



HE daintiest bit of a girl is she, With dusky violet eyes, That smiling, she raises unto me,

As I toss, and dandle her, on my knee, Or, with head on my breast, she lies.

She's a broad, white brow, un wrinkled, set In an arope of gold; And her lips, like a red, red rose, dew wet, Or a bunch of fragrant mignonette,

Or an enchanted sweetness hold.

Of her teeth, I've never a word to say, For in sooth, she has none yet, But there will be pearls "of the purest ray" By her fairy soderthorn brought some day

From the sea, in a silver net.

No circlet of diamonds wreath she, She's a princess, ne'ertheless; No gown of silken embroidery Hides her tiny figures' symmetry, But a simple, snowy dress,

Falchets softly down to her wee, wee feet, And down to the dimpled hand, That with infantine grace, she lifts to meet The lips she knoweth so ready to greet With kisses, as tenderly sweet

As were ever in demand.

O, baby Louise, you have won me quite, With your eyes, that like twin stars shine; By your face, with winsomeness all aight From its perfect chin, to its brow snow white, So I choose you "My Valentine."

—Sarah L. Morris, in Inter Ocean.



HERE was an unusual flutter in the little town of Pattleton. Joseph Jennings was coming home again. Years ago, when the old red

schoolhouse was filled with the boys and girls of the town, February 14th was as great a holiday as could be made of it with school in session and somebody had a party, or some one got up a ride, or there was a grand popcorn frolic. In fact, there was always something going on that day, if all other days in the year should be dry as dust, though that could never be the case with forty girls and boys to make them lively. The excuse for this extra fun on the 14th was that it was Jo Jennings' birthday, and they must celebrate it; and when any of the parents tried to remonstrate the ready argument was that they didn't celebrate other birthdays, because nobody was ever born on a day they could celebrate, and with such a good reason what could be said further? All the girls sent him valentines, and all the boys wished they could change places for just that one day. As he grew older the custom remained the same, for he was, and had always been a great favorite in the town. The mail bug which came in on the stage that night fairly bulged with the number of missives directed to J. J. Jennings. To be sure some of the girls had married and left the town, but all who remained kept up the custom.

Everybody called him Jo, and as he came back year after year seemingly unchanged in his love for the old home, and just as cordial with all the old friends, they decided that travel could never make him other than the kind-hearted friend he had ever been.

Always impartial in his treatment of the young ladies of the place, he took one to the picnic, another out driving behind the fat, black pony, still another on the harbor excursion, and a different one up the mountain after blueberries.

Everybody called his mother Aunt Judith, because she was such a lovely old lady they simply couldn't help it. A face sweet and beautiful in its youth only grew more sweet as the years made wrinkles and drew lines here and there. The eyes, always sympathetic, only filled with deeper light of love as time fled. The hair, in earlier years a rich crown for the erect figure, only laid itself in more caressing waves about the face. Truly she had grown old gracefully. An invalid, she was cared for by her eldest daughter, Martha, who had already sent away a lover because she would not leave her home just now.

She did wish Jo would marry and bring his wife home to live. That would make all clear. Martha could be happy, and she knew for herself she could love anyone of the village girls whom he might choose for a wife. Why didn't he care for some one? The year before something had happened! They had all sent valentines according to the usual custom. There were eighteen of them. The next morning, down at the Corners, Jo was talking to Jimmie Hazen, and Jimmie asked, carelessly: "How many this time, Jo?"

"Eighteen splendid ones; but I don't suppose one or the senders can make a biscuit to save her life."

Of course Jimmie mentioned it as a good joke to his sister Ruth, who had black eyes and a lively temper of her own, and she told the other girls, considering it anything but a joke, and that was what caused all the flutter. Now Ruth couldn't make biscuits, and she had always thought Jo just a little better than ordinary mortals, and to have him come down to biscuits, and then to throw out such a remark as that to her brother! He probably meant to have Jimmie tell her.

Ruth told the girls at the next social, and, with her eyes flashing, declared she wished she could bake, but she couldn't, and she hated dough; but if she could make biscuits she'd make a

bushel and smother him. So now! She cried at home, and thought it very unkind of Jo, and declared she wouldn't send another valentine as long as she lived. But when the summer came and the girls, not forgetting the fling at their lack of ability, tools to refusing him when invited to picnics or other places of amusements, Ruth was sorry, and yet glad, for she couldn't stop liking him all at once, even if she tried her best. So when the anniversary came again she decided she would just send as always and not mind what had probably thoughtlessly been said.

No one knew why the daughters of the several households were so anxious to learn to make bread, but it was a fact that every girl in town suddenly developed a desire to relieve her mother of the biscuit making. And yet, not every one; for little Ruth Hazen declared she couldn't and wouldn't, and stuck to the china painting which she sent regularly to Rockland, and which brought her more money than carloads of biscuits would have done.

Valentine's day brought only one valentine for Jo, and he opened it wondering if his friends had forgotten that it was his birthday, or whether they thought it time to drop the old custom. He wondered who had remembered him. The roses looked like some he had every year, half blown and always pink. Ruth Hazen always wanted a bunch of the blush roses by the door, and he remembered so well how she buried her face in the last ones he had carried to her—yes, it must have been Ruth. Puzzled and a little troubled at the dearth of valentines, he knew not what to make of it. Then Grace Eames had refused to ride with him last summer, giving a good reason, of course, but one that he knew could have been laid aside.

"Oh! I am sure the girls didn't mean—" she stopped, for though she might explain the meaning of the biscuit, could she explain the one valentine? "Cousin Albert told me I shouldn't always have so many valentines, and he was right. But it is only the end of a lesson that I have been a long time learning. Martha says a man can have but one valentine. Now that I have really come down to one, I find that I have never had but one. That I have looked for yours first, and last night when I thought what it would mean if you stop sending each year I could hardly wait to see you and ask if you would come yourself as my valentine. Ruth, I love you dearly; I think I always have."

Ruth still kept her eyes on the far-away hills. But her heart was as full of joy as her eyes were full of tears. Now she could say what she had been trying to ever since they started. "I

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