

BRIG-A-BRAC.

VOL. I.

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No. 2.

For BRIG-A-BRAC.

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY.

By CLARA H. TARDY.

What is the matter? Such laughter!
"What's in the wind to-day?"
Asks grandfather, smiling, and looking
At Jamie and then at May.

He sits on the south verandah,
Where breezes and sunshine play,
(Though the calendar tells it is winter,
The weather seemeth like May.)

He has reached in his days—life's winter;
Its frosts have silvered his hair:
And he waits in that Florida homestead
For the summons "over there."

The children are whispering round him,
Exchanging words and signs,—
And to his questionings, answer:
"Why, to-morrow's St. Valentine's."

"And, see, grandpa, we are sending
Flowers up North, you know;
Emblems of love for *some one*
Who lives midst the sleet and snow."

The old man hears,—then memory
Opens her golden store,
And in his thoughts he is living
The days that are now no more.

He is sending a little maiden,
One single, written line;
And "Yes," comes back in answer
To "Be my Valentine."

He sees a happy morning—
The white day of his life,
When his Valentine—dear Mary,
Becomes his darling wife.

And then, through years of brightness
His thoughts with swiftness run,
And reach that dark, sad hour
When Mary's life was done.

And his thoughts come to the present,
With its mellowed silver days,
Through which he is surely drifting,
To be with her always.

And he listens to the children,
While tears and smiles combine.
As he thinks how near the meeting
With his true Valentine.

A MODERN CIRCUMSTANCE.

By HAROLD E. BATSFORD,

Author of "Doctor Dick," "To Gain Experience," etc.

CHAPTER III.

"Well, mamma," began Henrietta Nevins, one day after the summer had passed away, and the autumn had set in bright and pleasant, "has Miss Briarsford found rooms yet?"

"Oh, yes," replied Mrs. Smith, "she had no trouble in that matter; you know I referred her to Mrs. Newman; she wanted to let her top floor. Miss Briarsford went around there, and when she came back, she was quite enthusiastic about Mrs. Newman, said she had already fallen in love with her."

As Mrs. Smith uttered the last sentence, Henrietta gave a little scream; it had reminded her of the time they discovered Miss Briarsford's secret.

"Why, mamma, how could you!" she exclaimed.

"My dear!"

"Why ever did you refer Miss Briarsford to Mrs. Newman? Don't you know that she is Harry Newman's mother?"

"Yes, my dear, I presume she is."

"And don't you know that Miss Briarsford—"

Mrs. Smith fell back in the big arm-chair, while her face was overspread with a little of the anxious horror that was depicted on her daughter's.

"Oh dear!" she exclaimed, "I never thought."

"You have put her into the lion's den."

"Worse than that," groaned the mother, "much worse."

"Worse?"

"Yes, yes. I have put her into the lion's claws. Hark!"

There was the sound of footsteps on the front stoop, and then the door-bell rang.

"He is there," Mrs. Smith said, in a tragic whisper.

"He? Who?"

"Harry Newman."

"Good gracious, mamma! what for?"

"I hired him to take her furniture around."

Henrietta sank down on a convenient sofa, and stared at her mother in helpless horror.

"I couldnt help it," Mrs. Smith said, weakly, "he was out of employment, and I thought it would be a good opportunity to earn a couple of dollars. He asked me to speak for him, if I heard of any odd jobs around."

"And does *she* know?" asked Henrietta.

"No; and she is out now."

The bell sounded again.

"Oh! what shall I do?"

"The only thing you *can* do," the daughter answered unsparingly, "go, and let the lion in."

With a last despairing look, Mrs. Smith disappeared.

When she returned, Henrietta flew from the window, just as she entered, and hastily put on her hat; and gathered up her host of small parcels with which women seem to always travel.

"Henrietta! what are you going to do?"

"Good-bye, mamma! I am going. Miss Briarsford is coming. What have you done with Harry Newman?" All this breathlessly.

"I have sent him up-stairs to her rooms."

It be surprised if you hear a terrible scream and heart-breaking sobs in a little while: If she faints, the smelling salts are just inside that closet."

"Don't be nonsensical, Henrietta. Do you think she is going to fall into a paroxysm of love; propose to him; be rejected, and die of a broken heart, as soon as she sees him?"

The only answer was the closing of the door.

When Alice Briarsford came in, she went directly up-stairs to her front room, and as she opened the door softly, her eyes rested on the form of a young man, who stood upon a chair, while taking down a picture that hung over the mantel shelf. She could distinctly see the profile of his handsome face as it rested close, upturned to the dark wall paper, and she uttered a half-suppressed cry as she recognized him as the unknown man whom she had learned to love.

Harry Newman heard the cry, and it startled him so, that he dropped the picture with a crash. Miss Briarsford saw the chair topple, and with a piercing scream, rushed forward, as man and chair came down on top of the already wrecked picture.

Downstairs, Mrs. Smith heard the scream, and flying in terror to the closet, seized the smelling-salts bottle and dashed up-stairs—it must have been three stairs at a time—she afterward told Henrietta. When she reached the door-way of the room, her face pale with fright, she paused as the scene there presented itself.

There were an over-topped chair, the shattered remains of Miss Briarsford's best oil painting, Harry Newman on his knees with the young lady herself insisting upon soaking his forehead with a wet handkerchief, while the water ran down into his eyes and blinded him.

"What on earth has happened?" the old lady exclaimed.

"Oh! Mrs. Smith! Alice cried, dabbing vigorously at the young man's forehead, "it was so stupid of me; but I was so—so startled at seeing—a—man in here (dab) when I opened the door (another dab) that I am afraid I startled him by crying out, and he gave his head such a terrible knock on the shelf as he came down."

"No, no, I beg of you," the young man expostulated, struggling to his feet. "It is nothing serious; I am not hurt—much."

"Good gracious," Mrs. Smith said, dropping into the chair, "it did frighten me so. I brought up the smelling-salts."

The young man could not help smiling, as he wiped the water out of his eyes.

"I don't think I shall need—smelling-salts," he said grimly; and then his tone changed to one of self-rebuke. "The picture, I am afraid it is ruined."

"Oh, that is nothing," the young lady exclaimed hastily, "it was only a little piece of my own work; nothing of any importance."

And she gazed with perfect serenity at the great long hole the chair-rail had torn through the centre of the picture that had been the one great pride and treasure of her artistic days.

"You may take it down-stairs, and throw it in the 'ash-box," she said without a tone of regret.

The young man stopped on the stairs, and taking out his pen-knife, opened out the large blade, and carefully cut the canvas away from the shattered frame, folded it up with almost a reverent touch, and placed it carefully in his breast-pocket.

CHAPTER IV.

When he returned up stairs, Mrs. Smith was helping Miss Briarsford to finish packing her trunk, and Harry Newman stood a moment in the doorway, watching the graceful figure of the young lady as she bent and swayed over her work, with the same earnestness and vigor as she exhibited when dabbing his forehead. He put his hand up doubtfully at this recollection, and caressed the little round discolored lump just above his left eye-brow. Her figure was small and delicately moulded in rounded curves. Her face was not beautiful, but it was pretty, eminently and exquisitely pretty. And he knew that she had brown eyes, soft, and deep, and tender; and he knew that she had a heart warm and impulsive; and, more than all, he knew that she loved him. Ah! if she was only rich! He even thought that if even one half of her prettiness was taken away; if her eyes were grey instead of brown, and her hair was red instead of dark, with that same warm heart and a hundred thousand dollars, he would be satisfied.

She turned around suddenly, and saw him leaning against the doorpost, with his hand to his forehead.

"You have really hurt yourself very much," she said.

"No, no," he replied quickly, "I was only waiting for you to show me what things are to be got ready."

"There is not much," she said. "These two trunks, and those two easy chairs, that rocker, and that other chair over in the corner, my easel, and one or two boxes in the back room, and—oh! my two pictures hanging up there. Here, I'll hold the chair while you get them down."

Harry Newman had to smile at the situation, as he mounted the chair. It seemed so funny. Here he was, hired like any ordinary odd-jobs man to do a job, and she was treating him more like a friend, a brother, a husband, or a lover.

After he had taken down the pictures, and gathered the other things together handily, he was about to shoulder the largest trunk, when he suddenly remembered that Mrs. Smith had never told him where the young lady was going to remove to.

"Where have they got to go to, Mrs. Smith?" he asked.

"Why! don't you know, Harry? Miss Briarsford has rented the top floor in your mother's house. This is Mrs. Newman's son, Miss Briarsford."

Miss Briarsford looked surprised, and bowed silently. The young man bowed stiffly, and a hot flush mounted his face, as he turned quickly, and lifted the trunk to his shoulder.

As he went down the stairs, he wondered if she had done this purposely; if she had found out where he had lived, and had engaged his mother's top floor with an object in view. Then he remembered the look of surprise that had come into those honest brown eyes, so deep, and so soft, and so tender; and his disengaged hand was laid softly on the pocket that held that piece of folded canvas.

(To be continued.)

Bric-a-Brac:

DEVOTED TO AMATEUR JOURNALISM, AND
MORE ESPECIALLY, ITS EXTENSION
IN CANADA.

HARRY W. ROBINSON,

Editor and Proprietor.

No subscriptions can be taken at present, but single copies will be sent to any address, on receipt of 1 cent, to pay the postage.

Exchanges are earnestly desired.

Any book sent to us will be carefully reviewed.

Contributions of suitable matter requested.

Address all communications to

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Amateur Journalism.

Many of our friends to whom copies of this paper have been sent, have asked us for what purpose we publish it, and of what use it is to issue so small a paper; and when told it is published in the interest of Amateur Journalism, ask—what is Amateur Journalism?

In answer to the first question,—we publish this paper for our own mental improvement, and to practice as an amateur that profession which we hope some day to make our vocation; and the last question we feel sure we cannot better answer than by quoting the following passage from Finlay A. Grant's pamphlet on Amateur Journalism. He says: "Amateur Journalism is the occupation or, perhaps, pursuit of a fraternity of boys and girls, young men and young women of America, who edit and publish small papers of their own, for the purpose mainly of self-culture, and the exchange of their ideas upon various topics, the dissemination of amateur news, and the discussion of the many interesting questions incident to the existence of the fraternity." It must be apparent to the most superficial observer that an institution like this should be a source of infinite pleasure and profit to its devotees; and it is.

In the past, Canada has been a considerable factor in the strength of the 'dom; but one by one, the Canadian Amateurs have fossilized, until at the present day, *The Nugget*, *Thistle*, *Boys Folio* and *BRIC-A-BRAC* are all that are left to represent the 'dom in Canada. This is the more to be regretted that not only do the boys of Canada lose a pastime, which (in our opinion) is second to none, but the country itself is also a loser by it, for, says Mr. Bright in one of his great speeches, "there is nothing that is a greater instrument of intelligence, knowledge, and altogether of good, than the dissemination throughout a country of a well conducted and morally influenced Press." If this be true, and who can say it is not, then Canada or any other country must be benefited by the existence within its borders, of a fraternity of Amateur Journalists; for what can be better calculated to ensure a country a moral press, than this noble institution "which is," says a Boston Newspaper, "a training school where crudeness of thought and expression is pruned, where a taste for better letters is cultivated, where excellence, by induction thereof, is readily and gladly recognized, where emulation and enthusiasm

are universal." It may be objected to this, that the boys who enter its ranks do so, not to train themselves for journalism as a profession, but merely for amusement. This is true, but many prominent amateurs have, on leaving the ranks of amateurdom, become famed in the literary world, notably among them being Chas. Scribner, the founder of *Scribner's*, now the *Century Magazine*, the most successful monthly of the day. Moreover Amateur Journalism as an educational institution is yet in its infancy, and we believe that it will reach its highest point as a training school for those who intend to make journalism their profession. It is our ambition to do something towards making Canada again to take a prominent place in amateurdom; to this end, we send *BRIC-A-BRAC* to all our friends, and place it and as many other amateur papers as we can obtain, in every reading-room we have access to, in order that as many as possible may become acquainted with Amateur Journalism.

We can testify that recruits are warmly welcomed by the 'dom, and that during our short connection with amateurdom, we have received an amount of pleasure that has far more than repaid us for the trouble and expense incident to the issuing of a first number.

Our Winter Carnival.

Our Carnival has come and gone, and has been declared by all to be even a greater success than was anticipated. To begin with, King Frost seems to have taken us into special favor; the days of the week, each dawned bright, clear and cold, not the damp cold that sends a shiver through you on going out into it, but the dry, healthy cold that sends the blood into the cheeks, and makes the eyes bright with exhilaration. Then the rinks and roads were in the best possible order, and the tobogganing hills were ice from top to bottom, and the toboggans flashed down them with speed of the wind; it is said that on one hill the toboggans attained a speed of about ten miles a minute.

Perhaps the most beautiful and picturesque sight that man ever saw, was the storming of the Ice Palace on Wednesday night (28th ultimo). Two thousand five hundred snow-shoers, dressed in the most picturesque costumes of modern times, armed with torches and roman candles, stormed the Castle; then from the Castle shot rockets, bombs, and fireworks of every description. Faster flew the candles from without, and faster and faster came the rockets from within. The sky is one mass of gleaming stars, and, can we believe our eyes? the Castle changes colour, gleaming now red, now green, now blue, and now changes to a transparent white. We rub our eyes and think, surely this is Fairy Land; but no; even as the thought crosses our mind, the fires die out, the snow-shoers fall into line, led by the "Old Tuque Bleue," they slowly file past, and depart for the rendezvous at Cote de Neiges.

Are the wonders of the night ended? No; something directs our attention towards the mountain, and we see what appears to be a serpent of fire winding its undulating way over the mountain; it is the snow-shoers, and as the last of them disappear, two columns of fire arise from the mountain, and the night is done.

Many other things of interest are shown our visitors, and they depart, loud in their praises of Montreal and her Carnival, and making inward resolutions to be here next Carnival, come what may.

Editorial Notes.

Miss Arlington, E. S. Heney, S. Hein and C. R. Burger will please accept our best thanks for the papers they so kindly sent us; they were of the greatest use to us in getting out this number. Outside of these and the New York bundle, we have not received thirty exchanges in return for two hundred and fifty sent out. Where! Oh, where are the papers of those enthusiastic youths,

who talk so much about the encouragement of recruits? Have they all fossilized? Amateurs will confer a favor on us by putting our name on their exchange lists AT ONCE.

The Syracuse bundle is worthy of the city it comes from; there being at least a dozen papers in it, of all sizes, from the diminutive *Excitement* to the *Gauntlet*. The editors in this State are engaged in a warm fight for the presidency of the local A. P. A., and as a result some of the remarks are of altogether too personal character.

Mr. Emery is the subject of a good many articles at present, of a not very flattering character. It is a significant fact, that while the papers of many of his opponents abound in "slang" and and coarseness, his own is free from anything of the sort, and his editorials are all written in a spirit of moderation that shows he is a gentleman, at least, while his sketches and poems show that he is of more than average ability.

The *New Yorker* will again be issued about the middle of March, with Roger Burke, Jr., at the helm.

It is a curious fact that we have received more exchanges from California than from any two other States, with the exception of New York and Maine.

We would like to hear of someone who would edit a "Puzzle Department" in BRIC-A-BRAC. In future, one column will be devoted to "Puzzledom."

If those amateurs who receive more than one copy of BRIC-A-BRAC would kindly reciprocate, they would oblige us greatly; we do not ask this for ourselves, but to put on the files in the different reading rooms in this city and in Quebec. We wish to make amateur journalism as well known in Canada as possible, and so far, cannot think of a better plan than this. Montreal should be a good locality for recruits, and we confidently hope before long to see it a rising amateur centre.

BRIC-A-BRAC is rather late this month; the reason being the Carnival, which was held during the last week of January; while it lasted, there was no possibility of getting any time to work on a paper or anything else.

The saddest news that has come to England for many a day, came in the shape of a telegram on Friday the 6th inst. The tidings may be put in three words: "Khartoum has fallen," but how much do these three words mean? They mean that Gordon is a prisoner; that the course of the British in the Soudan has been checked; that Wolsley's little army is in the greatest danger, and lastly, it means that Mahdi will be reinforced by thousands of those who waited to see to which side victory would incline, before joining it.

On Monday the 9th instant, the cable wires brought us more news. Italy will send fifteen thousand troops to aid England. The generous hearts that beat in bosoms of those who live beneath the sunny skies of Italy, will not allow them to forget that to England they owe great debts; that they owe to her, in a great measure, liberty itself. It is said that Canada will send a regiment of volunteers to help in the Soudan. Such a proceeding would be most popular both here and in England. Canadians are as loyal subjects as any the Queen has; and as we shared the joy which every advantage gained in the Soudan brought to England, so we share the sorrow that this great disaster has given her.

Exchanges.

The first exchange to enter our sanctum was the Christmas number of the *Violet*, well printed on toned paper, and filled with interesting matter. It is a credit to its editress. We, too, think that if more ladies would enter our ranks, it would greatly benefit the 'dom.

The November number of the *American Sphinx* is a worthy successor to those other numbers which have gained for Spencer a name "second to none" in our ranks. If Spencer enters the lists against Sullivan for the N. A. P. A. presidency, we predict a hot campaign.

While the columns of the first number of *At-Ki* show many proofs of Wick's ability as an editorial writer, they are also distinguished by some very coarse language. Every coarse word, and every bit of "slang" appearing in an amateur paper, does something to retard the progress of the 'dom.

The editors of the *Nutshell* have been kind enough to send us some back numbers, including their "Midsummer" issue. The contents of all are varied and interesting, and the editorials are especially well written. Thanks!

On being elected to the official editorship of the *Golden State A. P. A.* Mr. Bull has found it necessary to sever his connection with the *Nutshell*; as a result, that paper goes out of existence, and *Chic*—published by his former partner, Hastings—takes its place. *Chic* is one of the few papers with two editors that is worth the two copies it asks for.

The first all-editorial paper we have received was the *Nugget*, from New Glasgow. The editorials are all well written, and every word shows an honest regard for the true interests of the 'dom.

The best paper we have yet received is *Youth*, from Boston. It is filled with interesting articles of all sorts, and the editorials are, of course, well written. While edited by two such editors as Stone and Sullivan, it can scarcely fail to meet the success it deserves.

Hailing from Syracuse comes the *Arcanum*, a little sheet published under an *incognito*, and abounding in personalities. If it is necessary to write under an *incog*, *Arcanum* should at least avoid this; not to do so is the act of a coward.

The *Amateur Naturalist* is a well edited, well printed and interesting paper from Philadelphia. While it is interesting to any one who may take it up, it must be doubly so to those who take an interest in Natural History.

The October-November number of *Progress* shows that it is worthy of its name, and its editors deserve great credit. Their dispute with Emery, has gone far enough, and the sooner they drop it the better will Amateurdome be pleased. With Burger's evident talent, it is a great pity he should waste so much space with such senseless disputes.

The January number of the *Sentinel* is a credit to its editor, and a worthy successor to those former numbers which gained for it the title of "the best literary magazine in the 'dom."

A worthy representative of the city it comes from is the *Gauntlet*; the editorials are all written in a bright, pithy style, that makes them very pleasant reading. That article on "Mr. Emery," however, is very unjust, and, moreover, is not over refined.

No wonder that the professional press ridicule the amateurs, when such papers as the *Western Amateur Press* are issued. Such papers are a disgrace to the 'dom, and should be driven from it.

The editors of the *Scrap Basket* have kindly sent us two extra copies for the Montreal reading-rooms. With the exception of the *Nugget*, they are the only ones that have done so.