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Bachelor Queen

"Old maids are a nuisance and old bachelors are an abomination,"

said the girl at the summer institute of Forest Lake were busy at work at their benches preparing lettuce slips for transplanting. They were enjoying camp life with its attendant disciplines and studying school gardening at the same time. At the bugle call of "reville" they arose each morning and worked, studied and recreated at stated periods. Every night when the sad echoes of " taps " reverberated from the surrounding hills, all Nighs were out, the camp was still, and Morpheus reigned supreme.

"Oh, the clam attached to episternhood," laughingly interposed Miss Gordon, one of the summer school instructors and matrons of the dormitory, suddenly appearing in the doorway. "What horrible creatures old maids are! Why does every administrator assume they are soothing chloroform to these useless creatures and consign them to sweet oblivion? Girls, I beg of you, escape if possible this sad state of single blessedness; but if Fate should unkindly relegate you to sip your cup of tea in a lonely corner when you are old and gray, reflect the odious title of 'old maid' and adopt the modern term of 'bachelor girl'."

The girls stood aghast at this unexpected speech from their beloved teacher. She was a woman in middle life, intellectual, refined and sympathetic, the idol of her girls because of her scholarly attainments and her sterling qualities. In youth she had been fair as a goddess. Her Grecian head, crowned with a glory of silver curls, had waved over a smooth, broad forehead; grayish blue eyes, patrician nose and firm mouth bespoke honorable ancestry and gentle breeding. The years had not robbed her of many of her youthful charms, for she proved a kind mother to her ardent devotees.

Marie felt that she must redeem herself in her favorite's estimation, and apologetically added, "Miss Gordon, when girls get together, they don't talk in generalities, they talk in particulars. I wonder if 'the eternal one' is the topic when the lords of creation assemble."

"Undoubtedly it is," said Miss Gordon, "although I say so tentatively, as I have not had the opportunities afforded me to settle that question beyond the shadow of a doubt. But, leaving aside, girls, I have come to ask you to honor with your presence at a farewell chafing dish and marshmallow party to-morrow evening at the 'Bungalow.' The board of administration has allowed us the use of the building until the first call of 'taps.' Will you come, my friends?"

"Of course we will," chimed all the girls, surrounding their "summer mother," dancing and singing a song composed in her honor by one of their number.

The next evening the "Bungalow" presented a scene from fairyland. A log fire was burning in the open fireplace, lighted Japanese lanterns swung gaily to and fro, and the girls in their airy muslin gowns gave the final touch of fresh, vivacious, bubbling, mirthful life. Miss Gordon presided at the chafing dish, assisted by her dancing butterfliques. Marshmallows galore were toasted on tnatpins before the open fire. Finally, the repast of fudge, sandwiches and fancy cakes was spread upon the floor, and all sat in a circle around the fireplace.

"A story, a story from Miss Gordon," shouted athletic Alice Burkhardt when interest in eating began to wane. Miss Gordon bowed graciously, saying, "I will tell you a true story of 'A Girl That I Have Known.'"

"Some years ago in New York I knew a young woman of 19 who was preparing to be a teacher. She was of an intense nature, strong in her likes and dislikes. The medicine never satisfied her; she was seeking the ideal in life. Her friends said she would never marry because the persons she sought did not exist in human form. Yet they were wrong in their conclusion.

"When her training was over she elected to work in the East Side, in that congested district where the stunted flowers in the Lord's garden do not enjoy their rightful heritage of fresh air, sunshine and cleanliness. Here she met a young physician, another enthusiast, aiming to be a leader in his profession. His specialty was the study of the 'Great White Plague,' its cause, treatment and eradication. These two idealists became engaged, but their hopes of marriage were never realized, as he died a victim of typhoid. She still labors in her chosen sphere, teaching the benighted of God's creation to the children of the Ghetto. Her labor may not bear fruit in this generation, but it cannot fail to reap results in the next."

Just then Miss Gordon arose to sound the first call of "taps." The girls remained motionless, swayed by the subdued voice of the narrator and the dull flashes of light reflected on the rafters from the dying embers.

"It is the story of her own life," whispered Alice to the wondering group.

"A toast, a toast to Miss Gordon," cried the irrepressible Marie Courtleigh. "All stand and lift your glasses high in her honor. As each girl was about to drain the cup of sparkling beverage, Marie proclaimed, 'To Miss Gordon, Queen of Bachelor Girls, and with a wonderfully sweet but sad smile Miss Gordon silently accepted the homage.—ELIZABETH E. HAGGERTY.

Father's Joy.
It is surprising how little money a man can get along on when his family needs it all, says a writer in Life.

"Perkins looks very happy these days."
"He has reason to," Brown replied. "After his wife and children had been fitted out with their winter wardrobe he found there was enough left to have a new collar put on his overcoat."

CUPID

My wife and I are rather old-fashioned people, but we occasionally dine at a cozy little restaurant in the city district. I remember our first introduction to finger bowls, but that is not at all what I wish to tell you about; possibly I never shall tell you, as I dwell upon the occasion entirely without joy. And the waiter, a stumpy little chap he was. For quite a while I used to address him as "Mister," with an inviting pause, hoping he would supply his name. He never supplied it, however, and as I am of a somewhat determined nature, persisted in this form of address, until on one occasion he said to me, "Would you mind, sir, not calling me 'Mister'?"

"Not at all," I replied, as blandly as I could. "What is your name?"

"It is Hezekiah, sir, but most people call me Cupid, sir."

"For short, I presume?"

"No, sir," he replied. "I believe there's a god by that name, sir, who makes work for the pinner."

The evening was rather a staid one, and in consequence the dining room was comparatively empty. The waiter, therefore, had little to do but attend us. "You see, sir," he went on, "I'm of a very sentimental nature, sir."

"Yes," I replied, with as straight a face as I could muster. "It seems as though I have heard of Cupid." And from the table I received a remonstrative kick from my wife.

"I've figured in many a matrimonial deal, sir. Maybe you'd like to hear of the one that gave me my nickname, sir?"

"I should be glad to," I replied, and the waiter, warmed to his subject by our receptive attitude, went on: "You see those little numbered dining rooms on the balcony above? Well, one night when I was working up there, in comes an unhappy-looking couple that quite evidently wants to be alone, so the head waiter shows them up to No. 25. No sooner was they seated, sir, than another couple gloomier even than the first, comes in, and we puts them into the next room, 24. I was to wait on them all, running in from one room to the other as was necessary. We waiters see funny things at times, but these two couples was amusing. They squabbled with each other, two by two you understand, neither knowing of the other's presence, and from soup to nuts, sir, not one of them really ate enough to fill a dicky bird."

"You had no business to take me up so quick," says the girl in 25; "suppose I did ask you to take me out to dinner, that's no reason why you should have done so."

"Now, see here," says the man, "this is no picnic for me, either. You're a charming girl, and all that, he says, 'but I can imagine at least as pleasant a companion as you are proving to be,' he says. 'Confound the little mixer,' he goes in a kind of muttering tone, 'God bless her, he adds quickly, 'she had no business to disappoint me.' You see he was thinking of some other girl."

"And that odious Jack," says the girl, "if he hadn't been so stupid, I'd now be with him instead of you. And so it went on, each mad that they weren't with someone else. And in the next room it was just as bad. They weren't so outspoken, but I could see that a more miserable couple didn't exist that night. It didn't take me long to put two and two together, so to speak, and I knew that through some misunderstanding each was out with the other fellow's girl and wishin' he wasn't; and the same with the girls. They had formally 'Mister'd' and 'Miss'd' each other so much that I knew all their names, so finally I hit on a scheme that I thought might clear the atmosphere."

I goes into 25, and, begging his pardon, asked if this wasn't Mr. Atkins? It was. Well, Mr. Atkins was wanted at the telephone in the manager's office and I showed him the way to the 'phone. Then I goes into 24 and asks wasn't this Mr. Brown? That was his name, he says, looking at me as if he'd like to bite my head off. Well, Mr. Brown was wanted at the telephone at the cashier's desk, and I shows him the way which was in a different direction. I had it all fixed that there was a mistake, and that the gentlemen really wanted had already answered the calls. While the two men are gone, I puts the number 25 on Room 26, and vice versa, so to speak. You see those curtains up there with the numbers on? Well, it was an easy matter for me to do this, and when the men got back each goes into the other man's place. I was taking some chances, but it certainly worked fine.

"Of course it had to come out right away what I had done, and such happy looking sets of people I've never seen before. They run in here quite frequent now, all four of them together, and they always calls me 'Cupid.' There's one thing about it, though, that I never could quite make out, not being very good at figures, sir."

"And what was that?" asked my wife and I in unison.

"Well, you see," said the waiter, "Mr. Brown's check was for \$5 and Mr. Atkins' was for \$7. Now, each man paid the other man's check with a \$10 bill, and both of them told me to keep the change. Which one do you think lost by it, sir?"

"I'm sure I don't know," I laughingly replied, handing him a ten myself. "But go thou and do likewise."

"Thank you, sir," said the waiter. And he did.—ELIZABETH HUMPHREY.

Scale of Values.
"He forgets that he owes me his life!"
"That's nothing; he even forgets that he owes me \$5!"

Definition Up to Date.
Pat-An' phwat the devil is a cha'n' g'it.
Mike—Whist! Ut's a fryin' pan 'dat's got into society."

The Hopeless Case

"My dear," said Mrs. Hanson, sighing, "I am afraid you are quite hopeless. Let me see if I can't make you last effort."

The girl addressed swung around in her chair and eyed her hostess.

"Your methods are so subtle," she laughed. "Why don't you march me up to each eligible, and say: 'Man, this is your future wife. Woman, this is your future husband'—it would save hours of unnecessary quibbling. You deserve to fail."

"Oh, well, subtlety is not in my line," said the other, sighing, "but appreciate my efforts and do try and be reasonable. Here you are, well—old enough to know better, and you persist in remaining single. But this time I win. Oh, Anna, he is the dearest man!"

She clasped her plump little hands together in a comical gesture of ecstasy. "You will meet him at the Country Club this afternoon. He has just come from the West, and means—"

She broke off at the other's outburst of amusement. "Oh, well," she said, "laugh if you like, but wait."

It was customary to serve tea at the club at 5 each afternoon, and the ladies and some of the men were generally found there at that hour. When Mrs. Hanson and Anna arrived that afternoon, they found quite a little group collected on the breezy corner of the piazza and they were swept into the centre with laughing greetings. The men on the railing scrambled unceremoniously to their feet and brought more chairs. Mrs. Hanson turned to the holder of one rooney rocker and held out her hand.

"Mr. Whitney," she said. "I am so glad to see you again." She turned to Anna. "My niece, Miss Bradley," she said.

The girl was regarding him, a mixture of surprise and amusement in her gray eyes.

The man flushed, hesitated, and exclaimed: "Why, it is Miss Bradley. How do you do?"

They shook hands under Mrs. Hanson's ill-concealed glances of curiosity. Anna taking sufficient pity on her finally explained: "Mr. Whitney and I are old friends."

The man was young and undeniably good looking. When he and the girl went off to inspect something on the grounds under cover of some thinly veiled excuse, they were followed by all eyes enviously, or admiringly, according to whom the eyes belonged. Mrs. Hanson smiled gleefully.

The days following met entirely with her approval. Mr. Whitney was at the house frequently. He and Anna had free use of the runabout, the horses, anything the house afforded. But to all queries the girl remained silent. Sometimes she laughed, some times she blushed. She neither denied nor affirmed, which Mrs. Hanson declared was encouraging. So the month wore on.

One afternoon towards the end of that time, after Mrs. Hanson had watched the couple bowl early away in the machine, the girl's fair head close to the man's dark one, and the sound of their happy laughter floating back to the older woman, she ordered out the car and started for the club. It was early yet and she would take a drive. It was too beautiful to be doing nothing. It was a shame to stay in the house. Still early to expect to find anyone, she drove up to the club. There was always a breeze there and the piazza afforded a delightful view of the hills and beautiful rolling country around. The place was quite deserted, but draws up near the steps was the familiar runabout. Mrs. Hanson eyed it doubtfully and then descended and dismissed the man. Crossing the piazza she stood looking off at distant figures playing golf, enjoying the unaccustomed quiet that enveloped the place, till a sudden sound attracted her attention to the living room with in and she turned to the window opposite which she was standing.

A man stood inside, his back turned to her, absorbed, exceedingly so, as he held in his arms some charming bit of femininity, whose pretty head rested against his shoulder. The back was suspiciously like Whitney's.

Mrs. Hanson was rooted to the spot. No desire for eavesdropping possessed her, she was simply overwhelmed with sudden inability to move. A horrible suspicion had taken possession of her, which was definitely confirmed as they turned and she saw their faces. The man was Whitney. The girl decidedly was not Anna.

The couple did not see her, so absorbed were they in each other, but another figure advanced from a distant corner of the piazza and confronted her. This time it was Anna. Unlike the popular presentation of the forsaken damsel, she was laughing. She shook her head reproachfully at her astounded aunt.

"How cruel of you," she said, "to witness such a meeting. Alan hasn't seen the girl he is engaged to for six weeks! She just arrived this afternoon."

When Mrs. Hanson had regained her breath sufficiently to speak, she exclaimed: "And you knew all the time!"

"Of course I knew. But you deserved a lesson. Forgive me, dear aunt."

The other dropped her hands at her sides in a gesture of resignation. "I suppose I shall have to," she said. "But I can only repeat, 'you are hopeless.'"

To which the girl replied only by a laugh.—HELEN IRWIN.

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