Jack of Hearts

I.

"And that was three years ago, wasn't it?" Miss Martindale said. "It doesn't seem like it."

"No," he replied, "it seems—thirty."

"Thanks! Have I really aged so much since then?"

"I mean until I saw you I seemed thirty," he explained.

"Three years! It goes very quickly. You haven't changed much."

"I? I haven't changed at all."

She regarded him critically.

"No, you haven't—in looks."

"I haven't in any way," he replied earnestly, and with an undertone of intention in his voice. "And you—you are all I imagined."

"You imagined? Then I was not a reality three years ago. I was a mere figure of your brain! What do you mean?"

"I mean—why—that in all these years I have been imagining you in all sorts of ways, you know."

"Oh! Sometimes as fair-haired, I suppose, and sometimes as dark-haired; sometimes with a hump, and sometimes cross-eyed!"

"Nonsense!"

"Well, it's what you said—'all sorts of ways.' And yet—do you remember the silly speech you made to me when you went away?"

"Of course. Only it wasn't silly—it was the solid truth."

"It didn't seem very solid then; but perhaps it does now, however, at this distance. You haven't answered my question, yet, though. What was it you said?"

"Why—that—what's the use of my telling you over again if your memory is so good?"

"It's your memory that's in question, not mine. Confess you don't remember."

"But I do, of course. It was that I wouldn't forget," he said triumphantly.

Miss Martindale dropped her eyes, raised them again for a brief, fluttering moment, and again dropped them with a pensive little smile.

"And you remember what it was I said to you then?" he asked impressively, leaning nearer and looking down at the bent head.

"You said—of course, you were only saying it—but you said you would remember every word I had said to you, every look of my eyes, every tone of my voice. You were quite sentimental that night."

"It was meant, every word of it. No man could forget it. I know it now."

"Now? Didn't you know it then? What do you mean? You talk as though you were not the same man you were. Aren't you?"

"Well, every man changes, you know, every seven years. Scientific fact, I believe."

"But it hasn't been seven—only three."

"Oh, of course, not really change!"

"Ah! And you have that photograph of me yet?"

"Of course! As if I wouldn't! It has never been out of my keeping since I stole it from——"

"I thought I gave it to you myself?" she said, with some surprise in her voice. "Have you forgotten how you begged it from me that night?"

"Of course I have not forgotten."

"How beautiful the moonlight was on the water that evening, and far off some boating party was singing! It was perfect!"

"Yes, perfect—at least, to me."

"Do you remember when we glided into that stretch of lily-pads and I lifted them dripping from the water, each drop like a diamond, and you said——"

"And I said I wished they were real so that I could give them to you," he said boldly.

"Did you? I thought it was that the drops would spoil my gown—the gown you admired so much."

"I did admire it. I have always seen you in that gown—and your face luminous in half shadow, the glint of your hair, and your arms gleaming in the moonlight as you trailed your fingers in the water and made silvery ripples over the polished black mirror of the—er—river."

He drew a long breath when he finished as one who felt relieved.

"And it was as we neared home, wasn't it, that you told me that you wanted my picture?"

"Yes."

The corners of her mouth twitched a little.

"What a splendid memory you have!" she said. "A marvellous memory, I call it. I wish I had one like it, though it's not what I would call accurate—if that's a sample—because, you see, you didn't ask me for my photograph that night."

"But you said yourself——"

"Yes; I did. I just wanted to test you. Now, I commence to doubt that you really still have my picture."

"I can show it to you."

"Are you certain it's not some other girl that you've mistaken for me? One is liable to mistake one person for another, unless there's some special reason."

"No danger! There's not another girl in the world like you. I knew you the moment I saw you."

"Knew me?"

"Yes—across the ballroom."

"You were not thinking of me until you saw me, then?"

"I mean," he explained slowly, like one who picks his way, "that I knew you for the one girl I cared about."

"Oh-h! I remember you telling me that three years ago, but I didn't think it was at a ball that that knowledge came to you. We met first—let's see—where was it?"

"At—at—— It's idiotic, but for the life of me I can't remember for the moment. You were the important matter. All else——"

"It's hardly to be expected you should recollect," she said, compassionating his confusion. "It was at the Brownings.'"

"Of course—the Brownings'. I knew; but I couldn't think of the name. I remember Jack telling—"

"Jack? What Jack?"

"Er—Jack—Jack Browning, of course."

"Oh, I never knew there was a brother. And he told you."

"That he wanted me to meet you. He said, 'Arthur, there's a——'"

"Why, I thought your name was Jack! But possibly that's changed in three years too. You used to be called Jack."

II.

"A man may have two names, mayn't he?"

"It seems like it."

"I mean he may have more than one name. My name is John Arthur Graham. All my old chums at college called me Arthur."

"I might have understood—so stupid of me. So Mr. Browning was a chum of yours at college?"

"Yes; great friends we were."

"And that's how you came to know his sisters? Charming girls, weren't they?"

"Very, very charming! Only I don't want to talk about them now, it's such a waste!"

"Why? Have you quarrelled?"

"No—not exactly."

"I thought perhaps you had, because Grace Browning just passed and neither of you spoke, I thought it was curious."

"Yes—of course, I saw her—but—it's rather a painful subject with me and so, if you don't mind, let's get off it."

He looked away sadly, with a perturbed expression of countenance, due naturally to the pain he was feeling.

There was silence for a moment or so, and then, hearing a little sobbing sound, he turned towards her.

She was bending over, her face buried in her hands. Like a flash it came over him what was the matter. She cared for him, and thought he cared for the Browning girl.

"Mollie!" he said—"Mollie dear! It was nothing of that kind. I've never cared for any other woman but you—honestly."

Suddenly she lifted her face. There were traces of tears in her eyes.

"Oh, you fraud!" she cried. "You utter fraud!"

"I tell you——"

"You imposter! And you fancied I believed you?"

She drew a letter from the folds of her gown and found a place in it.

"Read that. Arthur Graham, and then——"

Graham read the part she indicated.

"And now the greatest news! Of course—you sly puss!—I know of your flirtation with Jack Graham three years ago, and that you gave him your photograph. Well, my dear, it seems that Jack's twin brother Arthur saw the picture and rescued it when Jack was burning his scalps just before his marriage. Arthur kept it on his mantelpiece for three years. Now, Mollie, what do you think? He proposes to break his journey at Blenfield and pretend he's Jack, stay at the Carters', and pick up the ends of the affair with you where Jack dropped them. Isn't that impudence? He has made a bet with Jack that he can do this, and he should be taught a lesson. He is exactly like Jack—as good-looking—and nicer, and I'm afraid——"

"You needn't read the rest," Miss Martindale interrupted. "It's nothing to do with you." She turned a severe countenance towards the culprit. "It is a very nice trick to try and play on a girl, isn't it? So gentlemanly!"

"I suppose it wasn't fair, but—"

"But what? I want to be just."

"Well, it wasn't all a lie. To me the picture was all I said, and I have known ever since I met you that I cared for you; but I suppose you are awfully offended, and it's all over?"

"It should be, shouldn't it, as a punishment? There ought to be some punishment surely."

"I shall lose my bet. Isn't that enough? Unless you'll let me win it?"

"Why, how can I?"

"The threads, you know; let me pick 'em up where Jack dropped them. Then I'll win. You said you were walking, weren't you, that day? Mayn't I come to-morrow for you?"

"You don't deserve it, and I won't promise; but I shall be at home at three, and—— Your waltz, Mr. Dalinger? Yes, so it is. Too bad you had such a hunt for me! I was just going in."

Miss Martindale's hand fumbled for a moment adjusting her roses; then she moved away to the ballroom, leaving behind her on the floor a bud just opening to the world.

Graham picked it up and put it in his buttonhole.

"I am quite sure to-morrow will be a pleasant day," he mused.

FIGHTS IN PARLIAMENT

SCENES IN THE BRITISH HOUSE OF COMMONS.

The King Was Asked to Withdraw—Members Have Been Forcibly Ejected.

What was, perhaps, the most remarkable "scene" enacted in the House of Commons since the days of Cromwell, had its origin, curiously enough, in a comparatively trifling and unimportant incident. The date was July 27th, 1893; the hour ten o'clock at night. Mr. Chamberlain was "pitching in" to Mr. Gladstone, and, just as the closure fell, somebody shouted out "Judas."

This unparliamentary epithet was promptly reported to the Chairman, and he replied that the expression had not reached his ears, and ordered the division to be proceeded with. Thereupon some few Conservatives refused to leave their seats. But still there was no sign of any active disturbance when, suddenly, a gentleman named Hayes-Fisher seized a certain Mr. Logan by the coat collar.

Then indeed, the "fat was in the fire," and at once. First one member, and then another, joined in the scrimmage. The Irishmen, true to the traditions of their race, rushed back into the House from the division lobby to "bear a hand in the fun," only, however, to be met in the doorway by the pugnacious and redoubtable Colonel Saunderson, who "floored" two or three of them most effectively and scientifically ere he himself was sent sprawling by a well-directed left-hander.

John Burns was also in the thick of it, but his efforts were entirely directed to quelling the disturbance by pulling the combatants asunder. In the end the Speaker was sent for and

PEACE WAS RESTORED,

but not before the undignified brawl had been carried to such length as to draw down from the Strangers' Gallery a storm of well-deserved hisses.

Curiously enough, the next really serious Parliamentary "upset" was also about a division, but this time it was the Irish Members who refused to go into the lobbies. The House happened to be in Committee at the time, and the Chairman, warned probably by past happenings, promptly sent for the Speaker. That high official at once "named" the offenders, and their suspension was moved and carried.

Still, however, they declined to budge. Whereupon the Speaker leant down, spoke a few words to a messenger, who hurried outside into Palace Yard, and, almost ere the rebellious Members knew what was happening, a score of sturdy policemen had marched in and surrounded them.

But even then there was no passive yielding to overwhelming force. On the contrary, the Irishmen resisted to the uttermost, and had to be carried out bodily, kicking, struggling, and squealing.

Among the most violent was Mr. Crean, who "floored" Colonel Saunderson in 1893, and who was said to have monopolized the attentions of ten constables for ten full minutes.

Mr. M'Hugh, the editor of the Sligo Champion, also "distinguished" himself after a similar fashion; while Mr. Flavin,

A GIGANTIC KERRY MAN,

was heard boasting next day that it took fifteen of the "Sassenach hirelings" to "down" him.

This was the first occasion on which outside force had been employed to coerce the people's representatives within the "sacred precincts" of the House itself since that memorable April afternoon, in the year 1633, when Oliver Cromwell, taking with him a band of soldiers and also gathering up the sentinels from the sentry-boxes as he came along, unceremoniously "dissolved" the Long Parliament.

But similar stern measures have not infrequently been resorted to by the attendants of the House. By them, for instance, Charles Bradlaugh was forcibly ejected, in 1883, after delivering what Mr. Gladstone afterwards said was the finest speech he had ever heard at the Bar of the House.

On another occasion it was the ladies who brought upon themselves a like ignominy. Grown bold through tolerance, they invaded the floor of the House, and, on being called upon by the Speaker to withdraw, actually defied the authority of the Chair. Of course, this could not be permitted, and force was employed to compel them to leave. It took nearly two hours, however, ere the last fair rebel was got outside; and ever since then they have been compelled to ensconce themselves behind the grille, in a position where the Speaker's eye need never officially rest upon them, silent, and

THEORETICALLY ABSENT.

An exceedingly turbulent scene, and one which, according to modern ideas, was entirely unjustifiable, was that provoked, in 1872, by Sir Charles Dilke's opposition to the Royal Grant.

Similar motions are now frequently made, as a matter of course, and without creating the tiniest ripple of excitement. But this one was the first of its kind, and old-fashioned Conservatives, as well as some Liberals, regarded it as little less than a species of sacrilege.

No sooner had Sir Charles commenced his speech than someone moved to exclude the reporters. The motion was carried. And then the House gave itself up to a delirium of disapproval. Yells, howls, cock-crows, drowned every attempt of the honorable baronet to make himself heard. His seconder, Mr. Auberon Herbert, fared no better. And, in the end, they had to resume their seats, having utterly failed to address a single intelligible sentence to the assemblage they hoped to convert to their way of thinking.

Perhaps the late Mr. J. G. Biggar was responsible for more Parliamentary scenes than any other Member before or since. He it was who led the twenty-five Irish Members suspended by Speaker Brand "for deliberate and planned obstruction" on that memorable July morn in 1882.

He it was, too, who once caused our present King, then, of course, Prince of Wales, to be turned

OUT OF THE HOUSE.

His Royal Highness was, on that particular occasion, technically a "stranger," and under the rules of Parliamentary procedure then in vogue the Speaker had no option, when Mr. Biggar persisted, but to request him to withdraw.

But the fury of nine-tenths of the rest of the Members at the insult offered to Royalty was frightful to witness. Indeed, for a while, fears were entertained for the sturdy old pig-jobber's personal safety.

But of all the many minor scenes that have from time to time upset the equanimity of the House, the most curious, perhaps, was that which had its origin, on August 5th, 1871, in the reading of a message from the Queen concerning Prince Arthur—the Duke of Connaught. The Speaker, as is the custom in such cases, received the document from the Prime Minister, and started reading as follows:

"Victoria Regina.—Her Majesty being desirous of making competent provision for the honorable support of her third son, Prince Arthur, on his coming of age, relies on the attachment of the House of Peers"—here the Speaker stopped confused, while loud

MURMUR OF SURPRISE

broke forth from the assembled Members.

In the midst of the turmoil Gladstone rose, and remarked confusedly that a mistake had been made. "I move," he went, "that the consideration of the message be deferred until Monday next."

This, however, was greeted with loud cries of "What message?" "We have no message." The Prime Minister looked about him helplessly, as if not knowing what to do. But just then a messenger from the Upper House arrived in hot haste. There, too, he explained, they were in a similar predicament. They had got a message addressed to Her Majesty's "Faithful Commons."

A great shout of laughter went up as the messages were exchanged, and this gave place to ironical cheers as Gladstone again presented himself at the Bar. He, too, could scarcely keep from smiling. But in his heart he was exceedingly angry. And it is said that the official responsible for mixing up the two documents got one of the worst wiggings he ever had in his life.—Pearson's Weekly.

THE DREADED OBEAHMAN

THE HIGH PRIEST OF OB WIELDS GREAT POWER.

A Subtle Poison Is His Agent, and His Victims Succumb Quickly.

In Jamaica, the most beautiful of the West Indian Islands, there slumbers beneath the smiling exterior of things a volcano of dark superstition and savage fanaticism, which occasionally becomes active with deadly results. The high priest of Ob, or the obeahman, as he is more commonly called, wields a power in the land that the stringent measures adopted against him by the British government have been unable to put down.

One may read in the Jamaica papers quite frequently of the imprisonment and, where murder can be proved, the execution of some member of the deadly brotherhood of Ob,

The practice of obeah is said to have first arisen in Egypt, taking its name from the idol Ob. From there it spread over the whole continent of Africa, and with the importation of slaves from the Guinea coast to the West Indies was transplanted to a soil in which it flourishes with ever-increasing virulence. The old planters were aware of the deadly character of the obeahman, and as it was supposed that he carried his magic, or obeah, under his hair all slaves were shaved before being landed.

WHOLE FAMILY POISONED.

One of the most noted men of Jamaica, Judge Joseph Hurlburt, in sentencing an obeahman convicted of the poisoning of an entire family to death recently said: "It is my belief that a special statute should be put into effect against this baleful practice. I do not doubt that many men quite as dangerous as this prisoner are at large to-day. Obeah is the most serious problem the modern West Indies have to face. No man can be said to be safe from sudden death until this thing is stamped out by the most stringent measures."

Outwardly there is nothing to distinguish the obeahman from the ordinary villager, unless it is perhaps his sinister look and peculiar slouching gait, as, carrying in one hand a long stick and in the other a cotton bag containing bits of broken bottles, cats or dogs' teeth, nails, bones pins, bits of cloth, etc., he shuffles along the country roads or back trails on some deadly mission. Besides his more sinister trade of death, the obeahman deals in love philters and charms. It is, too, a well-known fact that in cases of lawsuit an obeahman is retained as well as a lawyer. Usually he "works" at home on the case, but occasionally he accompanies his client to court for the purpose of casting spells on the prosecutor and his witnesses and influencing the judge and jury.

CULTIVATING PLANTS.

The obeahman is well versed in all the vegetable poisons of the island, and sometimes cultivates in some remote valley in the mountains a patch of deadly plants. He knows that the presence of vegetable poison is much harder to detect than that of mineral. One of his favorite methods of poisoning, which is diabolical in its ingenuity, is to soak the undergarments of an intended victim in a strong decoction of poisonous herbs. The poison is of course absorbed by the perspiring body of the owner of the "doctored" garments, and his mysterious death soon follows.

Equally dreaded with the obeahmen are the "Mial people," or the "fan-eyed." The mialman is believed to injure his own or his clients' enemies by depriving them of their shadows. It is believed that once the shadow of anyone is taken he can never be healthy, and in the event of his failing to recover it he must inevitably pine away and die. The shadow when taken is supposed to take up its habitation in the giant cotton or ceiba tree. This tree, like the Druidical oak, is still worshipped in Jamaica, and sacrifices are offered at its roots to appease the wrath of the "duppies," or evil spirits. So great is the Jamaican veneration for the cotton tree that one is never cut down, it being the belief that in such a case "the deaths," dwelling in its buttress-like roots, would enter the ax-wielder's soul.

The ceremony of recovering the "taken" shadow is very curious. The "shadow-catchers" are known as "angel men." They charge exorbitant prices for their work, and are the aristocracy of their profession. The person desirous of regaining his shadow must neither drink nor smoke for several weeks.

CHANT OF THE "ANGEL MEN."

When he is declared "fit" by the "angel man" the whole village troops to the nearest cotton tree, and, forming a ring, dances about the "worker" and his client, chanting:

> Lord, have mercy, oh!
> Christ, have mercy, oh!
> Obeah pain hot, oh!
> Lord we come fe (for) pull he, oh
> A no we put he, oh!
> A pirit tek he, oh!
> An' we come fe pull he, oh!
> Shadow, your fadder want you, oh!
> Bwoy, you fadder want you, oh!
> Bwoy, your modder want you, oh!

Faster and faster the ring circles till many fall exhausted. When the "angel man," concludes things have gone far enough he gives the signal to stop and declares his client restored to health. Then the cotton tree is pelted with eggs and newly killed chickens placed at its roots to compensate "the deaths" for the loss of their shadow.

However childish the obeahman and his devices may appear to the enlightened reader, he is a very real and very serious menace to the West Indies.

With a compound of the fine fur from the inside of the bamboo he inoculates his white enemies with the seeds of tuberculosis. Ground glass placed in their food he prepares the way for an agonizing death. So skillfully does he work that the victim, while conscious of feeling ill, does not realize till too late that he has incurred some servant's hatred for some probably fancied injury, and that the obeahman has been called in.

JAPAN'S BEAUTY SPOT.

In Japan the nose is the only feature which attracts attention. The nose determines the beauty or ugliness of the face, according as it is big or small. This is probably due to the fact that difference in noses constitutes about the only distinction between one Japanese face and another. The eyes are invariably black the cheek-bones high, and the chin receding. In Japan, a woman who has a huge proboscis is always a great beauty and a reigning belle. There are few large noses among the natives, and lucky is he or she who possesses one. In most Japanese pictures the beautiful woman has this feature abnormally developed

ANTI-CORSET LEAGUE.

About sixty ladies and many more gentlemen have joined the Anti-Corset League at Leeds, England, which is an offshoot of the Leeds Society of Physical Culture. The males have vowed never to marry "corset wrecks." Ladies are exhorted, at the peril of excommunication from the society, to bandon the use of corsets entirely, and there is a hard and fast rule that every woman member shall have no restriction of bands or other tight clothing round the waist, but shall endeavor to have all garments suspended from the shoulders.