

MIZPAH!

I kissed your lips and held your hands, And said farewell and went away, Well knowing that another day Would speed you forth to other lands.

A thousand miles between us lay When autumn passed, in lingering flight, And drenched with fragrant dew at night The woodland fires he lit by day;

The winter night falls cold and bleak; I sit, in saddened mood, alone, And listen to the wind's low moan, And hide a fear I dare not speak.

Hot spring shall blossom up the plain, And Easter lilies scent the air, And song birds riot everywhere, And heart and hope grow glad again.

And when, with flowers of June, you come, And face to face again we stand, And heart to heart and hand to hand, O love! within the one dear home,

—Homer Greene, in New Haven Palladium.

UNCLE PHILEMON.

You see, said Popleigh, this was the way it happened.

My grandfather was a supercargo in the India and China trade, and he spent most of his life travelling all over the world, and only coming home now and then to attend to his family duties.

Then she died, and after a while he gave up the supercargo business, and settled down to farming in New Hampshire. He was 78 years old then; but he married again, and went right on helping the census along to the day of his death.

So, you understand, we weren't much surprised when we got a letter from Uncle Philemon, up in North Chuggville, New Hampshire, saying that he'd like to see his brother Augustus' son and his brother Augustus' son's family, and if we couldn't come up to North Chuggville, couldn't we let him come down and see us some time.

Well, you know how women look at such things. My wife always wants me to be polite to my own family, and she takes in all the aunts and uncles and cousins, just as if they were hers. If I object, she says I don't think seriously enough of my children's future.

However, so it was, and Uncle Philemon had to come. My wife sat down and wrote him the nicest sort of a letter, and told him how glad we'd be to have him here at Christmas and have a real family reunion, and get in Aunt Christina to dinner, and Cousin Alonzo and his five daughters, and Uncle Elanath, and Sarah Clymer, his first wife's daughter, and her late husband's sister, who's living with them.

Well, when it was settled, we both of us began to feel a little bit uneasy, and my wife said she thought perhaps I'd better have waited and thought it over. You see, we not only didn't know whether we should like Uncle Philemon; but we didn't know whether Uncle Philemon would like us. You know about how we live. I like my claret at dinner, and the whiskey decanter stands on the sideboard for anybody who comes in of an evening.

My wife and I held a caucus over it, and we decided that the whiskey decanter should go inside the sideboard, and that I should drink my claret for strictly medicinal reasons. My wife wanted to know if I couldn't give the stuff up for three or four days, and asked me if I was a slave to the habit; but I told her I was, and we compromised on the medicinal basis. Then we agreed to take turns in escorting him to the various churches, and my wife suggested that I

should find out what prayer meetings were going on, or any other services of an interesting character, so I got a list out of the paper. We had to work a little in the dark, for we didn't know what church he belonged to, but I familiarized myself with the whole subject, and I was ready for him if he should turn out to be a Seventh-Day Baptist or a Millerite.

We thought a great deal about Uncle Philemon, and got to preparing for his visit in various little ways, and arranging things to suit his taste. My wife borrowed a perforated cardboard motto from Uncle Elanath, and hung it in the spare room, and she stuck some of the children's Sunday school cards in the looking glass on the bureau. I found an old photograph album with a lot of family pictures in it, and I put it in a conspicuous position on the parlor table. We wanted to make him feel at home. But it did seem to me all the time as though I had given a mortgage on my house, or as if I was out on bail. I got to dreaming of Uncle Philemon.

We got a note from him a day or two before he was expected, saying that he might look for him on the train that arrived at five on Monday afternoon. At half-past five he hadn't turned up, nor at six. It was snowing like a leather bed, and at half-past six my wife said she thought the poor old gentleman must be waiting at the Grand Central station, and that he was probably so confused by the noise and bustle of the city that he didn't dare to start off by himself. She thought I'd better go and look him up. I didn't want to, but I put on my overcoat and stamped off through the snow.

The snow was coming down so that you could hardly see ten feet in front of you when I got to the place where the trains come in. Just at that corner I stopped, for I heard a noise up the street, and—I don't know why the idea came into my head—but I felt sure that I was going to find Uncle Philemon there. There he was, sure enough. I recognized him right off, although he was muffled up in an army overcoat and a fur cap. He had three hackmen dancing about him, and he towered above them like a Statue of Liberty.

When I came up he was talking New Hampshire so loud that the policemen ought to have heard him in the bar-rooms. "You're the sixteenth kerriage driver I've talked to this afternoon," he yelled; "and, by gum, you'll take me to Lexington Avenir for two York shillings, or I'll mop 'th' hull durn taown with ye!"

I went up to him and introduced myself, and asked him to come along. But he had no intention of coming along until he got ready. He shook me warmly by the hand. "Glad to see you," he said; "you come along right handy." Then, before I knew what he was about, he hit one of the cabmen in the pit of the stomach, doubled him up like a jack-knife, chucked him into his cab, and slammed the door on him. Then he jumped up on the box like a lively old cyclone, reached down and caught me by the wrist, and hauled me so hard that I had to clamber up after him.

"Come along!" he shouted; "you tell me whereabouts Lexington Avenir is an' I'll drive this dinged kerriage-farmer there, an' I won't charge him no quarter, neither. Hi thar! git outer the way, Mister man! Gee up, Jenory! Whoop!"

And before I knew where I was, we were going down Park avenue faster than I ever saw a cab go in the city of New York. Well, I got the old man switched off into Thirty-somethingth street after awhile and cooled him down, and we stopped and took the hackman out. He was pretty well dazed, and there wasn't a bit of fight in him. Five dollars settled his case and he got upon the box and drove us home. But I did a good deal of thinking on the way, and finally I told Uncle Philemon that he would oblige me if he wouldn't say anything about the affair to my wife—and, in fact, if he would be very careful of her nerves. I said that she wasn't very strong, and that excitement was very injurious to her. He grinned like a satyr, and said I needn't worry myself.

"I'm a leetle lively with the boys, now and then," he said; "but, bless your soul, I'm ice cream and honey with the girls." We got home and sat right down to dinner, and I am bound to say that Uncle Philemon did splendidly. He sat up there looking like an old patriarch, and he talked away about how he'd enjoyed his last visit in 1843, and how much he'd like to have us at North Chuggville. He told us all about the members of the family, how they all were, and what they were doing. I began to think that he was an uncommonly nice old gentleman if he was a little hasty in his temper. My wife looked a little nervous when I told about the medicinal claret; but he took it very pleasantly. He said he occasionally took something in the same way; but he didn't take it at meals.

After dinner I proposed that we should go out and do a little sight-seeing, and he assented at once. He wanted to know if there were any concerts at Castle Garden nowadays, and seemed disappointed when I told him that I hadn't heard of any. But he put on his army overcoat and his big fur cap, and we set out. His costume wasn't just the correct thing for an evening in the metropolis; but he was such a fine-looking, benevolent, grand old man that he carried the style quite gracefully.

When we got into the street, I asked him where he would like to go, and suggested the Eden Musee. "Eden Musee?" he said, "that sounds good." But when I told him what it was, he snorted with disdain. "Wax fingers!" he yelled; "I ain't no wax figger, nor I ain't come down ter York to gun fer wax figgers. Say, ain't there any female minstrels or lady aggregations I can see, or is this durn taown a graveyard?"

I felt like a puppy nine days old—I was beginning to get my eyes open. I told him that the lady aggregations were out of fashion, and then I took him off to the Casino. I was in hopes that we would not be able to get seats down stairs; but some man had just returned a couple when I got to the box office, and I had to take them—right down in front.

When the chorus marched in, Uncle Philemon said: "Whoop! Gosh!" in a voice so loud that the gallery gave him a round of applause, and a fellow who sat behind me said that if my ears were frost-bitten I'd better go out and rub snow on them. That audience had a good deal of fun with us, before the show was over. Still there wasn't any general recognition of the entertainment we were affording until the curtain came down

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in the last act. Then Uncle Philemon sat silent in his seat for a full minute, taking all the glory in, I suppose, and then he looked up and inquired, in a voice that must have been heard out in the street: "Know any o' them gals?"

"That was pretty bad; but the fun hadn't commenced. I lost him in the crowd going out—or rather he lost me—and when I got to the street I tore wildly up and down looking for him. At last I noticed a crowd at the stage door, and I hurried there. There was the old blue overcoat and the big fur cap swaying about in the grasp of the doorkeeper and two or three stage hands, and I heard that white-haired old gentleman bellowing above the howls of the crowd:

"I'm agoin' behind the scenes! I ain't never be'n an', by gum, I'm agoin'! Don't you take a-holt of me, Mr. Man! What fer can't I go? I ain't a-going to do no harm. S'pose I'm goin' to eat up yer durned old theater? Sho! lemme go! S'pose I do wanter see the lady in the pink gown! Whose gosh dinged business is it if I do? Lemme loose, ye dood!"

I don't know how I got him out of it; but somehow I lured him into a gilded bar-room, and the magnificence of his surroundings diverted his attention from his scheme of exploration.

"Hi!" he shouted, and all the people in the room turned to look at him; "this is just about rich enough fer my blood. Got many shebangs like this around taown? Oh, I'm thrivin'!"

He said he would take Medford rum, and the waiter opened his eyes, but he brought the stuff. I had never tasted it before, and it struck me as a pretty mean combination of herb tea and alcohol. Uncle Philemon said it was pretty good; but it wasn't just the right article, and he was going to get a drink of Medford rum that would make him feel at home, if he had to hunt up every bar-room in the city. I don't want to go into details about the rest of that night. It was half-past two when I persuaded Uncle Philemon to come home, and I had a great time with him on the front stoop where he wanted to sing comic songs.

I got him into his room pretty quietly, however, and then I went to mine. My wife was awake—as usual—as I ever saw her—and she said to me: "I think it's a perfect outrage that you should keep that dear old man up to this hour of the night. I should think you'd be ashamed of yourself."

I wasn't ashamed of myself; but I was dead tired out, and I had a splitting headache, and I was so mad that I was just cussed enough to get into bed without saying a word. I thought the kindly hand of time would lift the veil from her eyes soon enough.

I hadn't long to wait. It was rather chilly at breakfast the next day. Uncle Philemon was still in bed. I didn't offer any explanation of our lateness on the previous evening, and there were large areas of low temperature all over the house when I left for the office.

When I came home at five o'clock, I found Uncle Philemon stalking up and down the parlor, with his cap on the back of his head, talking cheerily with my wife. She was staring at him in a dazed, fascinated sort of way, like a bird at a rattlesnake. "Hello!" he shouted, when he saw me; "I've been sp'illin' the Philistines. Jest be'n tellin' yer wife about it. Look at this here, sonny, an' weep!"

He drew my attention to a large diamond which was sparkling in the bosom of his shirt.

"Buncood a bunco man out'n that!" he proclaimed. "How's that fer a bayseed from down East with grass on the back of his neck? Oh, the old man ain't dead yet, you bet!"

He wasn't dead, that's a fact. But I was, almost. And I wasn't looking forward to that Christmas dinner with any particular exhilaration. Outside of the family, we were not expecting anybody but Swazey, and he was looking forward to the time when he should be counted in as a member. He was the house surgeon at Fairview hospital, and was expecting to marry my wife's sister in the spring. I steered him onto the old man's antics the day before Christmas. He was rather more amused by them than I was, and said he guessed it would come out all right. I only hoped so.

Uncle Philemon went out in the morning and didn't put in an appearance until all the guests had arrived. They were sitting around with an expression of settled gloom which would have been more appropriate for a funeral than a Christmas dinner, when Uncle Philemon burst in.

"Got 'em all here, with yer?" he exclaimed cheerfully, as he proceeded to knock the wind out of Uncle Elanath with a tremendous thump on the back, following that operation by kissing the women all round. "Well, let's whoop her up," he added, with a fervor in which I detected a flavor of alcohol.

"I've be'n a tryin'," said Uncle Philemon cheerfully, after he had seated ourselves at the table. "I've be'n a tryin' to find some real Medford in this 'ere town, and I've found it b' gosh! 'The barkeep' come from New Hampshire, and he knows Medford when he sees it. Lemme show you," and Uncle Philemon left the room to return with a gallon demijohn, which he trium-

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