

AS IT SEEMS TO ME

BY A PRISONER OF HOPE

A love affair always attracts attention. Ever since they were quill pen and quill pen they were never overlooked. It seems to me hardly true that all the world loves a lover, but certainly, whatever the sentiment he inspires, the lover is rarely left to his own way.

It had been such a long time since I had seen a lover—the genuine article, the young man, ridiculously, hopelessly in love, that when one appeared upon the stage that is always spread before me, I was distinctly glad. It seems to me a very interesting thing to accept our small corner of the world as a stage and watch the people who appear before us as actors. I feel that way long before I knew that the writer of the greatest plays had put the idea into words. So when the lover appeared I watched him with interest. He had the Romeo manner all right. I waited for knowledge of his heart. He had fallen in love with another play. A simple, flower-faced Ophelia, with quiet, childish ways and a smile that went straight to one's heart—a country girl used to homely ways.

It seemed to me a very pitiful thing and most unfitting that Romeo should fix his heart upon Ophelia, for he was of other sort than the matter born. He was used to roses, sweet voluptuous roses and here was his patrician hand stretched longingly toward a held flower, a simple daisy.

And then upon the scene of action appeared another character, a man of the world, rich in years, experience and wisdom. He had right to Romeo's ear, and into it he straightway poured a stream of words. Listening I wondered if the words were true.

"You think that you love Ophelia, Romeo," said the man of the world with a carefully measured but distinctly superior smile.

"I know that I do," was Romeo's quiet response. His voice had a thrill in it.

The man of the world tilted his chair and let his eyelids down a trifle. "Ah," he said as if he needed a throb of time for the settling of himself in a new position. Then he smiled comfortably.

"It is not a matter of sentiment that we are going to discuss, Ophelia is very lovely, very fascinating, I am not surprised that you love her madly."

The boy caught his breath, blushed and smiled into the cool eyes that watched him. But he was silent.

"Great thing this that we call love," reflected the man of the world. "Nothing like it. The question is, does it pay?"

Romeo laughed softly, but the man of the world went on: "You see it belongs to youth and youth is such a very little time. There is such a little bit of it falling to each of us. It is immense while it lasts and love is the flower that fills it with fragrance. But youth drifts away and love goes with it. Ophelia's beauty is gone. She is no longer sweet and fresh and fair to see. Romance fades, fascination vanishes, the end of the period of loving is come. And it comes early."

The young man listened, a sort of superior wonder in his eyes, and the man of the world went on: "You know all about the loving. You know that as well as I do. But there your knowledge stops. You haven't been any farther. I have. I know the sequel. Romeo, it doesn't pay. It is the mess of pottage, the transient joy, the flower that leaves you a handful of withered stems."

"Here you are in love, madly in love with this fair Ophelia, and she, poor child, is as madly in love with you. You have made up your mind to ask her hand in marriage. You have been brought up to one manner of life, she to another. You love ease and fashion and all that society means. Women of culture, men of refinement, crowded drawing rooms, social functions, position, wealth these have filled your life and are necessary to your happiness. But for one fair woman, a girl who has been very simply reared, untaught in the things that the women of your circle know, you are willing to sacrifice everything you have held dear, to forego your bright prospects as your uncle's heir, to take your place among the men upon whom rest the curse of Adam."

"Yes," said the boy slowly. "I told my uncle to-day that my choice is made. Ophelia and poverty, love and labor."

The man of the world looked at him pityingly. "It is nothing new," he said slowly, "and yet you are never quite reconciled to it. We are impatient because each man insists upon finding out for himself. From your position you cannot understand the transitory nature of love, and love's joys. The morning is a short part of the day. As I said, it is a question of comparison. The other division of life is a larger one. We are old longer than we are young. The time comes very quickly when the comforts of life mean much. The quality of a man's finer, ease of body and mind, power among other men, refined tastes and ambitions, success that other men recognize, these are the things that last if you went in for these now and left Ophelia over for ten years, do you think you would sacrifice them for the faded beauty that would be your sweetheart's only dowry?"

"I've heard all the poetic nonsense about eternal devotion and love in a cotage. If you really want to believe in it, don't put it to the test; you need a wife to be sure, but your uncle's choice is wiser than your own."

"Mind you, I am not doubting nor belittling your passionate love for Ophelia. But I know as you cannot know the short-lived nature of this devotion."

"Do you need to have pointed out to you the men who are carrying weight, the men who have all for love? Some of them, with a chery it was worth it, fight bravely to the end, and some forget that the fields of pleasure ever were green."

"Your uncle's choice is a woman of your own world. You are used to her kind. She would be companionable, a comrade. A man needs that to the journey's end. She would be the mother of your children, the equal of your father, and she would bring them up as you have brought up, there would be no embarrassment, no confusion, no unfitness. This passion, real as it seems, is a sort of madness. This disease, a man in love should be treated as if insane. It is a delusion, a hallucination, a mania. It is a morbid condition that should not be encouraged. There is no sensible reason why a man should suddenly de-

velop such a violent and irrational preference for one particular woman. We should treat the attack as we do whooping cough, or measles. All of us have it, but most of us recover. The trouble is with the grave complications and remote consequences."

"I guess you don't know what you are talking about," said Romeo.

"That is what we always have to contend with," smiled the man of the world, patiently. "They always think we don't know. You remember the quaint old fable with the homely monkey. If you are a porcupine, marry a porcupine. It's the best way. Passion cools, beauty fades, conditions change. But nature remains the same. In a year or so your pretty field flower will be a shabby, humbly weed, and you will miss the accompaniment of your more and more. Your sympathies will attach themselves to quills of your own pattern, and this will separate you from Ophelia who is not a porcupine and direct you toward your uncle's choice who is a porcupine and whose choice will be gnawed greedily by ravenous remorse that knows no tiring."

And then, timidly, across the piazza of the summer hotel came Ophelia—Ophelia in a badly hung, home-made gown, Ophelia with a little tell-tale swing to her arms and a pitiful squeak to her shoes. Her face was as white as the disk of a daisy and her eyes were pure as wells of summer dew, but—

The man of the world said the correct thing, bowed in the correct way, and took himself correctly off the stage. But from somewhere came the low cadence of a flute-like voice, a voice that rounded each word with perfect ease, and trailed off in a generous ripple of soft laughter, and lo, there was before us an exquisite creature whose softness fit her as the feathers fit a hummingbird, a girl who knew what to do and say, graciously, perfectly at ease. And I knew intuitively that this was the uncle's choice.

Ophelia, dropping her eyes and coyly looking up at the man of the world, ending with a childish giggle, and the other girl, the exquisite "silk-lined" girl with a sweet, cool charity added a softening word or two. When I looked again Romeo and Ophelia were crossing the lawn to the house and the silk-lined girl was waving to the eyes of the man of the world.

It was then that I fell a-wondering. It seems to me that there is something of truth in the cruel cynicism of the skeptical man of the world. The ignorance of the young is pitiful beyond the power of words to be telling. For how shall the young man know a passionate infatuation from the grand passion. Even the wise man of the world had never learned as much as that. And though a middle-aged woman should testify to the existence of a love that lasts past the fire of passion, the charm of beauty, the freshness of youth, how yet should he know? The power of belief was gone. He had formed his opinion. The most hopeless people are those who have afflicted themselves with formed opinions. They are deaf and blind. You can't reach them. The pity is that they are not also dumb. But they never are. Well, the man of the world had formed an opinion. His case was hopeless. He will have to get along with his burden the best way he can. The only use we can make of him is to keep him for a sort of warning to others who are in danger of forming opinions.

But Romeo? It seems to me that he may be making a mistake. There is a world of homely wisdom in the little fable about the porcupine who won the race because his wife was so entirely like himself. No other sort of wife could have helped him. And so I thought of Ophelia's lack of culture, her ignorance of things that to Romeo were mere matters of course and I wished he could make his uncle's choice his own. For we who are older know that prettiness does vanish. We must acknowledge in spite of sentiment and romance that there must be a good deal in a girl if she is to be weighed in the balance against a man's prospects in life. I wondered if Romeo, stripped of wealth, robbed of position, Romeo working humbly in a lowly place would seem the hero that Ophelia was finding him now. She has pretty shallow blue eyes and a small pit-tiled nose. Remembering these I found myself shaking my head. She really is not worth it. If we are going to be perfectly honest, there is no getting round as much as that.

It seems to me that the question is: Will love blind him to this? Is he in danger of finding it out? My experience with love explodes for me the theory of its blindness. Nothing is so clear of vision as love, nothing so clear sighted. Its eyes are positively microscopic. For love finds virtues that no other sight discovers. It is not that love is blind to fault, but that it is so exquisitely sensitive to virtue.

But if this of Romeo's should not be the real love, is he going to be brave enough to be a man? He has a full, pleasure-loving mouth, a dimpled chin and eyes with long, heavily fringed lids. And so I don't know.

His eyes are easily made just here, and well, if you are a porcupine, marry a porcupine.

AMERICA'S GREATEST GENIUS.

Joel Chandler Harris Gave Through "Uncle Remus" a Gospel of Enlightenment and a Gospel of Gratitude and Love.

Rutherfordton, S. C.

The wires are flashing the sad news all over the world that "Uncle Remus" is dead. In millions of homes tonight little heads will bow, little wonderful eyes will fill with tears, little stricken hearts ache with bereavement. No "little boy" to steal down to the old man's cabin—no old man with the dreamy wise old face—no "Tar Baby" tale—no "Miss Sally" to call the little fellow back. "Drumpp, read me a story," said a dear little boy to me only a few weeks ago, with the dreamy wise old face I had heard or thought, there was but one from which he'd have us read.

Joel Chandler Harris—dead, oh dear children—is America's greatest genius. When the President went to Atlanta, his first inquiry was for "Uncle Remus"; nor would he be satisfied until he found him! There's not a man or woman, young or old, in all the South who was not a close student of the "Uncle Remus" incident, for the tribute was true.

"No period of human history has been more misjudged and less understood," said Henry Grady, "than the slaveholding era of the South. It is doubtful if the world has seen a peasantry so happy and so well-to-do as the negro slaves in America. If the 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' had portrayed the rarest exception, not all the armies that went to the field could have stayed the flood of rapine and arson and pillage that would have started with the first gun of the civil war. Instead of that, witness the miracle of the slave in loyalty to his master—maintaining and defending the families of those who fought against his freedom—of the negro who, on the far-off battlefield, searching among the carnage for his young master, that he might lift the dying head to his heart and bend to catch the last words of the old folk at home, or the wrestling the meantime in agony and love that he would lay down his life in his master's stead."

Everywhere humble and kindly, the bodyguard of the helpless, the rough companion of the little ones, the observant friend, the silent sentry in his lowly cabin, the shrewd counselor; and when the dead came home, a mourner at the open grave of slavery rather than the Northern man, dealing with casual servants querulous and sensitive cannot understand this sympathy and friendliness that existed between master and slave, "that friendliness," Grady says, "was the rule of the regime." And he truthfully adds, "It has survived war and strife, and a political campaign which has done more to divide and Federal bayonets fortified. It will never die until the last slaveholder and slave has been gathered to rest in the South. It is the answer to abuse and slander. It is the hope of our future."

It is this "miracle" which Joel Chandler Harris, through "Uncle Remus" has interpreted to the world, and implanted in the loving hearts of little children. He has made it not only manifest, but immortal. No philosophy can evade it, no subsequent bitterness destroy it because of the hand of a master, he has pictured it imperishably and given it to children—into the keeping of those whom the Savior blessed. A gospel of enlightenment for the little boy of the North—a gospel of gratitude and love for the little white child of the South!

We have not yet realized the debt we owe him—but we shall realize it. He is the Old South's greatest vindicator—to the New South, the preserver and prophet.

And the negro race, too, is his debtor—in a Southern town a year or so ago, infuriated white men, maddened by a mob against all because of the unspeakable crime of one, were driving black men before them. As a father came rushing into his terrified home a little boy met him at the door, and with tears streaming down his little cheeks said, "Oh, papa, don't let them hurt 'Uncle Remus'!"

Such a lesson is obvious. God bless the gentle spirit of Joel Chandler Harris.

I PAIN WOULD LINGER.

A little while (my sun is almost set) I faint would pause along the downward way.

Musing an hour in this sad tender ray, While, sweet! our eyes with tender tears are wet;

A little while I faint would linger yet, All for love's sake, for love that cannot tire;

Though fervid youth be dead, with youth's desire, And hope has faded to a vague regret, A little while I faint would linger yet.

A little while I faint would linger here; Behold! who knows what strange, mysterious bars

"Twixt souls that love may rise in other stars? Nor can love deem the face of death is fair; A little while I still would linger here.

The Question Box

Ignoramus.—What is the amount of the public debt of the United States, and what method has been adopted for its gradual extinction? (2) What is the debt of Great Britain?

A.—At the close of the last year the interest bearing debt was \$538,488,510, and a further sum of \$8,330,955 on which interest had ceased. This does not include some four hundred millions of currency and notes outstanding, which is partly offset by gold and silver. The debt is not being reduced at present, and is very small as compared with those of the nations of the world. (2) Great Britain's debt is \$3,339,629,745, and she has guaranteed a part of the \$12,510,084 debt of her colonies.

J. E.—How is silver separated from ore? (2) Where can I send ore to have it analyzed? Will there be a change for it?

A.—By the process of refining. It is rendered pure by dissolving it in nitric acid, altering the solution, and then precipitating the metal with common salt. A chloride of silver is afterwards mixed with sulphuric acid and then, by introducing bars of zinc, a chloride of zinc is formed while the silver is reduced to metallic state. (2) Minerals are assayed at the New Orleans mint. The assayer will advise you as to charges.

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J. K.—Please recommend me a good book to learn French from.

A.—Buy a French grammar at any book store.

W. M. S.—When will the Panama canal be completed? Has this government control of lands bordering it? (2) How many soldiers and how many ships has the United States to use in war? (3) Is there any present danger of war, and with whom? (4) How many Representatives in Congress has Florida? (5) How many fair as the United States to use in war? (6) Can a telegram be sent around the world, and what is the time required? (7) What is the value of a quarter-dollar stamped in 1872? (8) What is the horoscope of one born October 11th.

A.—Probably in 1915. Yes, five miles either side. (2) About 70,000 soldiers and 275 vessels of all kinds. Of course either the United States or necessary. (3) 1 vessel of none. (4) Three, and two Senators. (5) The casualties are estimated at 420,000 Russians and 170,000 Japanese. (6) Yes. The time is appreciable except where the message has to be repeated. (7) Twenty-five cents. (8) Inventive, great foresight.

M. D.—Is there any extra value to a 50-cent piece coined in 1867? If so, how can I get it?

A.—The milled edge without lettering is worth \$1 to \$2. Look in a city directory. Addresses are not permitted in this column.

L. R. F.—Both gentlemen reside in New York.

F. S.—Put your questions to the contractor, who will employ you.

E. N.—What is the salary of a good electrical engineer, what is the cost of running a long distance, and how to complete the course, and how is the demand for such men?

A.—One question is answerable: Experts are always in demand. The other things depend upon the man and his opportunities. Experts in any profession are not made with a rule and saw, like a soap box.

U. E. B.—Where can I get the book "My Lost Self," and what is the price? (2) Is the tomb where Christ was laid in a good state of preservation and yet to be seen? (3) What interval of time elapsed between the time Christ saw Mark 13:31? Verily I say unto you that this generation shall not pass till all these things be done, and the fulfillment of the prophecy.

A.—I do not know the book. A bookseller will get it for you if it is in print. (2) The tomb of 1900 years ago is not in evidence, nor is its locality a matter of certainty. (3) Jerusalem seven years after the death of Christ. It then became the scene of bloody riots and was finally destroyed by Titus 70 A. D., forty years after Christ's death.

N. J. F.—Please inform me as to the conditions upon which teachers are pensioned by the Carnegie fund, and who to address.

A.—The provisions are that any person 45 years of age or over, who has had not less than fifteen years' service as a professor and who is at the time a professor in a non-denominational college, shall be entitled to receive for each year of service \$1,000 or less an allowance of \$1,000, provided that no allowance exceed 90 per cent. of the active pay. For active pay above \$1,000 the allowance is \$50 for each year of the active pay. Retiring professors whose age is under 45 have a slightly smaller allowance, and widows of professors who die in service share in the benevolence. The office of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching are at 542 Fifth avenue, New York.

V. C.—Name the State officers of Kentucky. (2) How many Senators in Congress? (3) How many soldiers in the United States army? (4) How many post-offices in the United States? (5) Who is Speaker of the House of Representatives? (6) Who are the Senators from Kentucky? (7) Kentucky is part of what district of the United Circuit Court? (8) How many States were needed to ratify the constitution of the United States?

A.—Governor, E. W. Holt; Lieutenant Governor, W. J. Fitzgerald; Secretary, C. E. Denton; Treasurer, Mark Tully; Attorney General, F. C. Jackson; Adjutant General, J. W. E. Hunt. (2) Ninety-two. (3) 149,000. (4) 1,490. (5) 1,490. (6) 1,490. (7) 1,490. (8) 1,490.

F. W. C.—How can I make sticky fly paper?

A.—Oil your paper and coat with turpentine varnish. Or melt gosh, boiled linseed oil and add honey. Or take a pound of resin, three and a half ounces each of molasses and linseed oil and boil till thick enough.

M. C. A.—Ask a coin dealer. I have no information as to the value of Confederate coins.

J. N. A.—I would be glad to have information about how to make box kites; do you write the publication and I will treat of making and flying of kites.

A.—Directions have no doubt been printed in The American Boy, and I will write the publication and I will treat of making and flying of kites.

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