

BOMBARDMENT WITH A MOTIVE

It is with some misgivings that I set myself the task of dredging my mind for the facts, and I have no doubt fancies, which shroud my first attempt at social contact with a member of the opposite sex. The past has not yet dimmed sufficiently for me to be unable to discern myself clearly on the memorable night, and it is with mixed emotions that I bare these hitherto unknown happenings for all to muse and speculate upon.

I had passed several stages regarding girls that are normal for a boy to go through, and I think it best for me to begin my narrative at the end of my "girl-hating" and the beginning of what I will call my "appreciation" stage. I had been a firm "hater" for several years, but now to my astonishment I found myself regarding a certain girl, a year my junior, and a reasonably close neighbour, with a new and better light. After deep and sad contemplation, I admitted I found her not at all unattractive, and decided to show my affection by requesting the honor of her company to the local movie theater.

But a direct approach and invitation was out of the question, and I had to first let her know in some subtle fashion what my intentions were, and then gradually work around to the actual asking. I was aided in this by the fact that it was the season of Winter, and when, on four successive afternoons I lurked in a suitable alley and bombarded my choice with vigorously and accurately thrown snowballs, I believed her to be ready for the all-important question. I would have preferred a fifth afternoon in the alley, but as Friday evening was fast approaching I deemed it wise to make my request without further delay. And so on Thursday afternoon I abruptly confronted her, noting with satisfaction her hurried glance towards my hands, to see no doubt if I was in the possession of any snowballs, and manfully suppressing a slight but rather embarrassing squeak in my voice, I made my request. To this day I don't know if it was surprise, fear of another bombardment, or a genuine desire for my company, which influenced her affirmative reply, but I elected to believe the last, and with a smug smile, I departed to await the hour of 7:00 P.M. Friday.

Wearing that shiny look which can only be captured by much application of soap to a beardless face, and arrayed in the choicest of a non too bountiful wardrobe, I made my punctual appearance, and with what I hoped was a debonair manner took my date's arm in mine and proceeded in the direction of the movie. This journey was by no means long, and as I strutted along I noted with pleasure the surprised looks of two elderly spinsters who were also residents of my neighbourhood, and who were advancing, I believe, in the direction of the Church. The trip held one very bad moment for me, and that was when I observed a group of my friends, out for no good I was sure, and only in search of such a victim as myself to hurl innumerable taunts and jeers at, walking in front of us. No doubt my companion noted my momentary pause in stride and loss of voice, but with the wisdom that is inbred to women, wisely kept her silence, and I breathed a silent sigh of relief when my friends filed into a store, allowing us time to pass unnoticed. I resumed the conversation concerning the relative merits of the actors we were soon to gaze upon, and in short order we arrived at the ticket office.

The show is itself, I believe, of secondary importance here, and as the title eludes me I think it will be sufficient to say that it was of the suspense type. My escort showed

the proper amount of terror at the appropriate times, and I showed my bravery by chucking at her displays. After some two hours of this the movie concluded and we again found ourselves on the sidewalk, preparing for the return journey.

We did not go directly to my date's home, but deviated to the extent of entering an ice-cream parlor, where the traditional sodas were duly consumed. From there we continued our return with, I must confess, the conversation again being non too enlightening, and in fact consisting to such an extent on my companions side of replies such as "yes", "surely", "I agree", etc, that I suspected the recent bombardments were still very fresh in her mind. In a few short minutes we reached her door, and here the scene which is most vivid to my mind took place. I had been giving serious thought to whether or not it would be proper, and to some extent safe, for me to attempt a good night kiss, and lacking the wisdom of past experience, and possessing the cockiness of youth, I decided an attempt was in order. But as the inevitable moment approached my determination wavered, and for a frantic second I feared all to be lost. Then, motivated by an impulsive urge, and with eyes tightly shut, I made a hasty lunge in her direction. I believe I came in contact with the point of her nose, but, considering that it was my first attempt, I deemed I had conducted myself admirably and without further ado, I turned on my heel and left.

—MARTIN F. J. CLOONEY

BELOW MOUNT FUJI

Everything was out of sight now except the pale blue sky with the blazing sun up above and the mysterious dark blue sea down below. Our ship was headed for Japan, and this was the first part of our journey across the Pacific.

Shipboard life is a lazy life. Every day we sat on the deck and watched those silly flying-fish, dashing away from the sides of the ship five or six inches above the water through a distance of about ten feet or more, and then exhausted, disappearing into the sea again. At night, blessed were those who went to bed early.

There were only eight passengers on board ship; two couples, three old ladies, and myself. All were Americans except myself. Very soon, we got acquainted with each other, and we were looking forward to the fascinating experience of visiting Japan. Four days was not a very long time, after all. Finally, we were inside our first port of call, Kobe.

Japan is a small yet very strong country to the northeast of China and just opposite Korea. The most famous landscape of this country is Mount Fuji. Japan—the land of romance!

Kobe is one of the great ports in southern Japan, and was a chief naval base during World War II. As a result, it was utterly destroyed by the Allies. The Kobe that I saw had been rebuilt after the war, so the buildings were modern and westernized. If you want to see Japan, Kobe is not the place to go. One amazing thing about this place was that there was an excessive number of banks (money banks), thirty or more on one single street. Some of them even stood side by side in a row of ten. The total number of them, I think, was more than sixty. I imagine the people there are rather rich.