

**UNCLE  
PHIL: A NOVEL**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649727032

Uncle Phil: A Novel by Mrs. John M. Clay

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**MRS. JOHN M. CLAY**

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PHIL: A NOVEL**



# UNCLE PHIL

A NOVEL

BY

MRS. JOHN M. CLAY

Author of "What Will the World Say," "Only a Woman," and "Some Little of the Angel Still Left."

"Pleasure is evil's chief bait; the body the principal calamity of the soul; and those thoughts which most separate it and take it from the affections of the body most entrenchise and purify it."—*Plato*.

SECOND AND REVISED EDITION

THE  
**Abbey Press**

PUBLISHERS

114

FIFTH AVENUE

NEW YORK

London

Montreal



MRS. JOHN M. CLAY.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

*Mrs. John M. Clay is a Kentuckian, the daughter of Col. Russell, who was well known in his day. In her girlhood she accompanied her father on various excursions, so that she began to see and understand life almost as soon as she opened her eyes. She early went to California, where she met and married Col. Eugene Erwin, a grandson of Henry Clay, who was killed during the Civil War at Vicksburg. Returning later to Kentucky, she met and eventually married John M. Clay, the youngest and only surviving son of Henry Clay. The great orator had been fond of blooded stock, a taste which his son inherited. Mrs. Clay shared in this taste and, under her husband's tutelage, became an expert stock farmer. After his death, she carried on at Ashland, which her husband had inherited from Henry Clay, his celebrated thoroughbred stock farm with increasing success.*

*Mrs. Clay has been devoted not only to stock farming, but also to literature. She has thought much and written not a little during these years and one result is this volume. UNCLE PHIL shows an insight and an out-sight which entitle it to public consideration, especially as a view of the Old South, now fast fading into history.*

THE PUBLISHERS.

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# UNCLE PHIL.

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## CHAPTER I.

### FAIR AND FREE IS THE KING'S HIGHWAY.

"Keep your heart as light as you can,  
An ounce of care killed a man."

The inhabitants, which are mostly of the Spanish race, of the peaceful little city of Bonito, are in the enjoyment of the post-meridian siesta.

There are exceptions, however, for, standing in the corridor of an ancient adobe building—its flagstaff, from which floats the American flag, proclaims its official character—and fronting the pier, for Bonito has a seaport, are three young people: sister and brothers, as evidenced by the strong resemblance they bear one to another; cast in the same generous mold, with the same upright carriage, lofty poise of head, and noble, finely chiseled features. The girl is young, not eighteen, and her brothers only a few years older.

These young people, contemplating a fishing excursion, are busily engaged selecting hooks and lines from a large assortment, filling a good-sized box; that is, Miss Geraldine Southampton has the

matter in hand with an arbitrariness that does not allow a different opinion to emanate from either of the young men, had they one, which most likely they had not, for the young lady's manner clearly indicated that she knew what she was about. Her quick fingers soon filled a small basket with all she deemed needed; then she announced in a voice distinctly clear and musical, though tinged with an imperious ring, such as the fortunate individual, male or female, unused to contradiction, will naturally acquire: "Now, South and Fred, we are ready, and we are going to fish for fish on the briny deep—every mother's son of us."

This questionable piece of witticism receives plaudits beyond its merits, and the three of them begin their walk toward the mole. At its steps lies a small boat, manned by two oarsmen of widely differing places of birth. Uncle Phil, the first in importance, was a "culled pusson," as he himself stated with distinctness and frequency, leaving no room for a reasonable doubt. Also that he first saw the light of day in "Wirgluny" was a circumstance of no inconsiderable pride to him, and was superfluously commented on; at least such was the opinion entertained by those who enjoyed his acquaintance. The other boatman was a Hawaiian, and per consequence, known as "Kanaka Jack."

The distance to be traversed was short, and, the young lady placing herself between her brothers,