining by rosebuds on Valentine's Day. Goldsmith tells us, in his "Vicar of Wakefield," that rustics sent true-lover's knots on that day—a pretty fashion.

The custom of valentine "dealing" prevailed in many English counties. A young woman would write the names of the young men she knew or had a preference for, each on a slip of paper. She then, blindfolded, drew a slip from the hat in which they had been placed, and the name written thereon was held to be her true-love and her possible husband. This very simple and innocent ceremony was severely reprehended by many pious pastors as a "heathenish, lewd, superstitious custom." St. Francis de Sales, we learn from his life, "severely forbade the custom of valentines, and to abolish it changed it into giving billets with the names of certain saints for them to honour and to imitate"—which must have proved but sorry fun, and of short popularity.

In 1667 Pepys notes the fashion of combining mottoes with the names—such mottoes as "most courteous and most fair," and suggests the "very pretty" use of anagrams.

In Derbyshire a curious custom prevailed of peeping

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gests new books, and discovers new departures in the world's activity, she who performs the innumerable charitable works required of her mother, and assists by her knowledge and wisdom in the decision of the complicated questions of their management. She attends to the details of housekeeping, and is at the call of her father for any duty or pleasure; she even selects the table-linen, and essays to advise in choosing stock. Does any one think such as these are trifling duties? Let her discover for herself the amount and variety of knowledge, science, skill, experience, acquaintance with the world, executive ability, illustrated and developed by simply this random list of occupations, and she will discover how a daughter may use all her knowledge and ability, and serve the world, in the midst of detailed affairs. And she will discover also once more that, in losing her life in other lives, she has in fact saved it for herself.

In a multitude of other ways is a daughter called upon to serve her day and generation. Nowhere is her field greater than in the social life of the family, and much might be said on this point. Old age and illness make an inexorable draft upon her. That is not religion but selfishness which leaves an aged father or dying mother alone while the daughter departs upon what she is pleased to call "the Lord's errand"—missionary addresses to the contrary notwithstanding. The particulars of a daughter's service in these and many other directions cannot be

through the keyhole on the early morn as a matrimonial divination. If the spying eye chanced to see but a single object at the first glance, the looker would remain unmarried for the ensuing year. If she saw two objects or persons, she was sure to quickly have a lover. If fortune chanced to drive a cock and hen within the range of vision of the keyhole, she was sure of being married ere the year was ended.

As with all old-time holidays, the poorer classes seized on St. Valentine's Day as the opportunity to demand gifts. On many holidays persons of all ranks of life forced unwilling gifts from each other. It is curious that in the one holiday we have still retained in America—Christmas—we have clung to the lowest form of its observance, the exchange of gifts, while as a religious holiday it has lost its significance. In Cambridgeshire and Herefordshire, until recently, little bands of children went from house to house on St. Valentine's morn singing,

Curl your locks as I do mine,
Two before and three behind,
So good-morning, Valentine!

Small gifts of money were thrown out to them. In other counties the children sing,

Good-morrow, Valentine!
First 'tis yours, then 'tis mine,
Please give me a valentine.

In some towns the drawing of lots for a true-love is done on St. Valentine's Eve. Another method of divination is to go to the churchyard at midnight and walk twelve times round the church, repeating without intermission:

Hemp-seed I sow,
Hemp-seed I sow;
He that loves me best
Come after me, and now.

It is believed that the figure of the lover will then appear and make some sign by which his identity may be discovered.

In New England, twenty years ago, it was the universal custom among little children to send valentines. As soon as it was dusk the valentines were carried clandestinely to the various doors and left with loud rings of the door-bell, or with a succession of violent knocks. "Boughten" valentines of lace-paper or stamped paper with printed mottoes, costing a cent or two apiece, or even the exorbitant sum of five cents, indicated not only much opulence on the part of the sender, but a violent extreme of affection and interest. Cases were known where even such unwonted luxuries as carnelian rings were inclosed with the valentine—a most significant gift. In general, these New England valentines were of home manufacture: sheets of paper, occasionally heart-shaped, with bits of gilt and colored paper, or tiny stamped roses with hearts pasted thereon, and with appropriate though trite inscriptions in the giver's handwriting—

The rose is red, the violet blue,
The pink is pretty, and so are you.

If you love me as I love you,
No knife shall cut our love in two.

And many other lines of amatory doggerel. Shelley's pretty lines were unknown to us:

My heart to you is given,
Oh, do give yours to me;
We'll lock them up together,
And throw away the key.

The child who received the largest number of valentines was an assured favorite. At a somewhat earlier date cut-paper valentines of white paper, cut in various significant designs, were very popular in America.

Good St. Valentine! I pray thee give us absolution and forgive us our degenerate and irreverent days when I confess to thee that, to thine honor and in tender memory of thy natal day in this New World in 1894, I saw offered for sale "a large Vallentine and peece of A. 1. Chewing Gum for 1 cent."

The School-Girls' Fund

Last week we made no acknowledgment of the money received for the Friendship Fund of the working-girls of New York. As an evidence of what a little money can do, the following story is told:

About the middle of last August a blind girl was horribly burned in one of the tenement-houses in the famous East Side of New York. The girl's mother was a partial invalid, and this accident compelled the sister, twenty years old, to give up work and become a nurse. No amount of love could supply the knowledge necessary to care for the suffering girl. An appeal was made to two trained nurses, who had gone down to the East Side to live, to call at this home. Only those who have seen what those two young women have become to that family can realize the opportunity that trained nurses among the sick poor have. Last spring the mother of the sick girl went to one of the New York hospitals and had an operation performed, the seriousness of which neither she nor her family knew. In September the old trouble returned; again the mother went to the hospital to see the physician; the truth was not told to her; but to the twenty-year-old girl, who from the middle of August had been up night and day caring for her injured sister, the truth was told. Her mother had cancer, well developed, and there was no help for her but death. Quietly, bravely, she kept her