

JOLLY OLD, UNCLE JOSH

His Great Generosity Towards His Newly Married Niece.

A Realistic Romance of Tallahassee, in which a Number of Prominent Business Men Take a Very Conspicuous Part.

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"Miss Summers—Polly—I—I—I—er—dare I—" But the speaker took a header over bashfulness, only to hear a sweet—

"Yes, Charley."

"Can I aspire to—er—to—that is—"

Again a lapse into silence, followed by an encouraging—

"Yes, Charley."

"Oh, if I might only hope to—er—to—"

Another failure in language. It was seemingly a hopeless case, and might have been, only for a demure.

"Charley, I have said 'yes' twice, and if you mean it, I mean it, too, and—"

And to this day that young man will insist that he popped the question.

All this happened away "down east," and it wasn't long before there was a wedding. Not much longer before there was a letter from Polly's Uncle Josh.

(Hon. Joshua Turner, an old Pioneer of Florida) rich, generous and level-headed, who wrote effusively of his delight at her exhibition of what he called "grit," and he proposed that if the young people would locate at Tallahassee he would start them up in life, as a wedding gift, having fully explained that this is the best spot in the world for young married people to get a good start. Of course they accepted, and were soon bidding their friends adieu.

A few weeks subsequent to the above conversation a travel-stained party arrived in Tallahassee. Our friend Uncle Josh was in charge and he led the party straightway to the Hotel Leon. "We'll go to the Leon," said he, "cause that's the popular place and strictly first-class. I have known Mr. Crawford, the proprietor, for years and he is mine host after mine own heart; being endowed with that delightful intuition that makes a guest feel at home, comfortable, contented, and in mighty good luck. The house is one of convenience; the apartments are well furnished and the cuisine—well, that hotel is noted for its excellent table, so I have engaged rooms here until your own house is in readiness."

"After breakfast is over," continued the old man, "I must take you for a little drive and then we'll proceed to buy your outfit. To expedite matters I'll just call up phone No. 33 and have Kemper's Stables to send us around a rig." When the handsome carriage, with elaborate trappings and prancing horses drew up in front of the hotel Polly declared it to be a turnout fit for a queen. "Yes Sir-ee," replied Uncle Josh, "that is a purty neat rig—the three S's, Speed, Safety and Style—is Kemper's coat of arms, and best of all, the rates are mighty reasonable. The Kemper Stables wedding, party and funeral equipments are unsurpassed. It was in a stylish turnout indeed that the rounds of the city were made.

"No grass shall grow under our feet," remarked Uncle Josh, "so what's first on the program?"

"Oh, goodness knows, there's lots to buy," remarked Polly.

"Then suppose we buy 'lots' first," quoth Charley without turning a hair.

"Well, I see you've got a great head for business," laughed Uncle Josh, "so we will just stop at Bernard & Son's office. I can always depend upon them for bargains in real estate, as they never hold out false lights to induce people to buy, but what they tell you about property may be set down as solid facts. Bernard & Son control a large list of desirable residences, as well as farm properties, and their judgment on the 'good things' is par excellence." Accordingly Judge Bernard accompanied the trio on their drive and before returning had sold to Uncle Josh, for his wards, a cosy cottage.

"Having already provided a cage for the bird," said Uncle Josh, "now the first thing we'll look after will be the furnishings for it." Hereupon Polly energetically declared that she had heard so much about H. D. Hartt that she decided to go there. The result was that they were ushered into such a bewildering display that the girl was at first at a loss how to select. But she soon yielded to the seductiveness of a magnificent parlor suite, a bed room set in oak, golden finish, that would do credit to old Mr. Klondyke himself. To this she added an easy rocker for Uncle Josh, and didn't forget a most convenient and ornamental writing desk for "Hubby" Charley, having come to the conclusion that H. D. Hartt's prices were below the very whisper of competition.

"A pretty good start," said the old man, "and now we'll go to L. C. Yaeger's big hardware and stove store, where Polly's housewifely instincts will have full play in marvels of kitchen apparatus. There is not an establishment in the country that carries a more com-



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comprehensive stock of cooking machinery," remarked Uncle Josh. "Every possible piece of kitchen furniture from a tin dipper to a cooking range is here in all styles and variety." If Polly fails to accomplish wonders in the culinary art, it will not be for want of superior cooking utensils, for she purchased a Home Liberty range, with all other equipments needed in a well regulated kitchen, all of which Uncle Josh paid for with delight "cause he knew L. C. Yaeger had treated him all right, just as he treats everybody."

"Let's see—I promised you a gold watch, didn't I?" queried Uncle Josh of Polly, "and H. N. Sweeting's is the place to get the worth of our money." Entering the popular jewelry store the old man gallantly acquitted himself of the promise and then directed Polly's attention to the superior stock of silverware carried by the house. "There is no other such a house in town," said the old man, "and I will guarantee the quality to be the very best. Pick out your family clock while here," he added. "Sweeting carries a magnificent line. Don't forget another fact—recontinued, "if every one unfortunately need optical goods, this is the place to come to get your eyes scientifically tested and fitted free, and say, my boy, remember that Sweeting is also an expert doctor on sick watches."

At this point, somewhat to the confusion of Charley, the old man indulged in a half serious criticism of his personal appearance. "You are decidedly out of style for a townsman," said he, "and we'd better go see D. B. Meginniss, Jr., about some new duds. That's an up-to-date place, where they understand the changing styles and are noted for good fits, and I bet you'll look more like a newly married man when you get togged out in a new suit from Mr. Meginniss." Accordingly, having found goods and prices irresistible, Charley purchased a neat suit and then invested in a complete outfit of men's furnishings from a late style hat down to socks, and he readily agreed that Uncle Josh took him to the right place when he took him to D. B. Meginniss, Jr.

"Well, scat my!" exclaimed Uncle Josh, with a David Harum accent, as they reached the street, "I must run over to the Capital City Bank and get another check book. Come along with me and get acquainted with the staff, for of course you will do business with them and it is always more pleasant to be personally acquainted with the people you do-business with. This bank is as solid as the base of the universe, and has a strong working capital. You will find them ever ready to extend any accommodations compatible with business principles."

"Guess I'll open an account with the Capital City right away," replied the young husband, and he did.

After this visit, Uncle Josh suggested a resort to some place of refreshment. At the refreshment table the old man waxed philosophical. "Never neglect your larder," he said. "That important adjunct to housekeeping controls masculine temper. To that end you must patronize a grocer on whom you can depend for honest goods. Through a long term of years I have found T. B. Byrd perfectly reliable. You will find him a careful man, always fully stocked with every possible thing in the line of staple and fancy groceries, fresh and first-class, no shelf-worn goods there, while the prices are down to brass tacks. To keep peace in this family get all your groceries of T. B. Byrd."

"Halt!" commanded Uncle Josh, as the party came in front of Wight & Bro.'s drug store, "Walk right in." "Why, Uncle, we're not sick, and—" "Guess I know that," laughed the old man, "but I suspect it won't be long before this young man begins to take an interest in matters of pargoric and—" "U-n-c-l-e!" "We'll go in anyway and get some toilet articles she wants." Sure enough, before leaving he was loaded down with combs, brushes, face powders, and several bottles of fine perfumes. "Don't forget," added Uncle Josh, "to come here with your prescriptions, as Wight & Bro. and their clerks are competent pharmacists, who use none but pure and reliable drugs."

While Uncle Josh was pondering where to go next, Polly suddenly asked, "Uncle, where can I find the leading millinery establishment?" "Just a few doors further on," remarked Uncle Josh, "and we will visit Miss Adele Gerard, who, by the way, has on hand one of the completest stocks of millinery to be found in the city. You can get what you want there, the latest styles and lowest prices being her motto. Miss Gerard's taste and experience guarantees that when you have purchased of her you have the thing according to fashion and a satisfaction that your work has been done by a competent artist." In a few minutes there never was a happier girl than Polly, for she got a "perfect dream" of a hat and the bill didn't scare Uncle Josh, either.

"Well, I reckon that cottages needs a few improvements," sentimentally remarked Uncle Josh, as they left the real estate office. "You ought to have a little portico on the front, anyway, so I guess we'll strike right out for Taylor & Child's lumber yard. They are principal dealers in that line around here—handles everything needed in the category of building material from the brick for a foundation to the shingles for a roof, including doors,

windows and moldings. Taylor & Child are pleasant to deal with, and don't want all the money a feller's got, either." When they reached the lumber yard Uncle Josh made investigations as to the price of materials, and he found out that Taylor & Child were selling stuff so mighty reasonable he concluded to let the cottage improvements go, and build a more commodious residence, much to the delight of Polly, although it sent glimmering her first ideas of "love in a cottage."

Having come to this generous conclusion about the larger and mere palatial house, it occurred to Uncle Josh that as they were not going to build a chicken coop or a barn, it would be a wise thing to employ an experienced architect and builder—some one in whose hands the matter might be placed with assurance of perfect and speedy results. "I have it; I have the arkite's right in my eye," he exclaimed. Taylor & Child are also contractors, and are the very men. They have designed and constructed many of the principal business blocks and elegant residences around this section. I showed you that magnificent home of Mr. Cohen's, didn't I? Well, Taylor & Child drew up those plans and executed 'em, and they didn't monkey around a whole year, either." Taylor & Child were soon contracted with to furnish lumber and build the house for Polly and Charley; in fact, the whole matter of the fine residence was turned over to these popular architects and builders.

"And in the matter of insurance," the old gentleman continued, "that is also of importance. You will want a risk on your new house, and the goods; but you can't be too careful about getting in a reliable agency. My old friend, W. A. Demilly, not only has lines of the solidest and best companies but he is an expert and trustworthy underwriter. He has a large number of companies, all of which belong to the old reliable category, being well known for their prompt and satisfactory adjustment of losses. It's better to be safe than sorry and you'll surely be safe in W. A. Demilly's agency." And Charley agreed to attend to the insurance matter at his earliest convenience.

"Oh, say, Uncle," exclaimed Polly, "where can I go for dry goods? This dress is hardly suitable. I must admit."

"Well, my girl, if you want to select from one of the most popular establishments in the city, I will direct you to Levy Bros., who carry a stock of dry goods that for variety and real value is seldom seen outside the largest metropolitan cities. Levy Bros. have all the latest weaves in fashionable dress goods and you are sure to be guided right in your selections. You will find Levy Bros. pleasant to deal with and their employees polite and expert, while the prices cannot be duplicated." It did not take Polly long to tell a bargain when she saw one. She got a handsome dress, with all necessary trimmings, and several other articles of "fantastic disarray" so dear to the heart of every woman.

"Oh, me! Oh, my!" ejaculated Polly as she noticed the shoe department. "What a perfectly lovely slipper."

"Yes," said Uncle Josh, "Levy Bros.' stock can't be equalled in style and extent in this section. Go in, look it over and get acquainted. Pick out what you want and I'll foot the bill." It might have been policy not to have extended that invitation, had not Uncle Josh known what wise economy it is to trade at Levy Bros. for Polly found goods and prices so seductive that she purchased an outfit from a pretty slipper to a handsome walking boot. And Charley invested in a gent's fine suit, while Uncle Josh indulged in a stout boot, with rubbers for the crowd. No one needing, dry goods, clothing or footwear can resist the styles and prices offered by Levy Bros.

"Yes, and I must have some stationery, Uncle Josh," quoth Polly, "and—" "Yes, and a Bible with a reasonably big family register," interrupted the old man, "so we'll go to J. F. Hill's book store. You'll find many articles indispensable for the parlor as well as the library there, and as for variety, J. F. Hill has an unequalled stock." So here Polly's purchases included miscellaneous books, fancy stationery, all the latest agonies, bric-a-brac of all manner for the center table, and finding an immense assortment of magazines, periodicals and newspapers, she subscribed for everything in sight. Polly remarked to the generous old uncle,

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"Why, I don't know when to quit buying. Everything I find here at J. F. Hill's just strikes my fancy and is so cheap."

"Well, great smoke, Charley, where in the name of creation did you get that rope? That's about the worst snipe that ever came in contact with my olfactory nerve," laughingly remarked Uncle Josh. "Step in here with me and get a cigar made by the El Provedo Cigar Factory and then you'll have a gentleman's smoke. The factory takes great pride in making none but the best, and consequently the El Provedo Cigar Factory's cigars grow more popular every day." Charley was so well pleased with the cigar that Uncle Josh treated him to that he bought a whole box and advised his wife to remember the brand when she got his next birthday present.

"Now, how about the plumber, Uncle Josh?" inquired Polly. "You remember you said you would see somebody for that." "Yes so, yes so; and we shan't have any botcher do the work either. I'll talk to Willis & Costa about that. We've got to have water pipes put in, a hot water heater and a porcelain bath tub, besides some sanitary fixin's, and Willis & Costa are the very men to do the work. They observe closely all the hygienic laws guarding against dangers from sewer gases. You can always feel safe about the house when practical men, as I know Willis & Costa to be, have done the work."

The aforesaid plumbers got the contract, did just what Uncle Josh said they would do, and won Polly's praise for their excellent workmanship.

"Yes, and there is the important topic of gastronomies," continued Uncle Josh; "we must not forget meat. It goes hand in hand with bread. Now the next thing to locate is a good market where you can get fresh wholesome meats, poultry, etc., at all times, and according to my notion J. T. Meginniss is the only man to supply you. This is the boss meat market in the city and is popular with everybody who is particular to have the best. The reason for this is all because Mr. Meginniss is very careful in the selection of stock, get the best of everything and keeps it fresh on cold storage. To keep 'hubby' in a good humor, Polly, trade at J. T. Meginniss' market every time." Good advice.

When the trio reached their home "that tired feeling" seemed to settle down upon them all—all at once—and Uncle Josh admitted that he for one was about "tucked out," whereupon Charley took advantage of the conditions, and made bold to remark: "Now, uncle, you've been very, very kind, and I kinder hate to speak of anything else, but say, can't you recommend something—ahem!—a little wine, or rye, for instance, for medicinal purposes, you know?" "Why, certainly, my boy," quickly replied Uncle Josh, a bright smile chasing itself over his benevolent visage, "a case of good port and a little Monroë & Jefferson will be about the proper caper, and the proper person to apply to for such extras in this town is Isador Marcus. I'll personally guarantee anything that comes from him. Suppose you go down and bring up a little 'good cheer' right away. And say, don't forget to tell Mr. Marcus to put in a case of Pabst beer and some Sam Clay and Puritan rye; and say, my boy, just take a look around the place; it's the only place in the town where there are private wine rooms." And Charley acted on the order at once.

Upon summing up the wonderful events of the day Polly began to volubly express her thanks. "You have bought us everything," she exclaimed.

"Only one thing," replied Uncle Josh, reflectively, "but I can remedy that. Hartt, the furniture man, always has a nice line of them and you can get one whenever you want it; I'll pay for the best."

"W-h-y," exclaimed Polly with great surprise, "Uncle Josh, what can it be?" "Well, it's a baby carriage, and—" But Polly had fainted.

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