


ing outlines of the Propbet Joseph's wonderful experience during the twenty-four years of his labor in establishing the dispensation of the fulness of times on the earth. Anything I could say in his praise would be like the babbling of the babe in the ears of its parent—so slightly do we comprehend the infinite and eternal consequences that will result from his labors, to verify which he gave his life as a final attestation of the doctrines that he revealed.

Let us work righteousness, my brethren and sisters, while the day lasts; for the night soon cometh when no man can work. May the Lord bless us with this spirit of Zion more and more to prepare us for all that awaits us, that we may be able to finish our work with joy and enter into His presence and receive His approval, which I humbly ask in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

UNCLE REMUS.

WASHINGTON, D. C. December 17, 1896.

 NCLE REMUS, is one of the saints of "The Holiday Season." He is almost as much a part of our children's lives as Santa Claus, and I cannot give a better Christmas letter than the story of my visit to him at his home in Atlanta, Georgia, a few days ago.

Joel Chandler Harris, for that you know is the real name of the writer of the "Uncle Remus" stories, is even more delightful than his books. He is not a handsome man, but his manners are so gentle and his talk so simple and wholesome, that you fall in love with him at once. His hair is of a fiery red. After you know him it seems to turn to gold. His homely features, which I venture would stop the traditional clock, become transfigured by his healthy, happy soul shining out through them when he talks, and makes him almost beautiful. I wish you could hear "Uncle Remus" laugh. He is, you know, short and rather fat, and when anything amuses him his rotund form shakes like a bowl of jelly, and his "Hal Hal Hal" rings forth in as clear tones as those of the boy to whom the "Brer Rabbit" and "Tar Baby" story was told for the first time. He is, however, painfully modest. He is always depreciating himself, and during my chat he told me he could not realize why people thought so much of his stories. He is especially backward in the presence of women. He is more bashful now at forty-five than he was as a boy, and I doubt whether he knows any woman very intimately except his wife. He is, you know, a newspaper man as well as an author. He is connected with the Atlanta Constitution, and for years he did his editorial work at the office of the paper. Now he does it all at home. Since he became famous the female curiosity seekers from the north, in passing through Atlanta, have attempted to call and visit him. When they entered his room his tongue seemed to cling to the roof of his mouth and at last, to get rid of them, he transferred his work to his home. He never goes into society; seldom attends the theater, and his delight is in his work and in his home.

The house of "Uncle Remus" is an ideal one. It is a rambling Queen Ann

cottage, containing about nine rooms, all of which are on one floor. Below this there is a basement and above it an attic, and about it runs a vine-covered porch big enough to hold "Brer Rabbit" and all his friends, should they happen to call. It is in one of the prettiest suburbs of Atlanta, and still it has a big enough yard to make it a sort of a country estate, as well as a city home. It contains more than five acres of land and its surroundings are those of a farm. We walked back through the fields before we entered the house to look at the donkeys which the young Harris children ride, and to pat the two beautiful yellow Jersey cows, which are among Mrs. Harris' pets. There is a big chicken yard just back of the house, and a lot of brother and sister chickens were running to and fro as we looked through the netting. "Uncle Remus" took an almost childish delight in showing me his possessions. He pointed out his big strawberry bed, where he raises the most luscious fruit, and told me how his asparagus was ready for the table at the first of the season. We walked among his flowers and spent some time in admiring his roses, which, though it is now almost winter, are still blooming. He has, I venture, more than one hundred rose bushes, and he told me that he had in his garden sixty-seven different varieties. He said he would have a thousand if he were rich enough, and as I saw him handle the flowers I could see that he loved them.

We sat a moment on the porch and then entered the wide hall, which runs through the house and into which the living rooms open. At the back is the parlor, and at the left the sitting room and work shop. There is nothing of the machinery of a newspaper editor or literary man to be seen. "Uncle Remus," uses but few books in his work. A pencil and a few strips of blank printing paper are all that are needed to make the "Uncle Remus" stories.

Mr. Harris handles these, and with his short stub pencil touches the hearts and tickles the sides of millions. He does his writing with his family about him, and his best stories have been written with a baby at his elbow.

Mr. Harris is fond of children. He has been told thousands of times how fond the children are of him, but when I told him that my boy Jack knew his "Uncle Remus" stories by heart, and that my little girl was in love with "Brer Rabbit" and "Brer Fox" he seemed pleased, and I said: "It must be a great pleasure to write for children."

"Indeed, it is," replied Mr. Harris. "I enjoyed the writing of the 'Uncle Remus' stories. It was not hard work, and I believe I got as much fun out of their conversation as the children seemed to get from hearing them read. I could see how the children liked them, but it has always been a wonder to me that grown-up people read them with interest. In fact, today I rather question the veracity or the sanity of the man who tells me he is fond of 'Uncle Remus.'"

"When did you tell your first 'Uncle Remus' story, Mr. Harris?" I asked.

"It was in 1878," was the reply; "just about eighteen years ago. I was writing for the Atlanta Constitution. I had begun my newspaper work, you know, as a boy of twelve, when I left home to learn to set type for a rich planter, who was publishing a little paper of his own

near our country town in Georgia. I had risen from the typesetting case to the editorial desk, and had had some experience in connection with the newspapers of Savannah and other places, and now I was employed upon the Constitution writing editorials, little stories and such other matter as seemed interesting to me. I wrote the first 'Uncle Remus' sketch for the Sunday paper, and handed it to the printers, not deeming it of special value. It was published, and was copied into other papers. My friends spoke to me about it, and I was urged to write more. Among the papers which copied the article was the New York Evening Post. This surprised me, as the Post, you know, is a very sedate paper, and it seems to keep as far as possible from the frivolous. Well, I wrote more of the sketches. They were also quoted, and within a short time 'Uncle Remus' and his tales became a regular feature of my work.

"When were the 'Uncle Remus' stories first published in book form?"

"It was in 1880. The Appletons then published the book entitled 'Uncle Remus, his songs and his sayings.' The book was well reviewed by the press, and the Saturday Review of London gave it a page. This started it well in America. The Boston papers followed with good reviews, and I was surprised to see that it was everywhere fairly well spoken of."

"You must have been delighted," said I.

"I was," replied "Uncle Remus." "And I was a little scared, too. The surprise was so great that I did not know what to make of it."

"How did the book sell?"

"It had quite a large circulation," replied Mr. Harris. "I wrote, you know, several more along the same lines, and they all have a steady sale, both in England and the United States."

"Where did 'Uncle Remus' come from, Mr. Harris?" said I.

"He was born, I think, at my home in Putnam county, Ga.," was the reply.

"But Mr. Harris, tell me, did he ever really exist in the flesh, or is he simply the creation of your fancy?"

"Both," replied Mr. Harris. "The 'Uncle Remus' of my stories is a composite of three or four old negroes, whom I knew as a boy. I have combined them and perhaps have added something to them. But the 'Uncle Remus' of fiction is chiefly made up from them."

"I suppose he really exists as an individuality in your mind," said I.

"Yes, indeed," replied Mr. Harris. "I can see him before my eyes as plainly as I see you. I know him. I can hear him talk, and his voice rings in my ears as I write."

"But, Mr. Harris, are the stories those which are really told on the plantations by the darkies, or are they made up of whole cloth?"

"They are in most cases the stories of plantations," replied Mr. Harris. "They are the folk-lore of the negro. I suppose many of them have come down through the ages from Africa. I am told that some of them are almost the same as the stories of the folk-lore of India."

"Why is it, Mr. Harris, that 'Brer Rabbit' is generally the hero of these tales? Why do the negroes pick him out as the most intelligent and cunning of the animals?"

"I don't know," was the reply. "The