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**The Silent Bell**

**And a Portrait That Went Astray**

By AMELIA DELANCEY

"The Silent Bell," as her brother had named her in childhood, was that anomaly, a woman of few words. Her name was Belle, and the nickname had clung to her ever after her brother gave it to her, so that she was known by young and old as "Bell" Edwards. She did not lack spirit nor temper, but seldom did she deem it necessary to set forth either joys or woes at any length in words.

But if the Belle was silent in speech, she was eloquent of eye, and those glorious orbs of hers had won her many admirers. But of all these only John Henry Allerton found favor. These two young people seemed to be attracted to each other from their first meeting and soon were constant companions.

After awhile they became engaged, but even the power of love did not seem to affect in the least Belle's silent manner. Often little misunderstandings between the lovers would have been brushed aside at once by a word or two from Belle, but she kept her tongue still and let time heal these tiny fractures in their otherwise uninterrupted courtship, a courtship that was to end in marriage just as soon as her devoted lover's business prospects were sufficiently bright.

The more surprised was Allerton on the occasion of his great quarrel with the Silent Bell when she stated fully and fluently her reasons for breaking their engagement. The sum total of her conversation in all their years of association did not begin to equal in length her speech at this time.

She touched each and every point where they differed, and she even dilated on details which he had not considered of the least importance—for instance, that of late years he had not seemed to care enough for her to present her with a good picture of himself.

She enlarged upon this bit of negligence until she had impressed Allerton with its due monstrosity. That she had not been presented periodically with a photograph of her lover was nothing short of a gross insult.

As her extraordinary burst of anger reached a climax on this one of his many flaws Allerton began to grasp the idea that she had really wanted his picture and that he had been guilty of a most grave misdemeanor in not sending it to her. But it was too late now, and the honest but clumsy fellow, of course, made matters worse by saying so. They parted, each believing the other to be a most unreasonable creature.

Soon after Allerton, very dependent and bitterly disappointed, went into business in a distant state. He had not been gone long when the Silent Bell's father died insolvent, and she went to her brother Robert, who lived in another town. There Belle, wishing to be independent, procured a position in a school. Her brother by virtue of being town clerk was also clerk of the board of education.

At the holiday vacation the principal of the school resigned. So great a confidence had Belle's work won for her that the board of education asked her to suggest some one for the place. She named a man of whose years and experience she could assure them, and at their request she wrote him asking him to correspond with the school board and to send his photograph.

Her brother Robert took the mail from their box a few days afterward and hurried to the board meeting. There was no letter from Belle's candidate, but there was a photo addressed to her. Robert hastily gave the photograph to the chairman of the board without even opening the wrapper and hurried away again to keep an appointment with the mayor.

Belle's recommendation and the fine looking face shown by the picture satisfied the members. Being anxious to act on the principalship that evening, they looked at the name and address on the back of the picture and dispatched a letter at once.

It was a very much puzzled and perplexed as well as slightly amused gentleman who sat at his desk in his elegant office a few days later and read a letter appointing him to a principalship of a country school with an annual salary almost but not quite equal to the monthly income that was earned for him by his business.

and dictated a letter to the stenographer explaining to them that the must have made a mistake. Suddenly he looked again at the name of the town. Then he lit a cigar and thought. Then he laughed.

"Why not?" said he. "I can spare a month to see."

With this Delphic utterance he tore up the answer that his stenographer had brought him, shut down his desk and told his manager that he had been called out of town and would be away for some time.

When the Silent Bell entered her schoolroom on the first morning after the holidays she found on her desk a typewritten request to report at the principal's office at once. She ran lightly up the stairs, opened the door of the office and found herself face to face with Allerton.

"Good morning, Miss Edwards," said Allerton blandly. "I would like to consult with you about some of the details of this school system. I trust I may count upon your cooperation during my principalship here."

"John Henry Allerton," said Belle, "what are you doing here?"

"My good looks," answered he gravely, "appear to have procured me this position. I am here"—this with great dignity—"to fill my position."

"Good looks?" queried Belle. "As represented by the photograph I sent you during the holidays," explained Allerton.

The light of comprehension began to dawn upon Belle. Being a woman, her intuition helped her to a solution of the problem, and she realized that this was really not a joke of John Allerton's.

"I really thank you," went on Allerton, "for your extreme kindness in recommending me. I hope you do not already regret it."

Belle remained silent. She was struggling between a belief that she ought to tell Allerton that she had not taken this method to let him know she forgave him and a wish to let him know she still cared.

"Belle," said Allerton, becoming earnest, "I found out from your brother what had happened. As soon as I arrived here I hurried to him and discovered the mistake we had made. I got him to keep my secret. We suppressed my competitor's photograph in a sort of criminal conspiracy, but I shall not keep him out of his position long—that is, if some one will go back with me to where I belong. I can find out about that if some one will tell me how she likes the original of the photograph that she didn't get."

Belle blushed, but said nothing. "Perhaps," said Allerton, smiling, but very, very anxious, "you would prefer to have me as a principal."

"No, indeed!" said the Silent Bell, and then, realizing what her reply meant, she covered her face and tried to escape from the room.

But the principal was swifter than she was. The school board would have been shocked if the subsequent brazen actions of the new ruler of their school could have been seen by them.

He, however, did not care. The Silent Bell did not object, and John Henry Allerton would have kissed her at that moment despite all the school boards in the world.

"So you surrendered, after all, without getting that photograph!" said he inhumanely. And Belle only nodded and blushed, with happy tears in her eyes.

**Chopin's Likes and Dislikes.**  
 Bach and, above all, Mozart were Chopin's ideals, "his gods." Hummel, Field and Moscheles were his favorite pianists. Field's nocturnes were greatly prized by him. He admired Schubert, though not without reserve. Weber and Beethoven only partially satisfied him. He disliked much of Mendelssohn's music and found still less to praise in Schumann, never using any of his pieces in giving his lessons. He disapproved of Berlioz, and while he liked Meyerbeer personally, he heartily disliked his music. Liszt says truly that Chopin sought in the great masterpieces only that which corresponded with his nature. "What resembled it pleased him. What differed from it received scant justice from him."—Dole's "Famous Composers."

**For Body and Soul.**  
 Here is a curious advertisement, republished in the Cornhill Magazine from an eighteenth century paper: "Wanted—For a family who have had health, a sober, steady person, in the capacity of a doctor, surgeon and apothecary. He must occasionally act in the capacity of butler and dress hair and wigs. He will be required to read prayers occasionally and to preach a sermon every Sunday. The reason of this advertisement is that the family cannot any longer afford the expense of the physical tribe and wish to be at a certain expense for their bodies and souls. A good salary will be given."

**TAUGHT THEM A LESSON.**

The Gun's Rebuke to the Officers of One of His Regiments.

The gun is greatly loved by his own soldiers, and no wonder, for the following story is typical of him:

A certain Russian lieutenant who was none too well off was one day seen riding in a tram. The other officers of his regiment were furious at what they called an insult to the uniform, and they told the lieutenant that he must send in his papers. The unfortunate young officer had no alternative, but before he could do so the rear heard of the affair. Immediately putting on his colonel's uniform of the regiment in question, his majesty left the palace, hailed a passing tram and, entering it, sat calmly down until it stopped in front of the barracks.

There he got out and, assembling all the officers, said to them: "Gentlemen, I have just ridden from the palace in a tram, and I desire to know if you wish me to send in my papers. I presume I have disgraced my uniform."

Naturally the officers were dumfounded. "Sir," stammered the major nervously, "you could never do that."

"Then," answered the colonel, smiling, "as I have not degraded the uniform lieutenant—cannot have done so and will thus retain his commission in this regiment even if he, like me, dares to ride in a tram."

After that snobbery died a speedy death in that particular regiment.—Parson's.

**TRY IT ON THE DISK.**

A Test That Proves the Human Skull a Good Sounding Box.

An interesting experiment that proves what a good sounding box the human skull is can be performed by any one who has a disk phonograph, says Electrical Engineering.

Stop up both of your ears with cotton as tightly as possible, so that no sound will be heard from the outside. Now place an ordinary darning needle between your teeth by biting on it hard, taking care that the tongue or lips do not touch the needle. The latter is important, because if either lip or tongue touches the needle the sound will be decreased considerably.

For the best results the needle itself should project not more than one or one and a half inches from the mouth. For that reason the darning needle should be broken off about one and one-half inches from its sharp point. It goes without saying that the sharp point should project out of the mouth, while the broken off end should be inside the mouth.

Now start an ordinary disk phonograph and carefully press down upon the record with the needle's point held at the same angle as the reproducer's needle is held ordinarily. As soon as the needle touches the record with sufficient pressure the inside of the head will be filled immediately with music exceedingly loud and clear.

**Brignoll in a Temper.**

On one occasion Bianchi, the noted teacher, went on the stage to see Brignoll, the famous singer, whom he found pacing up and down like a madman, humming over his part.

"Why, Brig, what is the matter with you? Are you nervous?" he asked.

"Yes, I am nervous," was the reply as he walked harder and faster than ever.

"But, Brig, you ought not to be nervous. I've heard you sing the part 200 times. I heard you sing it thirty years ago."

"Thirty years ago! Who are you that should know so much?"

"Who am I? You know who I am, and I know who you are."

"Very well; you know what I am, but I am sure you do not know what you are, and if you wish I will tell you. You are a fool!"

**Alexander in Mesopotamia.**

The marshes of Mesopotamia were famous in the time of Alexander the Great. One of the last acts of his life, within a few weeks of his death, was a voyage down the Euphrates to the great dike of Pallakopa, about ninety miles below Babylon. This sluice has been constructed by the ancient Assyrian kings to let off the water of the river when it became excessive into the marshes. It was reported not to be working well, and Alexander proposed to construct another sluice lower down. He sailed on into the marshes, steering his vessel himself, with his diadem on his head, to explore them and the tombs of the kings, and so extensive were the lakes and swamps that Alexander's fleet lost its way among them.

**Weather Variety.**  
 Some growl perpetually at the weather; it is too hot or too cold; too wet or too dry. And yet a kind Providence arranges it infinitely better than we could. What a beautiful promise this was in the early history of the race: "While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."—Christian Herald.

**Looking Ahead.**  
 "I think I had better get a job before we marry."  
 "Don't be so unromantic, Freddy. I won't need any clothes for a long, long time."  
 "But you may want to eat almost any time, my dear."—Pittsburgh Post.

**Knocking on Wood.**  
 The "knock wood" superstition is said to date back to the days of sylvan gods, when oak, ash and rowan were sacred trees, whose deities would come to the assistance of the knocker.

**Dunson Smoked in Church.**  
 Sir Walter Scott in his "Heart of Midlothian" refers to one Dunson of Knockunder, an important personage who smoked during the whole of the sermon from an iron pipe tobacco borrowed from other worshippers. We are told that at the end of the discourse he knocked the ash out of his pipe, replaced it in his sporran, returned the tobacco pouch to its owner and joined in the prayer with decency and attention.

**Capable of Correcting the Dictionary.**  
 It is futile to attempt to instruct the forward youth of this our day. One who sat at lunch with us the other day remarked in the course of a narrative, "and then the poor fellow sat and wrung his hands."  
 "There is no such word as 'wring,'" said we.  
 "There wasn't before I spoke, parsons," said he, "but there is now"—Philadelphia Ledger.

What makes us discontented with our condition is the absurdly exaggerated idea we have of the happiness of others.—French Proverb

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