

"THE OLD LOVE"

Poem That Influenced Chicago Society Woman,
After Third Separation From Husband, to
Return to Him---Strict Conditions Are to
Govern the Reunited Household.

And in its home—the human heart—
It hath a master spell,
The old love—the old love—
It worketh strong and well;
Ay, well and sure it worketh,
And casteth out again
Intrusive shapes of evil—
A sullen, spectral train;
The serpent, Pride, is created,
And Hate hath lips of gall;
But the old love—the old love—
'Tis stronger than them all!

CHICAGO.—Though given to what some of her friends and acquaintances call morose and contemptuous views and tenets, like the members of a sect or school of philosophers founded by Antisthenes, of whom Diogenes was a disciple, Mrs. F. K. Parker, a society woman of this city, is to-day a living example of what the old love will do.

In a novel she has just written she calls married life a farce and love nonsensical. Yet she has taken back her husband for the third time, her latest divorce suit having been dismissed at her request only recently.

To Mrs. Parker the search for perfect content has assumed the everlasting proportions of the old quest of the end of the rainbow. As a pretty, vivacious girl she was a leader in the younger society set a few years ago and had many admirers. None of the girls she came in contact with was happier, but perfect content was not in single blessedness.

She tried to find it in that state, telling her friends that she would never marry. Soon afterward Parker appeared on the scene and her declaration never to marry was forgotten.

To all outward appearances, for a time, peace and happiness reigned in the new home. Then the young bride came to the realization that she had not yet found the elusive "perfect content." Marital life lost its glow and a divorce suit followed.

Temporary separation from her husband and the worry over her case grew irksome to Mrs. Parker and a reconciliation was effected. But it was not for long.

Spell of Old Love.
The gossips of the South side soon had another tale of marital unrest in the Parker home to discuss, and in just as short a space of time the story of another reconciliation. Then came a third separation, and now they have "made up" again.

"It's the master spell of the old love," says one of her neighbors.

"The divorce proceedings were ended merely as a convenience," says Mrs. Parker.

But the neighbor comes back with the declaration that it is love, even if Mrs. Parker tries to make herself believe that it is not.

The neighbor is Mrs. A. E. Rose, whose classmate she was in the preparatory



school she attended and her most intimate friend, Elizabeth F. Elliott, is author of the stanza of poetry here reproduced. Mrs. Rose sent the poem to Mrs. Parker soon after the third separation, and she believes that the truths contained in those few lines awakened the little love god in Mrs. Parker's breast and had some influence in reuniting the couple.

Mrs. Parker is not optimistic regarding her future happiness. She stated the day following the return of her husband to her home that she doubted the efficiency of the reconciliation, but deplored the fact that there was no alternative.

Terms of Reconciliation.
Before being allowed to accept the probation of his wife and return to the beautiful South side home, Mr. Parker conceded to the several demands of him, among which were the following:

He must make a full accounting of the \$50,000 dower Mrs. Parker brought him on their marriage.

He must make a full and binding agreement as to the finances in the home in the future.

He must apologize for his past actions and must promise to be good in the future.

"There were many silly statements as to promises to love and obey, etc., which were never considered," said Mrs. Parker, "but there were certain requirements as to our relations to which Mr. Parker agreed. However, I do not care to discuss them at length. It is none of the public's business what agreements we made. Our reconciliation is complete and successful."

"And happy?" was suggested.
"I would not say that," replied Mrs. Parker, "but we are living in the same house."

"Do you contemplate reinstating your divorce proceedings?" was asked.
"It would not look well to reinstate them now, but I may be compelled to take such a step later on if the other side of the house does not abide by the agreement we have entered into. The divorce suit was ended merely as a matter of convenience."

One of the charges against Mr. Parker in the divorce proceedings was that he had not accounted for the \$50,000 dower, and she wants a full accounting—an itemized statement—as to where the money went. Parker claims to have used the money in his business. He is at the head of a firm of auditors.

What appears as a reflection of the moods of Mrs. Parker is contained in the story she has just submitted for publication. The title, "Marital Unrest," forecasts the attitude of the story. She pictures the fabled couple whose "milk and water sentiment is fed on moonlit nights and grows like a balloon, not in substance but in size, to resolve itself into the semi-engagement stage and finally into marriage."

For such as these she contends there is no content. The glow of the moon wanes and the glare of the sun of reality blinds them. No matter how loose the bond or how long the chain, it soon chafes and becomes short.

No Retreat for Woman.
There is no remedy, she declares. If they are divorced the man may forget, but there is no retreat for the woman. The cloud of the great error in the problem of life forever darkens her pathway.

Mrs. Parker closes her fable of regrets by charitably taking a large part of the blame upon her own sex.
"The just righting of the wrong should come from the woman, as to her usually falls the greater part of the blame for making the mistake."

Though Mrs. Parker will not say so, it is believed by many that the story is based upon her own experiences on the troubled and stormy sea of matrimony. Among those who have had the privilege of reading the advance sheets there is an impression that she sought a reconciliation with her husband because she realized that some of the blame for their marital mistake rested upon her shoulders.

Another reason for the reconciliation is seen in the fact that several months after Mrs. Parker filed her last suit she underwent a change of heart on the divorce question. She no longer believes in it, and did what she could to retard the growth of the evil by withdrawing her own petition.

Dwells on Divorce Evil.
What she did wasn't much, when it is taken into consideration that the recent census for 1897-1906 brought to light nearly a million divorces and demonstrated that the movement constantly gains in velocity, but she feels that it will help a little. The divorce evil is also one of the subjects of her story.

"About one marriage in every eight is broken, at the present rate," she says, "and in some states in the union the proportion is a great deal higher, probably one in every four or five. This latter fact is particularly true of this section of the country, the central and middle western states having from two to three times the rate of the Atlantic states."

"An investigation by the department of labor 20 years ago showed that nearly 400,000 divorces had been granted in the United States between the years 1867 and 1886, and that divorces were increasing 2½ times as

fast as the population. The broad contrast then was between the north and the south. But the divorce rates of the north and south have been converging, while those of the east and west have diverged. With the opening of the "quick and easy divorce" mill in Reno, Nev., the western states will soon be in the championship class.

"Marriage nowadays is nothing more than a farce, in many instances a mere business arrangement. The census figures on divorce wipe out many false impressions.

"It is frequently assumed that many couples who find their way to the divorce courts separate precipitately before they have given marriage a fair trial. But the figures show, and usually figures don't lie, that the average interval before separation is something more than 6½ years, and is not diminishing.



Mrs. F. K. Parker

"James, what can you do?"
"Please, ma'am, I can sharpen pencils."

"That's very nice. William, what can you do?"
"I can throw a ball."

"That's splendid. Mary, what can you do?"
"I can undress myself," was the proud response.

"I'm sure that must be a great help to your mother, Mary. Rachel, what can you do?"
"I can undress myself," interrupted Mary.

"Yes, Mary, that's very nice, but you mustn't interrupt. Rachel—"
"I can undress myself," piped Mary.

"So you have said twice before, Mary. If you interrupt me again, you will have to be punished. Now, Rachel, what can you do?"
"I take care of my baby brother sometimes, and—"

"That's lovely. Rachel, Charles, what can you do?"
"I can undress myself," persisted Mary coyly before Charles had time to answer. So the teacher gently led Mary to the cloak room to meditate on her disobedience. Shortly afterward the doctor called to see if all the children were well.

"Yes," the teacher assured him, "we are all well and happy this morning. Oh, all but one little girl. I think there must be something the matter with her tongue. Will you look at it, please? Mary, come here a moment."

Mary fluttered into the room minus her clothes. Waving her arms she said with childish glee:
"See, I can undress myself!"—Everybody's Magazine.

His Harvest.
"Huh! you don't hope to raise any vegetables in that back yard, do you?" sneered the Old Suburbanite. "Why, every carrot you raise there will cost you more'n a bushel of the best purchased at the market."

"Sure, I know that," cheerfully answered the newcomer, resting on his spade. "Of course this as a garden will be a total failure, and I don't care a cuss if it is. But I tell you what, I shall raise the biggest crop of crispy, fresh appetite, the largest and juiciest hours of sleep, the sweetest and mellowest dreams, bushels and bushels of fine exercise, and barrels of good health, right here on this little patch. This crop, on the whole, ain't going to be a failure. Not on your life."

A Dreadful Possibility.
I now come to the middle point of my story, which is that there may be, after all, possibly, no Smart Set. I suspected this for a long time, but I fought against it. I hated to think that in a grand country like this, where we have everything that is going around anywhere—where we had liberty, and freedom and taxes and sudden death, to think that after all we have been doing these few hundred years, we haven't even got a Smart Set to fall back upon—nothing in fact to look up to.—New York Press.

Among the First Arrivals.
Tjarks—What use will the south pole be after it is discovered?
Hjunks—Oh, somebody will be racing down there to get the souvenir postal card concession.

PROVED TRUTH OF ASSERTION
Kindergarten Pupil Gave Demonstration of Fact That She Could "Undress Herself."

It was the opening day of the kindergarten. The teacher began by asking each child what it had learned to do.

The Fifth Wheel

By INA BREVORT ROBERTS

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Dinner was drawing to a leisurely close. A little breeze, welcome after the heat of the day, came in through the lace curtains and swayed the flowers on the table, around which sat Arkwright and his wife and their guest, Oliver Carlton.

There were not many evenings nowadays when Oliver was not in what had grown to be called "Mr. Carlton's place." In town he was always dropping in on some pretext or other late in the afternoon, and they had fallen into the habit of expecting him to remain to dinner.

Here at their summer home other guests came and went, but Carlton stayed on, occasionally going up to town for a few days, but always returning sooner than he had intended.

That he liked to be there was scarcely to be wondered at. The Arkwrights were a charming couple; young and rich, besides having a delightful way of making their guests welcome.

As for Carlton, that young man talked business with Arkwright, discussed books with his wife, and was in many ways a pleasant person to have about.

Mrs. Arkwright rose with the gentle grace natural to her and moved towards the door, her husband and Carlton following. These two never lingered at the table after she left it.

In the hall Arkwright left the others, turning his steps in the direction of the library. His wife's eyes followed him.

"Won't you come out to the garden with us?" she asked; "it is cooler there."

"Yes, do come," urged Carlton; "it's much too warm to stay in the house."

Arkwright shook his head; he had letters to write, he gave as excuse. Carlton and Mrs. Arkwright passed out to the cool darkness of the garden, while the master of the house went into the library, not to write, but to sit and think, with eyes staring

at the light and one hand idly drumming on the desk before him, of the pair who were in the garden—discussing books, he told himself with an odd, bitter smile.

There had been a time when Arkwright was wont to joke among their friends about the congeniality of his wife's and Carlton's tastes, and to protest that he was growing jealous, but that was long ago, before his eyes were opened to the truth.

He wondered how long that—it had gone on before he had found it pitiable of human beings, the man who is being fooled.

There was no bitterness in his heart towards her, only deep pity and a keen regret that he had persuaded her to marry a man she did not love.

She had told him this quite frankly before their marriage, but it had not made him afraid. In time, he was confident, he would be able to win her heart; such love as his must beget an answering love, he reasoned in his folly.

In spite of his pain, Arkwright found something ludicrous in the knowledge that Carlton had succeeded where he had failed, he who in the outside world was called a successful man, while Carlton—well, there was nothing against Carlton, but then there was nothing to him either, Arkwright thought.

As yet neither of the pair suspected that he knew. He had gone on as usual letting them, if they took the trouble to think about the matter, believe him still the fool.

He had a vague feeling that this pretense of being blind was not the straightforward course (and Arkwright above all things had always prided himself on being straightforward), and yet, after all, what could he do? What was there to do?

Perhaps some time in the near future death would solve the difficulty. Arkwright hoped so and, since he seemed to be a fifth wheel, that he would be the one to go, which was unselfish of him, when one considers that he was well and strong and did not want to die.

He did not blame Edith—such resentment as he felt was all for Carlton—but it hurt him to have to think of her as a hypocrite. "Why need she have urged me to go to the garden tonight? Why need she always go through the pretense of asking me to accompany them everywhere?" he mut-

tered angrily, as, unable to remain still any longer, he rose and left the room.

Outside on the porch he was pacing impatiently up and down when he caught sight, just inside of the long, open windows, of his wife's slender figure. An impulse which he wished to resist but could not made him pause in his walk and step through the window.

The room was in darkness except for the faint, clear starlight, but Edith was seated so that this fell full upon her face. Carlton was not there.

Arkwright dropped into a seat in the shadow. His wife must have been aware of his entrance, but she did not speak for some time. Finally she said: "I am glad you are here. I have something to say to you, something that I fear will hurt."

Arkwright drew a long breath. Was she going to tell him that she loved Carlton?

Mrs. Arkwright broke the silence. "I want to tell you that we cannot go on as we have been," she said. "I suppose," she went on in the same soft tone, "you think that you love me. No, don't speak yet. I know what you would say; you want to swear that you worship, adore me, that I am the one woman in the world to you, but I have come to feel that mere words do not count for much. It is acts that tell the story. Had you really loved me you would never have told me so."

Arkwright set his teeth hard. Was she going to reproach him for having persuaded her to marry him? Well, he deserved it, he supposed.

"Why did you do it?" she questioned with more passion, more anger, in her voice than he had supposed her capable of feeling. "Why did you force yourself into my existence? I was happy enough as I was, as happy as a woman can be who has never loved."

Arkwright winced.
"But there, I must not be unkind to you." Her voice had grown indescribably tender. "After all, you are not more to blame than I; indeed, not so much, and I know you are sincere in thinking that you love me. I thought I loved you too—once. But now I know that it was not you I loved. In accepting your attentions I was only yielding to the desire every woman has to be made much of, to have thought, devotion, showered upon her. What I mistook for love was merely being glad that you, someone, anyone, cared for me. It was comparing you with him that made me realize this. Had he been in your place he would never have told me that he loved me; he would have gone away and suffered in silence."

Arkwright stirred impatiently in his seat. Why could she not have spared him a little? It was bitter enough to be reproached with his own shortcomings without having to hear her lover's praises sung. Besides, would Oliver have done these things? Arkwright thought not.

His wife leaned forward and laid a hand on his arm. "You don't know how I hate to have to say all this," she whispered.

Arkwright shook her hand from his arm.
"Of course, you are angry with me, but isn't it better for me to tell the truth? I do not love you; I love him." The way she said the last three words made Arkwright dizzy with pain. It showed him how she could love.

"Of course, I can never be anything to him now," Edith went on, "for you will always stand between us; that is my punishment; but it is only fair to him that you should go away."

Arkwright did not speak; indeed, he could not, for something came into his throat and choked him.

His wife went on talking. Would she never stop, he wondered. How much more was there for him to hear?

"I know it is a good deal to ask, but I should like to feel that you forgive me for telling you these unpleasant truths and for sending you away. It may be hard for you to go, but believe me, you will find it harder to stay. I am sure of this because—if you loved me as—as I love him, you could never have borne it to be so much to me, and yet so little. I think I felt this in a vague way from the first. That is why even when I thought I loved you I would not tell you so."

Arkwright drew a sigh of relief. He was glad she was telling all this to him and not to Carlton. It meant much to him to be able to believe in her again.

His wife rose to her feet. "Come," she said in a voice she strove to make matter-of-fact, "we must not stay here any longer. He will be wondering where we are."

Arkwright rose too, and together they moved through the darkness towards a curtained doorway. Just before Edith paused and he felt her hand upon his arm again. "I am sorry, Oliver, I am indeed," she whispered.

Oliver! Arkwright felt a sudden dizziness. Oliver! She had thought he was Oliver Carlton all this time. Why—then she must have been talking about him—her husband. She must love him!

After a moment, when his mad exultation had given way to a great peace, Arkwright took his wife's hand, and, lifting the curtain, drew her into the lighted room beyond.



"I Thought I Loved You, Too—Once."