

# Rough Sketches

A Study of the Features of the New Negro Woman

By John H. Adams, Jr.

One day while standing in the centre of the business section of Atlanta, there approached me a bright eyed, full-minded youth of some nine years of respectable rearing. Both of us looked with eyes and soul upon the passing mixed panorama of men and women and children, and horses, and vehicles, and up to the modern ten and fourteen stories of stone, brick and steel structures out of whose windows, here and there, poked curious heads peering tamely upon the seeming confusion below. I saw an uncommon life picture pass slowly through the gang-way of humming electric cars, and rattling drays and of shifting humanity. Alford Emerson Clark, my innocent companion saw it also; and the throng of hurrying black and white folks paused in contemptible curiosity as the rubber-tired wheels of the open carriage rolled silently along the Peachtree thorough-fare. In the carriage sat two ladies, one white, one colored, engaged in a happy, spirited conversation all the while unconscious, of the Southern social monster which argues the inferiority of the Negro to the white folk.

Two opposing worlds riding happily, peacefully, aye, lovingly together in the worst of Negro hating cities. Is it real? Is it natural? Is it right? What a healthy breath passed over me; and I smiled and went on with my jolly companion to the outer South end of the city.

The picture continued to press upon young Alford's mind, and with the peculiar vigor of youth, he had stopped to quander over the outward aspect of the situation. Said he, "which one is the better looking, the colored lady or the white?" Expressing my inability to decide pending a closer scrutiny of the two, I asked which



In this face is an uncommon sweep of kindness and affection, linked with an 'industrious turn of mind, which have been the making of Lena.

did he think is the better in appearance. "The colored woman of course," he replied, as though he were greatly surprised at my not having a reason to say the same thing. Asking him for his reason, Alford looking me straight in the face said, "why the other woman is white." White? Well, what has that to do with a woman's real physical charm, either adding to or detracting from her? thought I to myself. To the black man a white face means little or nothing. To the white man it means his tradition, his civilization, his bond and recognition in the present age, and his safe guard in the future. Alford saw beneath the first skin surface down to the last layer of race greatness,—the preserving and hon-



This beautiful eyed girl is the result of careful home training and steady schooling. There is an unusual promise of intelligence and character rising out of her strong individuality. A model girl, a college president's daughter, is Lorainetta.



You cannot avoid the motion of this dignified countenance. College training makes her look so.

oring of race identity and distinction. He saw in that colored woman that which he could not see in the white woman so long as "white" in America stands for hope and black for despair.

The white woman's beauty was real, pure, substantial, but it came to thoughtful Alfred with no meaning. The black woman's beauty was real, pure, substantial, but it came with a life, a soul, which had touched his and which he not only understood but which inspired him to love.

I looked into his rich brown eyes, into his sun-lit smiling face and caught the gilded thread wire that, from his heart, followed the trail of Negro womanhood into all the ends of the earth. I fixed tight hand on it, I felt the fast beating of over nine million human hearts, as but the beating of one woman's heart when all hope seems lost, as they struggle with an inspiration which has too many times found its bed in the bosom of American

prejudice. Still holding on to the gilded wire and placing my head close against his throbbing breast, there was something within, with the silence of maddened power which seemed to say: Ye gods of the earth! this woman—mine, whom you have fettered with the chains of caste, whom you have branded with the red iron of infamy, whom you have degraded with the finger of your own lustful body, shall be free. God made it fast and eternal. This beauty which you have used to tame your generations shall be yours no more, and this person that has served your rawest purposes shall not enter again into your halls.

Some day however these Negro restrictive laws, these phantasms and prejudices shall be beat and bent and tuned to the music of a more perfect civilization in which men shall love to do honor to all women for the sake of their sacred mission and meaning in the shaping of human destiny. There is an inseparable

linking between mother and mother, be one white and one black; and the final triumph of civilization shall be when womanhood is a unit in all things for good and when manhood is a common factor in her defence.

We present the colored woman today as she impresses herself in the world as a growing factor for good and in her beauty, intelligence and character for better social recognition. Here she is in characteristic pose, full of vigor, tender in affection, sweet



We want more men who have the proper sense of appreciation of deserving women and who are deserving themselves. This is a death-knell to the dude and the well-dressed run-around. You ought to write a book on that, Eva.

life. Look upon her, ye nations! Measure her by all the standards of human-perfection. Weigh her upon the scales



Here one catches a glimpse of rare beauty. But it is not buried there alone, Eva.

in emotion, and strong in every attribution of mind and soul.

Look upon her, ye worlds! and, since there is none better, swear by her. If there is none purer, none nobler, which have stamped pre-eminence in the very countenance of man, woman and child, cast your glittering swords, and sheaths, and armor, at her untarnished feet and pledge the very life that you enjoy to the defense of her



In this admirable face rises a happy response to the lofty impulses of her poetic soul. In the language of art this is Lactia.

that were employed in the weighing of queens, and noble-men's wives and daughters. And, if, after the test has been exhausted in the finding her real merits, she is found to have not only the physical beauty, not only the intellectual graces but also the moral stamina, the purity of heart, the loftiness of purpose and the sober consciousness of true womanhood the same as her white or red or olive sisters, then let all

men whose blood finds eternal unity in the brotherhood of America's proscribed, whose traditions reach back into two-hundred and fifty years of mean slavery, and worse—of enforced ignorance;—I say, let all men, even they that be not of us, who love woman for woman's sake fling their full lives to the uncertain wind when her honor is at stake.



An admirer of Fine Art, a performer on the violin and the piano, a sweet singer, a writer—mostly given to essays, a lover of good books, and a home making girl, is Gussie.