

UNCLE BOB'S SOUL

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Uncle Bob was in a serious dilemma. Confronted for the first time in his life with a psychological problem.

"Uncle Bob," the boy had said, winding up a discussion the two had held regarding the delights of Paradise and a future life, "when you die and go to Heaven, will you have a white soul or a black soul?"

"Is I gwine"—the old man almost gasped—"ter be er white soul, aw er black soul when I dies? Is dat de queeshun you done ax, leetle Moss? (his name for the child). I fo'gibs you, leetle Moss; but you oughtah had bettah sense dan ter ax hit in de fus' place. Why, of co'se I gwine be er white soul! Is you eber heah ob air black pusson in de naix wohl 'sides de debil?"

"But, Uncle Bob"—doubtfully—"if you are going to be white how shall I ever know you up there? 'Cause, Uncle Bob"—cajolingly—"you are such a beau-ti-ful black, and I am so used to you with your lovely white wool—hair, and all, that I don't see how I can ever tell you from other common white people if you are going to change all that."

But Uncle Bob had misunderstood the comparison, and considered that the boy had reference to the social grade he would eventually occupy above; consequently the glamour of the compliment on his beautiful color faded away in a fresh burst of indignation.

"What you meanin' by 'common people,' leetle Moss?" he grunted, irritably. "Does you spec', foh er mo-moment, dat I gwine be po' white trash up dar?"

"Then what will you be, Uncle Bob?" queried the little fellow, feeling himself, now, very much bewildered by all these complications. "Are you going to be a white gentleman?" and the bare idea brought him very near the verge of tears, so loath did he feel to part forever from the Uncle Bob of his lifelong association, even if supplanted by the celestial creation of Uncle Bob's ambitious anticipations.

The old man was fairly staggered by this last question.

"I 'clar' ter gracious!" he said, covering his discomfiture with an air of superiority and reticent foreknowledge. "hit ain' no use my tellin' you what I gwine be when I gits up dar, chile; leetle's igna'yent boys ain' 'spec' ter hab de knowledge ob ole halds lek mine, and dey des got ter wait twell dey gits shot ob dey baby teef 'fo' dey puzzlin' dey halds on pints what's well on'erstood by de fail'ful froo rev'lation and wraslin' an' pra'r. Des mek yo' min' easy! "Unc' Bob gwine be fix up some way, so dat you sho gwine know him up dar, eben ef he had ter be a cullud white soul twell he git use ter de change. Good-by. Gawd bless you twell de naix time."

That night, in his devotions, Uncle Bob prayed in much fervor and unrest of spirit. The state of his mind will best be revealed by his petitions.

"Marse Jesus," he prayed, in the child-like faith of being very nearly approached and comprehended by the Power he addressed, "I now gwine bring up a subjec' ter 'scuss wid you dat bix ax me terday by de chile I lub. He say: 'Unc' Bob (he mos' cry when he ax hit), den is you gwine be er white gem'man up in Heaben?' Dat ar queeshun des pintally bin ha'n'tin' me all day!

"De idee of me bein' a white gem'man's soul up in Heaben neber is for one moment entah my min'. I hopes you will bellebe dat, an' 'scuse de on-polliteness of de sugges'shun. But den I buhn all my bridges down behin' me, by tellin' de chile dat I ain' gwine be no white trash up dar, an' dat I ausso 'spec' sholy ter hab er white soul! No won'er de po' chile des er spec' latin' ober dat problem, what Unc' Bob gwine tuh'n into, in de naix wohl, and done gone home in a quandeby. So dat lebes me face ter face wid er vohy se'yous state ob 'fairs dat I

gettin' tangle' up in. Ter begin wid, de chile say he ain' gwine know me up dar wid er white soul! Lawd, Lawd, dat ar soun' mon'sous ter ole Unc' Bob! De idee ob not bein' knowed by the chile dat I nuss' fom de time he er leetle teeny weenty infunt an' dat des de pride of my ole age lek Miss Lucy and Marse Tom."

"I des yeahnin', Marse Jesus," weeping unrestrainedly, "ter hab er face es well es er robe wash' white by de blood of de Lam' so dat I could serbe de Lawd in spotless pecty' of soul; but, oh! bless' Lawd, I ausso yeahnin' foh de time ter come when de gret gen'l meetin' wid ail the famby ban' gwine tek place, an' dey all gwine say: 'Why ef heah ain' Unc' Bob! des 'zac'ly lek ole times, 'deah ole Unc' Bob!' Lawd, Lawd," in an ecstasy of emotion, "what er meetin' dat gwine be! Oh, bless' Mahster! look down 'pon po' Unc' Bob, an' fix up de 'fairs of his soul so dat he res' se-kueh in de faif dat all gwine be well wid him in de happy lan', an' all things possible onto de Creator ob de Heabens an' de yearth! Hab mussy on Unc' Bob, an' bring light out ob dahkness an' gib him de power to res' saty'fied wid de final 'scision ob de Almighty."

The bell from the Angelus rang out its summons to the faithful, and down among the lily beds the vested throng stood in shining rows, wafting their incense on the scented air.

The dew fell, like tears, from myriads of weeping eyes, on tree, grass and flower, and all the mute, unsheltered things huddling close to the bosom of the earth. Above, the sorrowful heart of the night throbbled with the intensity of its star beats. Below, in the old plantation house whose walls yearned with their passion of protectiveness, the tide of life ebbed low in the pulse of the dying child.

On the edge of the bed sat Uncle Bob, watching with straining look each change on the small white face, lying so still, with closed eyelids, and scarce a breath stirring the parted lips.

Presently the lids fluttered and then slowly unclosed. The blue eyes looked up, for the first time in many days, with a perfect recognition into the seamed, agonized old face bending over them.

"Uncle Bob—"

"What is it, leetle Moss?" answered the broken old voice.

"Uncle Bob, are you crying?" touching with his wan little hand the withered cheek over which the uncontrollable tears were flowing.

"No, no! 'deed I ain', leetle Moss!" surreptitiously wiping them away with his bandana handkerchief, "'deed I ain', darlin'; what Unc' Bob gwine cry 'bout?' in futile attempt at loving deception, seeing the pained look on the fair little features.

"Poor Uncle Bob," with pitying tenderness, still softly stroking the withered cheek.

"Honey," sobbed Uncle Bob, "don' study 'bout me. Don' grebe 'bout ole Unc' Bob. He gib his life ter mek you des one minute easy an' 'dout pain."

"I am easy, Uncle Bob, and happy."

The unearthly sweetness of the smile broke down Uncle Bob's last little remnant of self-control, and he wept on, unrestrainedly, for a few minutes.

The little boy's eyes wandered round the room, and rested, in their pathetic searching, on the faces of Lucy and Tom—poor Lucy's, worn and haggard from nights of watching and days of unrest, and Tom's, whose breaking heart was plainly visible in the havoc which the past days had indelibly imprinted thereon.

The old grandmother, bedridden and prostrated under the impending calamity, was alone, save for her devoted and faithful attendant, with her sorrow and her God.

Tom bent over and tenderly wiped the damp brow and pushed back the fair clustering curls of the child. He gave a cold little hand to brother and sister, and, in response to the heroism of poor Lucy's brave and loving smile, sighed contentedly, as he turned his little head over on the pillow.

"Jerusalem, the Golden"—evening service was going on in the church, and the words were borne plainly on the absolute stillness of the air:

"I know not, Oh! I know not
What joys await us there,
What radiancy of glory,
What bliss beyond compare."

Uncle Bob's tears had ceased to flow; Lucy and Tom sat motionless, their faces in shadow.

"Tell me—about it—Uncle Bob," gasped the weak little voice, as the last strain died away—"Jerusalem—the Golden."

Uncle Bob leaned eagerly forward, all traces of tears carefully wiped away, that no selfish display of grief disturb the serenity of the departing soul.

"Leetle Moss," he whispered in his broken, quavering voice, "dar whar yo' gwine, de streets is gol'en, an' de flowers is bloomin', an' de libin' waters 'a flowin' froo de green fiel's ob Pah'dise! Oh! leetle Moss, you an' me—po' ole Unc' Bob—hab talk a heap 'bout dat happy lan', but Unc' Bob ain' neber 'spec' dat you gwine go hald ob him ter de sweet an' blessed country!"

"Flowers," murmured the little one, drowsily, "gold flowers. Will there—be any roses—like Lucy's?"

"Lek Miss Lucy's!" in tender assurance. "Leetle Moss, der flow'rs up in Pah'dise, des es much puttler'n Miss Lucy's es day is dan night! Ain' dey, Miss Lucy?"

"Yes, yes, Uncle Bob. Oh, tell him yes!" wept the girl.

"An' dey des de puttles' streets you eber is see, an' you gwine meet all de folks done gone befo', honey. An' tell 'em Unc' Bob gwine be 'long soon! Soon!" in an ecstasy of longing.

A smile of surpassing beauty, and full of the tenderness of a heavenly assurance, lit up the little pallid face.

"Sing, Uncle Bob," he said, in all the simplicity of his babyhood, when the melody of that tremulous old voice was the sound that nightly rocked his soul to sleep.

"Yas, leetle Moss. Unc' Bob gwine sing," clearing his throat and putting forth every effort of his bursting heart.

On the quivering air there fell the strains of a voice, old, cracked, worn, strained with the terrible strain of the coming wrench, yet sweet with all the memories of his little life, to the dying boy:

"I want ter be er an-gul
An' wid de an-guls stan',
Er crown ah-pawn my foh-haid,
An' er harp widin my hand'—"

"What dat you sayin', leetle Moss," bending down low over the parting lips.

"Is I gwine be er white angul? Oh, Gawd hab mussy!"—wringing his hands in indescribable agony—"What I gwine say? Gib me de right wohds to use, Marse Jesus: Leetle Moss! I gwine be er black angul!—er jet black scul! So dat you des boun' reco'nize Unc' Bob de minute you set eyes on him—dat de truf, Lawd!" raising streaming eyes of supreme renunciation to heaven.

"Uncle Bob," and the little voice was weak and far away—"When—I get—home—I'll—ask Jesus—to let me meet you—at the door—and give you—your white robe myself—and we will go—together—and have—your soul—washed white—Uncle Bob—"

"Oh, praise Gawd! Praise Gawd! My leetle Moss, my leetle Moss! My leetle white soul angul!"

"Now I lay me"—("down ter sleep," wailed poor Uncle Bob)—"I pray the Lord"—over the damp and pallid little face flickering lights are passing, and the indescribable majesty of the seal of death is already on the marble brow—"my soul—to keep" ("Oh, leetle Moss, leetle Moss!")—"If I—should—die—before—I—wake—"

And in the silence a little white soul slipped away to the shelter of the heavenly nest.

None to Sell.

De Madden—What about that gold mine proposition you made to me once? Would you like to part with a little of the stock?

McFadden—Not much! We discovered, after all, that that mine had gold in it.—Detroit Free Press.

Not Long.

He—Has she been married long?
She—No; she still thinks that her husband eats cloves because he likes them.

PIPE COLD AIR FROM WELLS

Cheap and Effective House Cooling System Put in Use in Montana Town.

Helena, Mont.—The town of Thompson Falls, in Missoula county, has a strange system of cold storage. In the hottest days in summer it is possible to keep living rooms at a temperature of 55 degrees, and butter, eggs and meat are kept cool and fresh without the least trouble. The best part of the cold storage system is that it costs absolutely nothing after the plant has been installed.

Thompson Falls has a large number of wells that furnish cold, fresh air, which rushes upward all summer long. The wells are dug for water, but the supply of cold air is fully as important.

The wells of Thompson Falls are a little more than 60 feet in depth. The water veins are found in a gravel formation and are doubtless fed by the mountain snows at some distant place. The gravel is porous enough to admit of a freely moving current of air, which during the summer time rushes upward in currents strong enough to snuff out a match held over the wells.

The utility of the cold air currents was first observed in 1884, when the Thompson Falls Mercantile company used the cool air to keep butter, eggs and meat in large quantities. The air can be piped in summer to rooms of houses. The wells are covered over tightly at the top, and large pipes tap the current a few feet below the surface of the ground. These pipes conduct the air to different rooms in nearby buildings.

For cold storage plants, a house is built above the well and the air rushes upward continuously, keeping the temperature at an unvarying point.

SOLDIERS SENT TO GIRLS.

The German Emperor Provides Partners for Young Women to Dance With.

Crefeld, Germany.—When Emperor William visited Crefeld in 1903 a group of girls complained to his majesty that they had no dancing partners and begged him to send a regiment of cavalry. The emperor promised to do so and a regiment of hussars arrived here from Duesseldorf and with it came the emperor, who had decided to take part in the regiment's reception.

The young women of the city enthusiastically acclaimed the soldiers and handed the staff officers heaps of floral offerings for his majesty. The latter, replying to the mayor's speech of welcome, said: "I have kept my word. To-day I have given the town its garrison and the young ladies their partners."

The emperor's remarks were greeted with cheers.

The city, which is the center of the silk and velvet industry, was gayly decorated for the occasion, a mile of the principal streets being hung with decorations of velvet and silk.

Since the emperor made his promise to the young women at Crefeld in 1903 the reichstag appropriated the sum of money necessary to erect permanent barracks here, which have been constructed for the accommodation of a regiment of cavalry.

Forestry in Kansas.

Approximately 1,000,000 young trees will be distributed to the people living on the prairies of western Kansas free of charge this year. H. S. Beaubien, state forestry commissioner, says he is afraid that even this number will not be sufficient to supply the demand. The forestry stations at Dodge City and Ogallah have the young trees almost ready for shipment and will begin sending them out to those who have made application within a few days.

The wolves of the Russian forests devour about 300 human beings yearly.