

THE PASSIONATE SPECTATOR

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The Passionate Spectator by Jane Burr

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JANE BURR

**THE PASSIONATE
SPECTATOR**

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BY
JANE BURR, pseud.

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1921

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To
SELMA
MY SISTER

TRANSFER FROM C. D. MAY 1923

THE PASSIONATE SPECTATOR

I

USUAL people marry for everything else in the world but love. I am a usual person. Samuel Stone waltzed into my life at Sweet Brier, White Sulphur Springs, in a tight-fitting evening suit that gave him a figure.

Mornings he flourished in well-made flannels; afternoons he strutted in innumerable hair-line trousers, black coats in varying degrees of cutaway-ness, and amazing hosiery.

His eyes were a bit pinched together, and his under-lip had lost its puckering string, but altogether he passed for what any designing matron would have called a "sweet fellow."

Having a social consciousness that demanded a modernization of his mother's ideas, he dropped the *Sam* and named himself *Uel* even on visiting cards.

Our auras bumped in the good old days when the autographs of Mary Johnston, the Roger Pryors, and the Hays gave tone to the register of the Sweet Brier Hotel. Life was very gay and waited upon.

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There were six hundred guests and six hundred and one "darkies" in attendance. It was quite impossible to reach the drinking fountain in the hall without having a black hand present one with a miniature napkin. Daily I was in expectation of a black apparition who would mellifluently offer to save me the trouble of breathing. What precious old "darkies"! Adoring slaves, seemingly unaware that Lincoln had ever signed that scrap of paper.

Uel's proposal to me was accepted by my mother, and I was kissed and given a ring without the slightest interference on my part.

Over the dull grayness that enveloped my approaching marriage hung one cloud of glory. I would live in Chicago, and Chicago meant darling Aunt Caroline.

Aunt Caroline was my father's sweet sister. Her fleeting visits to us in the South were the only highlights through all our lives. What a woman, and what a mother! She came with her troop of little ones and sun-swept the very air in which we dreamed. We flew to her when she entered our front gate and clung about her skirts until Uncle came and took her back with him. Is it any wonder he could not live long without her?

Such kisses were ours and such hugs! We buttoned her boots; we skipped on mysterious little errands; we wound our dun lives about in the brilliance of her! Precious Aunt Caroline!