The Romance of an Old Fool

Field Roswell Martin
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BY
ROSWELL FIELD

EVANSTON
WILLIAM S. LORD
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To

MY GODCHILDREN

With the somewhat unnecessary assurance that
it is not an autobiography, this little
tale of misconceived attachment
is affectionately
inscribed
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If it had not been for Bunsey, the novelist, I might have attained the heights. As a critic Bunsey has never commanded my highest admiration, and yet I have had my tender moments for him. From a really exacting standpoint he was not much of a novelist, and to his failure to win the wealth which is supposed to accompany fame I may have owed much of the debt of his sustained presence and his fondness for my tobacco. Bunsey had started out in life with high ideals, a resolution to lead the purely literary existence and to supply the market with a variety of choice, didactic essays along the line of high thinking; but the demand did not come up to the supply, and presently he abandoned his original lofty intention in favor of a sort of dubious romance. The financial returns, however,
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while a trifle more regular and encouraging, were not of sufficient importance to justify him in giving up his friendly claims on my house, my library, my time, my favorite lounge, and my best brand of cigars, in return for which he contributed philosophic opinions and much strenuous advice on topics in general and literature in particular.

From my childhood I have been in the habit of keeping a diary, a running comment on the daily incidents of my pleasant but uneventful life, and occasionally, when Bunsey’s society seemed too assertive and familiar, I sought to punish him by reading long and numerous excerpts. To do him justice he took the chastisement meekly, and even insisted that I was burying a remarkable talent, sometimes going to the magnanimous extreme of offering to introduce me to his publisher, and to speak a good word for me to the editors of certain magazines with whom he maintained a brisk correspondence, not infrequently of a querulous