

WIDOW DARBY'S VALENTINE. *

HE widow Darby, fair, plump and looking far younger than himself that morning, and Jared "happened to be going in," and had asked the widow

to ride with him. Jared was what some

of the people of the neighborhood called a "regular born old bach." He had flouted and scorned womanhind most of the fifty years of his life, and had openly set forth his conviction that men were "better off without 'em than with 'em," particularly when it come to "marrying of 'em." He had held to this conviction so long and had proclaimed it so boldly and so conknow it was Valentine's day. If it isn't last man's knees were under his chin, he had proclaimed it so boldly and so conknow it was Valentine's day. If it isn't last man's knees were under his chin, he arms were stretched across the bed an stantly that all of the match-makers in the rural neighborhood in which he lived entine!" had given him up a hopeless case beyond the pale of their schemes for making a Jared. benedict of him.

Jared was not, like most avowed women haters, a crabbed, cross-grained, sneeringly cynical man, which made his celibacy all the more unpardonable in the eyes of the match-makers.

"He'd make a real good husband if he'd valentines inside of it—sometry," they said. "Then he has the nicest thing about a widow likely." farm in the neighborhood, with one of "Why don't you open it and the best houses on it and money out at interest, although he's not a bit mean and stingy. He'll do his full share always for a neighbor in distress. It isn't because tinsel and bright colored embossed piche's too stingy to support her that Jared doesn't get him a wife." "He

It was a clear, crisp morning in February when Jared rode to the village with the widow Darby scaled beside him in that!" Darby seated t his neat little cutter. The sleighing was fine and the air keen and exhibarating. It gave the widow's plump cheeks a beautiful crimson glow and made her black eyes laugh rang out frequently as merry and rippling as the laugh of a child,

But then the widow Darby was prover-bially cheery. She had suffered keenly the loss of her husband and both of her children, but time had softened her grief, and she was too wise to spend her life in gloom and grief over the loss of those who were beyond all care and sorrow.

She had a comfortable little home and a few acres of land adjoining Jared Kent's. She had known Jared all of her life, but not once had she thought of him as a possible successor to Joel Darby.
"Jared will never marry any one," she

had said. "He isn't of a marrying disposition. Some men are that way. It's all they lack to make 'em what God intended they should be. My husband and I used to talk Jared over a good deal, and we did our full share to get him settled for life with a good wife. We used to invite lots of nice girls, young and elderly both, to our house and then have Jared come over to tea and to play croquet with him. He'd be nice and pleasant and all that, but he never came any ways near falling into any of the traps we set for him. We thought once that he did take a kind of a shine to a nice, sweet, real good looking girl of about 30 named Janet Denne from over Shelby way, who was visiting us. She'd of made him an awful good wife. and I sung her praises all the time, but nothing came of it."

"It's an elegant morning, isn't it?" said Jared, as he and the widow flew along over the hills and through long lanes in which the snow was drifted almost to the top rails of the fences.
"Oh, it's lovely!" replied the widow. "I

like snow.

"So do I. You got much to do in town?" "No; I'll be through with all of my errands in an hour. I can let something go if you don't want to stay in town that

"Oh, that'll be none too long for me. Where shall I meet you?"
"I'll be at Smith & Hanscom's dry goods

store, any time you say."

"We'll call it 11 o'clock, then." It was three minutes after 11 when Jared drove up to the appointed place of meeting. The widow had stepped into the sleigh and he was tucking the robes in

around her when she said:
"There, Jared, I'm just like other women; I've forgotten something.

"What is it?"

"I forgot to go around to the postoffice. I know that there's nothing there for me, because one of the Stone boys brought my trains in until noon; but poor old Jane Carr came over just before I left and wanted me to be sure and see if there was a letter for her. Her daughter is very sick out West, and she hasn't had a letter for a week, and she's half wild. I couldn't bear to tell her I'd forgotten to go to the

"I'll drive 'round that way," said Jared.
"It won't be three blocks out of the way." Two or three boys stood idling in front given him by his next-door neighbor.

them he chanced to know:
"Say, Jimmie, run into the office and see
if there's any letter for Mrs. Jane Carr. VALENTINE. To you needn't ask for me, for I've been around and got my mail."

"You might look in box 184," said Mrs.

Darby. "Mebbe there's a drop letter for

had gone back to his comrades and said man. with a titter: "She's got a valentine!"

the greatest idea that I should get a val-

"I don't know why you shouldn't," said "Oh, because I-but I guess some child

"Maybe not."

"No one else could have had so little gumption!" said the widow with another laugh. "Maybe there's one of these comic valentines inside of it-some ridiculous "Why don't you open it and see?"

"I will."

She burst into another laugh as she drew forth a dainty creation of lace paper,

"How perfectly ridiculous!" she said.

"You're not an old woman." "I'm forty-five!"

"Well, I'm older than that, and I don't call myself an old man. Many a woman sparkle. She was in high spirits and her around here would be glad to get a valentine like that if the sender really meant

"Yes, and it you were the sender." "I'm not vain enough to think that and not foolish enough to say it if I did think

'No, I don't think that you are, Jared. But I wonder who could have sent me The writing on the envelope is evi-



AT JANE CARR'S GATE.

dently disguised, and-O here is some thing inside! Let's see what it says.

"O wilt thou be my valentine
Forever and forever aye,
And wilt thou take this heart of mine,
And give me thine to-day?"
There was another verse, but before she

had read it, the widow Darby cried out: 'Jared Kent, that's your handwriting and you need not try to deny it!"
"I'm not trying to deny it. You'll find

my name signed in full to the next verse on the other page." This was the next verse:

"If 'yes' my answer is to be,
My heart with joy will fill,
If 'no,' I yet shall be your friend
And I shall love you still."
They had reached the outskirts of the

town now. Jared brought the horse to a standstill and said:

"Is it yes or no, Lucy?" She looked at him with shining eyes and laughing face for a moment. Then she laid one of her mittened hands on the sleeve of the great fur coat he wore and

"I think it is yes, Jared." He turned his horse's head toward the

"Where are you going?" she asked. "Back to the minister's. It's Valentine' day, you know, and if you are to be my

valentine, I want you to-day."

An hour later they stopped at Jane Carr's gate. She came skurrying out for her letter with her apron over her head. "I brought you a letter, Jane, and I got a valentine," said Lucy, holding up the

big white envelope.
"I got one also," said Jared, as he put
an arm around his wife and kissed her.— Detroit Free Press.

Don't judge a man by the character

A Good Story Geo, M. Pullman Loved to Tell of Lincoln. There was one story of his career that the late George M. Pullman of sleeping car fame used to tell with manifest de-light. It was as follows:

"One night going out of Chicago, a long, her 45 years, had ridden into town with Jared Kent because her horse had lamed other. He grinned as he handed them to Mrs. Darby. She glanced at the blue envelope and said joyfully:

"O here's a letter for Jane, and it's from her daughter, I know by the postmark. How glad Jane will be! And here—well, I declare!"

assigned in the took and the said the per about as well as they fitted the peg about as well as they fitted him. Then he kicked off his boots, which were of surprising length, turned into the berth, and, having an ensy conscience, was sleeping like a healthy baby before She burst into a merry laugh as she looked at the big white, embossed envelope. The boy had told the truth when he two minutes he was back at George Pull-

> "There's a man in that berth of mine," said he, hotly, "and he's about ten feet high. How am I going to sleep there, In went Pullman—mad, too. The tall, lank man's knees were under his chin, his arms were stretched across the bed and his feet were stored comfortably-for him. Pullman shook him until he awoke, and then told him if he wanted the whole berth he would have to pay \$1.

> "My dear sir," said the tall man, "s contract is a contract. I have paid you 50 cents for half this berth, and as you see, I'm occupying it. There's the other half," pointing to a strip about six inches wide. "Sell that and don't disturb me again." And, so saying, the man with a wart on his face went to sleep again. He was Abraham Lincoln.

James Parton's Prediction.

In 1862, James Parton, the celebrated biographical writer, made the following prediction in regard to Abraham Lincoln: History will say of Mr. Lincoln that no man of a more genial temperament, a White House; that he gave all his time, his thoughts, his energies, to the discharge of duties of unprecedented magnitude and urgency; that, hating no man, he steadfastly endeavored to win the confidence and love of all the loyal and patriotic, and that, in spite of four chequered years of such responsibility and anxiety as has seldom fallen to the lot of man, he bore away from the Capitol the sunny temper and blithe frankness of his boy-bood, returning to mingle with his old neighbors as one with them in heart and in manner, in retirement as in power a happy specimen of the men whom Liberty and Democracy train in the log cabin and by the rudest hearth to guide the counsels of the Republic and influence the destinies of the people.

Lincoln When a Boy. An exhibition of Lincoln's practical hu-manity occurred while a boy. One even-ing, while returning from a "raising" with a number of companions, he discovered a straying horse, with saddle and bridle upon him. The horse was recognized as belonging to a well-known drunkard, and it was suspected that the owner was not far off. The fellow was found in a per-fectly helpless condition upon the cold ground. Lincoln's companions intended to leave him to his fate, but young Lincoln would not hear of it. At his demand, the miserable man was lifted to his shoulders, and he actually carried him eighty rods to the nearest house. He then sent word to his father that he would not be back that night. He nursed the man until morning, and believed that he had saved his life.

Tear It Up.

Secretary Stanton was once greatly vexed because an army officer had refused to understand an order, or at all events, had not obeyed. "I believe I'll sit down," said Stanton, "and give that man a piece of my mind." "Do so," said Lincoln, "write it now while you have it on your mind. Make it sharp; cut bim all up. mind. Make it snarp; cut him all up."
Stanton did not need a second invitation.
It was a bone-crusher that he read to the
President. "That's right," said Abe,
"that's a good one." "Whom can I get
to send it by?" mused the Secretary.
"Send it!" replied Lincoln, "send it! Why. don't send it at all. Tear it up. You have freed your mind on the subject, and that is all that is necessary. Tear it up. You never want to send such letters; I never do."-Standard.

Lincoln's First Speech. Judge Bell of Mount Carmel, Ill., has a copy of Abraham Lincoln's first speech as a candidate. It was made near Spring-

field, and ran as follows: "Gentlemen and Fellow Citizens: I presume you all know who I am. I am humble Abraham Lincoln. I have been so-licited by many friends to become a can-didate for the Legislature. My politics are short and sweet, like an old woman's dance. I am in favor of a national bank; I am in favor of the international improvement system and a high protective tariff. These are my sentiments and political principles. If elected I shall be thankful; if not it will be all the same." C. G. APPLEGATH,

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