

# Only a Scrap of Paper.

"Hello!" said Mr. Clinton, as he read his letters at the breakfast table, "why here's one from old MacPherson. He's coming back at last and wants to pay us a visit. Of course he shall—the sooner the better. Bless me, why its twenty years since I set eyes on the dear old fellow."

And he tossed the letter across to his wife.

When Mr. Clinton mentioned MacPherson's name Miss McNabb, his guest, gave a slight jump. It was almost imperceptible, but she felt herself jump, and there could be no doubt about it.

Is that Major MacPherson of the—th? she inquired, in an unnaturally natural voice, if the expression may be used.

That's the man. I was at school with him—let me see; why, more than thirty years ago, and though I have seen and heard nothing of him we are sworn friends for life. Have you met him, then? And Mr. Clinton cast a quick scrutinizing glance at poor Miss McNabb, who was making singularly guileless attempts to conceal her agitation.

"I rather think," she gasped out, "that he must be a man I used to see a good deal—at least, something—of once upon a time."

For a moment her host wrestled with temptation, but the desire to chaff finally got the better of him.

"Ha, ha!" he said; "I spy a romance."

"Oh, Mr. Clinton, how can you? I am sure my days for romance were over long ago."

Then Miss McNabb took a long sip of tea, being under the impression, apparently, that the large breakfast cup would conceal the color of her cheeks.

"That's all very well," pursued her tormentor; "you don't pull off like that. I spy a romance."

"Indeed—indeed, you are mistaken," said the poor lady, with an unwary earnestness. "I never—he never—we were friends, that is all."

"My dear Horace," struck in Mrs. Clinton with womanly tact, "are you aware that you are eating your egg with a teaspoon?"

"My excellent Maria," retorted "dear Horace," "the spoon makes no difference, I imagine, to the taste of the egg which is full of reminiscences of by-gone days."

And thereon he made an argument under cover of which Miss McNabb was happily dumb and gradually collected herself.

If ever there was a typical old maid it was Miss McNabb.

Yet, with all her fads, she was very lovable. Through very prim and proper, she took the liveliest interest in any romantic incident, and was always pleased to pose as one who possibly in a past age had become a connoisseur on such subjects.

She was extensively an aunt and fulfilled the duties of her position to perfection, mitigating her good advice and anxious care for the welfare of her nephews and nieces by many acts of more easily appreciated kindness. Her parochial good works were manifold, and the number of mothers, shop girls and young domestic servants who had benefited by her friendly counsel was prodigious.

By sundry hints and shakings of the head she led them to believe that she had been youthful and flighty once herself, and made the shocking disclosure of her past weakness with an ill-concealed relish.

After the conversation at the breakfast table already described, Miss McNabb's nerves were very much in evidence. Not that they were all in a flutter.

"I think perhaps I had better be off in a day or two," she remarked to Mrs. Clinton.

"Why?" answered her hostess, with feigned surprise. "We were hoping you would stay with us for at least a fortnight."

"But won't you want my room for another visitor? He is coming soon, I suppose?"

"The day after to-morrow, I hope. But there are plenty of spare bedrooms."

Now, Miss McNabb knew there were plenty of spare bedrooms, and Mrs. Clinton knew that she knew it; but Miss McNabb had got the information she burned to receive, and she actually thought her witness was not discovered. And yet she was not quite certain whether to stay or not to stay.

"I am not sure whether I ought to be absent from Sunday school for another Sunday," she remarked, presently.

"Rubbish," was the simple answer. "You stay here."

And then she thought perhaps it was her duty to stay and recruit her health, and her thoughts took a new direction.

Miss McNabb drove to town that afternoon and bought sundry articles that go to the adornment of women—some new trimming for her hat (she still wore a hat), a new comb for her hair, some lace for her evening dress and a new pair of evening shoes. Also, she had another bottle of medicine made up, explaining that she could not do without it, as she found the thundery weather rather upsetting. Whereat Mrs. Clinton smiled to herself and awaited developments with curiosity.

Two days afterward a carriage drove up to the door. There was a great removal of rugs as if it had been mid-winter; and then the cheerful sound of old, long-separated friends greeting in the hall.

Come along into the library, old boy," cried Mr. Clinton. "It's warmer there, but there isn't a fire, and the temperature is not under 90 degrees. Why, you don't look a scrap changed!"

This last remark was scarcely accurate. Though MacPherson's eye was as clear and as keen as ever, and his form still tall and upright, his appearance was middle-aged. His hair was thin

and had turned iron gray, and his face was thinner and sharper than when he had said good-bye to his friends twenty years before. His bearing was soldier-like and his equipment neat and careful, but years and responsibility had toned him down, and there was none of the spruce dressiness which had distinguished him in the young subaltern days, when the ladies had competed for the favor of his smiles.

Miss McNabb did not put in an appearance till tea time. Then she entered in a casual sort of a way, and with such remarkable composure that only her brightened color betrayed her inward agitation. But Mrs. Clinton's keen eyes noticed that she was dressed with quite unusual care, and there was an almost girlish prettiness about her face and manner that she had not perceived before during an intimacy of several years.

"Miss McNabb—Major MacPherson. Miss McNabb—tells me that she rather thinks you are an old acquaintance."

"Oh—ah—um! How do you do?" said the major, shaking hands with stiff courtesy and a most elaborate bow.

"How do you do?" said Miss McNabb. "Oh, is that my tea, Maria? Thank you so much."

Then the Major pulled his moustache and sat on the edge of his chair, while Miss McNabb nursed her tea cup on a sofa at the other side of the room.

Mrs. Clinton noticed that during that evening at dinner and in the drawing-room afterward her two guests said but little to one another. The major enlarged much on his Indian experiences, rolling out story after story of the most thrilling interest, but Miss McNabb was apparently an inattentive listener, and the major addressed himself almost entirely to his old school friend. And yet if Miss McNabb had been cross examined as to the details of those stories she could have repeated them almost by heart and had the major been forced by torture to make a confession, he would have had to admit that his sparkling narratives were not intended primarily for Mr. Clinton's ears.

Next morning was wet, and Miss McNabb discovered for the first time that the morning room was draughty—a fact which Mrs. Clinton would not be likely to notice under the circumstances, would not deny. The result was that the minister had to take her knitting into the library.

"I hope the gentlemen won't make an incursion," she said, "but if they do I can clear out."

"Oh Miss McNabb," she had not been seated there long in solitary state before the door opened, and she was alarmed by the appearance of both Mr. Clinton and Major MacPherson. She immediately entered upon a hurried explanation and apology.

"Quite so, quite so," said her host; "but we don't object to ladies' society, do we, eh, major?"

"Not at all," jerked out the major, and then he gave a dry little cough.

"Well, now I must be off for half an hour to interview that confounded gardener of mine. You will excuse me, won't you? If you want literature you will find it on the table; if you want to write, paper and pens are ready for your use; if you want charming conversation, I can cordially recommend Miss McNabb; if you are cold, pray ring for a fire."

So saying the good man vanished. When he was gone the major coughed dryly several times and began to wander aimlessly about the room, picking up first a book and then a paper.

For some time silence reigned in the room, the major, to all appearances, intent upon his paper, and Miss McNabb, though most anxious for conversation, hoping that she might not have to begin it. After a while she tried, by clicking her needles very loud and fast, to remind him of her presence. But that expedient proved an utter failure.

Then she could stand it no longer.

"Do you still suffer from toothache?" she asked, casually, "as you used to when—"

"Not often—not often now," answered the major. And then he added: "That was an excellent remedy you told me about."

"Ah!" replied the lady in a low voice, "you haven't forgotten that?"

"I have a long memory for some things," said the major, and then he went on reading.

"I often used to wonder, when you had gone away," Miss McNabb continued presently, with a little quiver in her voice, "whether you were still suffering."

"Not from toothache," said the major, rather gruffly.

"I beg your pardon?" said Miss McNabb, interrogatively.

"Not from toothache," and he went on reading.

Miss McNabb took some moments to ponder over this dark saying and to devise means for carrying on the conversation. But she was relieved from her difficulty by the major himself, for suddenly he dropped the newspaper on his knee, and carefully looking away from her, jerked out:

"Good old times those, weren't they?"

Miss McNabb responded with a little sigh, but the ice was broken, and in a few minutes the two were busily engaged in talking over reminiscences of

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## PAIN PAST ENDURANCE.

G. W. COON HOPELESSLY CRIPPLED WITH RHEUMATISM.

COULD NOT RAISE EITHER HAND OR FOOT AND HAD TO BE FED AND DRESSED—THE DOCTORS TOLD HIM A CURE WAS IMPOSSIBLE, YET HE ATTENDS TO HIS BUSINESS TO DAY.

From the Millbrook Reporter.

Rheumatism has claimed many victims and has probably caused more pain than any other ill affecting mankind. Among those who have been its victims few have suffered more than Mr. G. W. Coon, now proprietor of a flourishing bakery in Hampton, but a number of years a resident of Pontypool, when his severe illness occurred. To a reporter who interviewed him Mr. Coon gave the following particulars of his great suffering and ultimate cure:—

"Some seven or eight years ago," said Mr. Coon, "I felt a touch of rheumatism. At first I did not pay much attention to it, but as it was steadily growing worse I began to doctor for it, but to no effect. The trouble went from bad to worse, until three years after the first symptoms had manifested themselves I became utterly helpless, and could do no more for myself than a young child. I could not lift my hands from my side, and my wife was obliged to cut my food and feed me when I felt like eating which was not often considering the torture I was undergoing. My hands were swollen out of shape, and for weeks were tightly bandaged. My legs and feet were also swollen, and I could not lift my feet two inches from the floor. I could not change my clothes and my wife had to dress and wash me. I never so thin that I looked more like a skeleton than anything else. The pain I suffered was almost past endurance and I got no rest either day or night. I doctored with many doctors, but they did me no good, and some of them told me it was not possible for me to get better. I believe I took besides almost everything that was recommended for rheumatism, but instead of getting better I was constantly getting worse, and I wished many a time that death would end my sufferings. One day Mr. Perrin, storekeeper at Pontypool gave me a box of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and urged me to try them. I did so somewhat reluctantly as I did not think any medicine could help me. However, I used the pills, then I got another box, and before they were gone I felt a trifling relief. Before a third box was finished there was no longer any doubt of the improvement they were making in my condition, and by the time I had used three boxes more I began to feel, in view of my former condition, that I was growing quite strong, and the pain was rapidly subsiding. From that out there was a steady improvement, and for the first time in long weary years I was free from pain, and once more able to take my place among the world's workers. I have not now the slightest pain, and I feel better than I felt for seven years previous to taking the pills. I thank God that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills came in my way as I believe they saved my life, and here is ready to whatever they rescue me from in years of torture."

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former times, of picnics, walks and parties they had enjoyed together of people they had met and int'ers they had shared in the days when Miss McNabb had been admiringly one of the "belles" of the countryside, and many people had safely conjectured that young MacPherson was the most favored candidate for her hand.

The conversation went briskly forward and yet neither was quite at ease. There were one or two awkward pauses, during which the major pulled his moustache and Miss McNabb dropped stitches, and then they would resume their talk with a desperate plunge, as if they dreaded nothing so much as silence.

To tell the truth, there was one episode to which Miss McNabb hoped the major would allude, but to which he had not the remotest intention of making any reference whatever, unless she touched on it herself. So at last, after a somewhat prolonged pause, during which each had sought to find a subject for a new starting point for conversation, Miss McNabb plucked up courage to remark:

"Was it you who—who sent those flowers before that last ball?"

"There was a letter with them," said the major rather shortly, gazing into a remote corner of the room. "You knew the handwriting."

Miss McNabb stared and stared, and then she said, "I don't know."

"There wasn't any letter; indeed there was not," she pleaded. "And I don't like to wear them in case some one else—"

—I mean."

And her voice broke down as she added, "And then you wouldn't dance with me at all!"

"No letter!" shouted the major. And jumping up he began rapidly to pace the room, while the memory of long years of mourning for false love rolled over his mind.

"No letter! Curse my boy! He must have dropped it out, and I didn't address it properly."

Then he stopped and looked long and silently at Miss McNabb. And as she sat there tearful and trembling, she seemed to him but little changed from the days when her bright face had won his life long devotion.

Had it, then, been all a gigantic mistake?

While he had moped and sulked at that miserable farewell ball, had she been wondering and sad, and loving him all that time and waiting for him to speak? And during all those long years of pining, and of vain struggling to forget, had the heart of the one woman he had ever loved been sore and desolate, hoping and waiting for his return? Yes, he knew all now. And all this misery, all these wasted years, because a helpless boy had dropped a slip of paper!

Now, the major was an experienced man, prompt to act in emergencies and gallant withal. The present situation was intolerable. Something must be done, and he must do it. A bright idea entered his mind. He looked around the room to see if there were any flowers in it. Nothing rewarded his gaze save three sunflowers in a vase on the writing table. But that was better than nothing.

Taking the smallest in his hand he gently approached Miss McNabb, whose head was bent low now, while the tears dropped fast upon her knitting.

"Elsie," he said very softly, "the letter contained these words: 'Wear these to night if you will be my wife.' Now we will call this the bouquet, and I offer it to you again."

And Miss McNabb slowly raised her face and smiled and took the sunflower. Then giving it one little kiss, she put it in her bosom and when a few minutes later, Mr. Clinton entered the room, he smiled out again like a hunted rabbit.

The major finds the climate much more tolerable now, makes political speeches of portentous length and is a devoted husband, and Mrs. MacPherson has given up dieting and her nerves trouble her no more.—The Monitor.

## HOW TO BECOME A CENTENARIAN.

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6. No cold tub in the morning, but a bath at the temperature of the body.
7. Exercise before breakfast.
8. Eat little meat and see that it is well cooked.
9. (For adults) Drink no milk.
10. Eat plenty of fat, to feed the cells which destroy disease germs.
11. Avoid intoxicants, which destroy these cells.
12. Daily exercise in the open air.
13. Allow no pet animals in your living rooms.
14. Live in the country if you can.
15. Watch the three D's—drinking water, damp and drains.
16. Have change of occupation.
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18. Limit your ambition; and
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