

A Bachelor's Soliloquies

AN EARLY COURTSHIP AND ITS RESULTS.

BY PAIK.

I am a bachelor. I have passed that uncertain period of life when the mind and heart go hand in hand and make the visible being play many a foolish game. My lot, such as I find it, is the result of choice, not of necessity. I am not given to relating my history, especially that portion of it which pertains to early events, but for the sake of introducing myself to those who are as yet to become my acquaintances, I shall on this occasion disregard what has hitherto been with me an inviolate rule—reticence. In doing so I exact but one condition—it is, that no confidences will be betrayed—your word is enough, though I'm a man of the world.

Once in my wanton, sportive youth, I knew a girl. She was fair and beautiful, as the first blush of a June morning. Her nature was of the ardent sort, slightly tinged with the mercurial. My love for her was a passion, and my attentions were unceasing. We beguiled the long summer evenings under the shadow of an umbrageous oak that formed part and parcel of a quiet sylvan retreat. We always selected this spot, because it seemed best suited for our reflections and discourses which were not meant for the vulgar ear. We talked of love with a pious reverence, and delighted to peer into the future, which we believed had for us much real joy. Hope was buoyant then, and life was all a dream. My fair love—I put emphasis on the "my," for so I regarded her—showed at times a disposition to coquetry, but this in my innocence, I construed into an awakening passion for me. I therefore made no attempt to repel, but rather, to encourage it. "My dear," said I to her one night, when a sharp breeze was blowing our way, "permit me to throw this plaid over you, I'm afraid you will catch a cold."

"Oh, Samuel!" she said, and her eyes spoke more tenderly than her words. "How kind and thoughtful, thank you! You must share it with me. Your silk moustache is still in its infancy, and might die, you know, if not properly protected, with fussy eagerness, as if to outdo my consideration for her. She threw a part of the plaid over my back and head, and so both of us were protected from the wind. It was a habit of mine in those days, to stroke and trim my incipient moustache, almost incessantly, for like most youths of my age, I took an unconscious pride in my solo adornment. This habit was not unobserved by my young lady, and she took the first opportunity of reminding me of it, in her own way. Not long after this when we were both together, I expressed my admiration of a beautiful locket suspended by a chain, which she wore round her neck, because I knew this would please her.

"Who gave you this, Ethel, and whose hair does it contain?" I asked. She sighed first, and then addressing me in a tone that invited sympathy, she said, "I received that locket from a dear aunt, she gave it to me before she died; the hair it contains was hers. She said it would keep me in remembrance of her. It is the only locket I have, and if my aunt had not died, I would not have had one at all. But I've worn this one for some time now, and it seems to be getting old; don't you think so, Samuel?"

I confess that I was rather innocent, at this time; but I was not altogether obtuse. I understood the purport of the hint, I denied myself of some personal comforts, and procured her the best locket my meagre exchequer could afford. She expressed her gratitude very fulsomely, as most women are in the habit of doing, and assured me that I was the first gentleman who had been so very kind to her. This very next evening I was with her, she said, "Samuel, do you love anyone?"

"Do I love anyone," I repeated in amazement. "O Ethel," I continued, "have you been so blind, after all those?" "No, I have not been blind," she interrupted. "I know you love one dearly, very dearly, Samuel."

Hope now took the place of surprise. I only wished she would go on in the same strain. "Yes, dear," I said, encouragingly, "you are right."

"Samuel," she said, taking one of my hands and placing it in hers, "a voice whispered to me this morning that you loved only one."

"And can you guess, Ethel, who that one is," I said, grasping both her hands. "Yes, the voice whispered to me the answer."

"And it is?" "Yourself."

"Yes, rather better than a slight acquaintance." "Well, Sam," he said, and a bright smile lit up his countenance, "I never had an intense love for the girl, but I don't mind confessing to you that I did like her. Her bright, jolly manner suited me, although I believe, she was something of a flirt."

"And at what period may I ask did you have this love for Ethel?" I asked becomingly interested, but endeavoring to disguise it.

"Well, as you know, I have been acquainted with Ethel Smart for a long time, but about a year ago I became attached to her and since then up to within a few days of her marriage we were a very great deal together," said Jack.

"Did she ever tell you, that she met another young gentleman, frequently during the period she and you were so intimate?" I asked.

"O, no, of course not," said Jack shrugging his shoulders, "and she asked me to say nothing about our interviews and walks, least it might make other girls jealous."

"Did she ever say that she loved only you?" "She did," and Jack laughed heartily. Jack's frank confession encouraged me to follow his example.

"Jack," said I, "we are two of a kind."

"What do you mean?" he asked, seeming much puzzled.

"I mean that I too was a lover of Ethel Smart. That our courtship was in progress exactly at the same time yours was."

Jack still looked puzzled, but could not help smiling.

"She had a most ingenious way of getting gifts out of one," I continued, "let me give you one instance, but this must go no further."

"The whole of this conversation, I take it, is confidential," said Jack.

"Very good: One night when we were out together, I admired greatly a locket she wore. I received that locket from a dear aunt, she said, 'she gave it to me before she died; the hair it contains was hers; she said it would keep me in remembrance of her. It is the only locket I have, and if my aunt had not died, I wouldn't have had one at all. But I've worn this for some time now, and it seems to be getting old.'"

Jack burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter. After he had recovered in a manner, still looking intensely amused, "Would you be surprised to learn," he said, "that I am that dear aunt?" We both laughed heartily now and Jack continued, "But recently I noticed that the locket I gave her had been replaced by another, which she told me she received from her grandfather, and that she merely wore it occasionally to please him."

How Fast They Leave This World.

A German statistician says: There are at present 3,064 languages spoken by the inhabitants of our globe, whose religious convictions are divided between 1,000 different confessions of faith. The number of males is nearly equal to that of the females. The average duration of life is 33 years. One-fourth of the population of the earth dies before attaining the 17th year. Of 1,000 persons, only one reaches the age of 100 years, and not more than six that of 65 years. The entire population of the globe is upward of 1,200,000,000, of whom 35,214,000 die every year; 96,480 every day; 4,020 every hour; 67 every minute, and 1 and a fraction every second. On the other hand the births amount to 36,792,000 every year; 100,800 every day; 4,200 every hour; 70 every minute; 1 and a fraction every second. Married people live longer than the unmarried; the temperate and industrious longer than the gluttonous and idle, and civilized nations longer than the uncivilized. Tall persons enjoy a greater longevity than small ones. Women have a more favorable chance of life before reaching their fiftieth year than men, but a less favorable one after that period. The proportion of married persons to single ones is as 75 to 1,000. Persons born in Spring have a more robust constitution than those born at other seasons. Births and deaths occur more frequently at night than in the daytime. It may finally be added that only one-fourth of the male inhabitants of the globe grow up to carry arms or perform military service.

Human Remains Roasted and Exported.

Intelligence from the Solomon group of islands shows that a shocking state of affairs was prevalent, massacres being frequent, owing to internecine wars. This was the case at Savu, Guadalcanar, and San Cristobal. It seems that the coast tribes had become exasperated with the bush people by continual petty thefts of pigs and other belongings. An expedition in force was organized by the coast people and terrible slaughter was the result. At one place 30 men, women, and children were massacred in a single village. Cannibalism was rampant, and it was said that in one case, at least, where a number of prisoners were captured, the people, after being slain were roasted, their bodies being afterwards cut up, packed in leaves, and exported to other islands for distribution. The raids were said to be taking place very frequently, and were attended with the same horrors. Wives and families had been captured in numbers, and in cases where they were not killed they were sold into slavery by their conquerors. This latter was the case particularly with the boys and girls. The schooner Enterprise, which brought the news of the shocking occurrences, reported that the people on some of the islands were imploring the captains of vessels to take them from the place as they were afraid of being massacred. It was said the natives showed themselves very willing to work, but the raids prevented anything being done for the crops so that the places were in a very bad taste.

Magistrate (to prisoner)—"Were you born in Pennsylvania?" Prisoner—"Yes, sir." Magistrate—"Brought up in that State?" Prisoner—"Yes; I have been brought up in Pennsylvania, and every other State in the Union, too."

"When I Was a Boy!"

is an expression almost every lad has heard his father use as a basis for bombastic self-adulation. But the boy of the last quarter of the nineteenth century may retort, "when you were a boy, and had an attack of green apple stomach-ache, you had to take calomel and jalap, but I am treated to Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Purgative Pills, sugar-coated, and just as nice as chocolates, caramels; no blue mass and castor oil for me—I'd rather fight it out with the pain!"

The black lace dress is declining in popularity. Alas, how changed! The rosy cheek is pallid as the dead. And from the eyes that were so bright the happy light has fled. Life has no joy for her to-day; grown old before her prime. She waits in hopeless suffering for that swift coming time. When death shall set her free. From poor, tick woman's misery.

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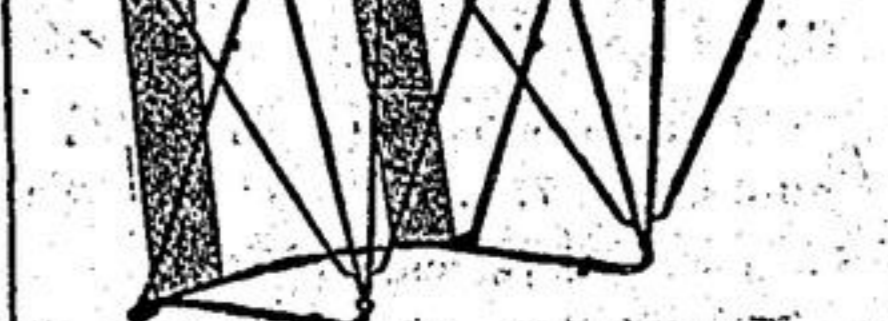
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