

# UNCLE JIM'S POSTHUMOUS JOKE

A Short Story By Crittenden Marriott.

"Copyright, 1903, by Crittenden Marriott."  
 "Then the lawyer had finished I looked at him in utter desperation. 'Mr. Mason,' I explained, almost crying, 'do you mean to tell me that Uncle Jim's money will all go to a set of silly cats unless I marry a man I never saw in my life—a man who, according to all accounts, is one of the most repulsively ugly creatures that ever existed?'"

"Mr. Mason looked distinctly sympathetic. 'I'm afraid that is the state of the case, Miss Williams,' he answered. 'Your uncle insisted on leaving it in that way and instructed me to tell you, if you protested—and he seemed tolerably certain that you would protest—that beauty was only skin-deep. It's monstrous! Horrible! It's carrying a joke too far!'"

"A joke?" the lawyer repeated feebly. "I shouldn't exactly call it—"  
 "That's what it is—a posthumous joke! I know Uncle Jim would get even with me in some way, but I never dreamed he would do anything as cruel as this. It was positively wicked of him when he knew how long mother and I would wait the money."  
 "But perhaps I had better explain. Every man has his own fancy, I suppose, and Uncle Jim's was for practical joking. To say that Uncle Jim would rather joke than eat is to put the thing too mildly, since he had invented and worked out this last alleged joke on his deathbed. He owed me one in return for a trick I had played on him some months before. Uncle Jim always made a point of paying such debts, usually with interest."

"I was on the watch for his revenge for a long time, but forgot all about one day when the dear old fellow was brought home knocked down by a runaway horse, and so hurt that he died a week later. Mother and I took his fate a great deal harder than he did. In fact, he made, or, at least, pretended to make, a jest of it, telling me over and over again that the only thing he regretted was that he couldn't live long enough to get even with me. At the very last he glanced at me with a twinkle in his eye. 'Too bad I couldn't get even with you, Bessie,' he said."

"When his will was read I understood the twinkle. He had left all his fortune in trust, the income to be divided between me and my first cousin, Phil, for three years, and the principal to come to us at the end of that time, provided we married each other in the interval. If either married anyone else or definitely refused to marry the other, the entire fortune was to vest in the other. We were to spend the month of June each summer at a certain watering place in order to get acquainted with each other. If either of us stayed away, the money was to revert to the one who remained, unless the meeting was waived by written agreement. If the three years ended without our marrying, the money was to go to a home for friendless cats."

"Now, neither the Stacy nor the Williams family was especially well to do. A fortune of \$50,000 was not to be despised, and our family as well as our Stacy cousins would hesitate for some time before giving it up; yet what girl could or would rejoice in being deliberately told off to marry a man whom she had never seen, especially one as repulsively homely as Uncle Jim—who was the only one of us who had even seen our Missouri cousin—has told us that Philip Stacy was."

"Philip Stacy has a heart of gold," said Uncle Jim again and again. "A heart of gold, but a face as ugly as that of the devil himself. However, when you think of this afterwards, I feel sure that Uncle Jim was trying to prevent the shock he knew that I, with my ideals of manly beauty, must experience when I should meet my cousin. If that was his hope, however, it was not realized for a long time, for it was nearly three years before either of us laid eyes on the other."

"This postponement of the inevitable came about very naturally. Philip was very ill just at the time of Uncle Jim's death or it supposed he would have come on for the funeral. When he recovered, he stayed away on purpose. I suppose he didn't relish having a girl pitched at his head any more than I liked having a man thrown at mine. Six months later, when June came along and our first set meeting was to take place, I wrote to him, according to the terms of Uncle Jim's will, and asked his consent to postpone the meeting for one year. As an incentive to this course of action, I enclosed a picture of my best friend, Nell Jones, who, though the dearest, sweetest girl in the world, was not—well, not exactly beautiful. Of course, I didn't say that the picture was of me; if Philip inferred as much, it surely wasn't my fault."

"It seemed, however, that he did not need any deterrent, as he sent a reply with a quick delivery stamp, agreeing with me fully and enclosing the portrait of the very ugliest man I ever saw. I took it to mother in horror. 'Really, mother,' I said, 'there is no use waiting any longer. I simply cannot marry a man who looks like that, no matter how many golden hearts he may have. You must write and break off the match definitely.'"

"precipitate. You aren't in love with anyone else, are you?"  
 "Certainly not," I answered, truthfully. "Then let things rest for awhile."  
 I yielded, of course, and possessed my soul in patience for another year. Then, as June drew near once more, I chanced to see in the paper one day an account of an accident to a namesake of mine, by which her face was badly scarred. This wasn't at all surprising, of course, as there are plenty named Bessie Williams in the world, but it put an idea into my head. I clipped it out and enclosed it to Cousin Philip, asking for a fresh postponement of our meeting time. I didn't say that the accident had happened to me, but of course the inference was plain enough. However, it turned out that I hadn't been fibbed, for shortly after I dropped mymissive in the mail when I received a letter from Philip, written the day before mine, telling me that he had been ill with smallpox. He added that it was hoped that he would not be much scarred, but that he was still weak and would be glad to postpone our meeting for another year. I could imagine his appearance after having a choice assortment of pockmarks added to his already horribly ugly features—for of course I understood what his optimistic remark about not being much scarred must mean. So I lost no time in writing again and gladly accepting the proposed delay."

"But finally the last June of all drew near—the June when we must meet and decide to marry or lose both income and principal of \$50,000. Mother and I would be sadly pinched without this money, and I couldn't help letting my thoughts wander to my distant cousin nor refrain from wondering whether he might be possible after all to— I ended by writing to ask him whether there was not some way in which we might arrange to divide the money and cheat the friendly cats without having to take each other for better or worse. In reply Cousin Philip wrote that he was sorry to say that he could see none. 'I appreciate your feelings perfectly,' he concluded, 'at being obliged to marry somebody you never saw. I feel the same myself, though, of course, in a less degree, being a man. But I don't want to give up this money any more than I suppose you do. Why not let us meet, without prejudice, as the lawyers say? It's just possible that we might fall desperately in love with each other at first sight. In that event, everything would be all right. If we don't, there will be no harm done, and anyway, if we decline to become lovers, we may at least become friends.'"

"There was something cold-blooded about this, but there was something sensible about it, too. The more I thought of it, the more I liked the idea. So at last I wrote that I should spend June at the place designated in the will and should hope to meet him there."

"But as the time drew near I could not make up my mind to go to be inspected like an animal for sale. Finally, when just about to throw up the whole thing, a brilliant idea struck me—at least, I considered it brilliant then. I would take my friend Nell Jones along with me and would change identities with her. She should be Bessie Williams and I Nell Jones. Then, if I found Philip impossible, I could easily get away."

"So did I. We went to the springs, and as mother wrote her name and mine and Nell's on the register, we saw the names of Philip Stacy and Frank Thomas, both of St. Louis, written just above them in the handwriting I had grown to know so well. 'Philip's got a friend with him, too,' said mother, meditatively. 'You both evidently need some one to help you through.'"

"We met, of course, almost at once, and, strange to say, we all became very chummy. Nell was always ready for fun and I feeling entirely at ease in my assumed character, could afford to be as jolly as any one. So, in spite of the fact that Cousin Philip was undoubtedly the ugliest man living, we got on famously together for two weeks."

"Of course, we soon paired off. Philip had to be especially nice to Nell—whom he supposed to be me—and Nell, acting for me, had to be especially nice to Philip. This left me—the real Nell—to Philip's friend, a big, broad, six-footer, as handsome as poor Philip was ugly."

"As I said, for two weeks we got on famously. Then the situation became strained. The fact was—I can confess it now—Cupid began shooting blindly and hit everyone of us. I had found that Philip's heart was really golden, but, all the same, I couldn't quite make up my mind to his other qualities. Besides I found my fancy straying altogether too persistent to his friend, Frank Thomas. Nell, on the other hand, seemed to appreciate golden hearts at their full value, and Philip, truth to tell, seemed mightily taken with her. Under the circumstances, however, she could not but feel certain that he was thinking more of Uncle Jim's fortune than he was of the real Nell, and, of course, she didn't want to be courted under false pretenses."

"Philip, too, was acting in the strangest way. He was in love with Nell, really, but in love—in love I was sure of it—yet he seemed to me to be in love with me. Actually, the man would join me when I knew he was longing to join Nell. I hoped that he could understand his own reasons for feeling this way; I'm sure I could. Anyway, he and Nell managed to make each other tolerably miserable, each anxious to go forward, but hanging back."

# GRAND INTRODUCTORY SALE! BARRIOS DIAMONDS

The finest imitation on earth. The nearest approach to genuine diamonds ever discovered. They have all the fire, flash, sparkle and brilliancy of old mine gems and stand all the tests of acids, heat, alkali, etc. So real are these stones that experts have been deceived, pawnbrokers victimized and jewelers fooled. Barrios Diamonds positively defy detection.

### COME SEE HOW THEY SPARKLE.



## Important.

Do not confound Barrios Diamonds with Rhinestones, Bolivia, Montana, Alaska, La Perla, Transvaal, Sumatra, or, in fact, any other imitation diamonds, no matter what the name may be.

Barrios Diamonds are the only stones which will positively retain their brilliancy. All other imitations are made of chemicals, cheap glass or paste.

Barrios Diamonds have never before been sold in your city. Any one who may have sold you imitation diamonds as Barrios has grossly deceived and cheated you.

## INTRODUCTORY SALE COMMENCES TO-DAY.

The most magnificent and beautiful collection of imitation precious stones ever shown in this city. Rings, Brooches, Pendants, Earrings, Scarfpins, Cuff Buttons and Locketts, the equal in appearance of pieces that cost from \$25.00 to \$175.00. At this Special Sale—\$1.50 to \$4.50.

You must see and examine these beautiful jewels to appreciate their magnificence and splendor. Every stone has all the exquisite beauty and brilliancy of a genuine diamond. The mountings are heavy gold filled, carefully finished, and exact copies of original pieces worth hundreds of dollars. Every stone warranted to retain its brilliancy forever.

### Barrios Diamonds Defy Detection.

Examine these stones carefully; they are accurately cut and perfectly polished. Every stone guaranteed to be indestructible and to retain its beauty and brilliancy forever. You cannot tell them from the genuine.

**Our Guarantee**—We guarantee each and every stone to retain its brilliancy forever and the mountings to give perfect satisfaction. We will give \$10,000.00 to any charitable institution if it can be shown that we ever refuse to replace a stone that does not give satisfaction. In fact, they can be washed and cleaned like ordinary diamonds.

# HAYDEN BROTHERS.

**ECONOMICAL HOUSEKEEPERS**  
 USE  
**Walter Baker's**  
**Cocoa and Chocolate**  
 Because they yield THE MOST and BEST FOR THE MONEY

The Finest Cocoa in the World  
 Costs less than One Cent a Cup  
 Our Cocoa Recipe Book, and free, will tell you how to make Fudge and a great variety of dainty dishes from our Cocoa and Chocolate.

**Walter Baker & Co. Ltd.**  
 ESTABLISHED 1828  
 WORCESTER, MASS.  
 40 HIGHEST AWARDS IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

"Of course."  
 "Then, Miss Williams—Bessie," he cried, turning on Nell. "I have deceived you. I am not Philip Stacy at all; I am really Frank Thomas, and Thomas there is the real Stacy; but I love you with all my heart; will you marry me?"

"As I said, Nell was quick-witted. Her face lit up with a glorified smile. 'And I am not Bessie Williams, either,' she cried. 'I am really Nell Jones; there is the real Bessie; and I will marry you with all my heart.'"

"Frank and I looked at each other—no, I mean the real Philip and I looked at each other. 'Why?' I gasped, in a low tone that the real Frank could not hear; 'why, you can't be Philip Stacy. Uncle Jim told me he was hideous.'"  
 "Philip started. 'Uncle Jim?' he cried. 'Why, it was he who told me that you were homely as a mud fence—with a heart of gold, but—'"  
 "For a moment we stared at each other. Then almost together we ejaculated, disgustedly: 'Sold.'"

"I telegraphed the news to our lawyer and received the following reply:  
 'Dear Miss Williams: I congratulate you and Mr. Stacy on your engagement, which I do not doubt was entirely a matter of true affection. Before anything becomes irrevocable, however, I feel it my duty to tell you a secret that has been carefully kept from you all these years. Your Uncle Jim's will contained a codicil referring to a certain sealed paper which he provided was to be opened at the end of three years. The codicil, however, refused to permit so important a document to remain sealed and it was opened forthwith and spread upon the records, where you or anyone else could have seen it at any time if you had cared to look. It changes the will as you know it in one respect only. It throws out the friendly cats and divides the fortune equally between you and your cousin at the end of three years whether you marry or not. I feel it my duty to remain silent all this time, but now I must speak out.'"  
 "Yours very truly,  
 HENRY MARON."

"When I read this I knew at last what I had never been able to understand before—how Uncle Jim could have been willing to have done under the first version of the will if Philip and I hadn't found our admirers in each other."

**FAMILY PROBLEM IN ARMY**  
 Philippine Service a Serious Proposition for Married Officers.  
 MUCH MOVING ABOUT SINCE THE WAR  
 Objections to Taking Wives and Children to the Orient and Also to Leaving Them at Home—Baby's Trip Around the World.

Traveling to the Philippines has now become quite a part of the life of an army officer. Under the present plan of giving a regiment two years in the archipelago and four years in the States, the average officer will make about seven trips to the Philippines in the course of an army career, between graduation at West Point and retirement on reaching the age of 64.

One little fellow, 26 months old, who went out on a recent trip of Sheridan, first saw the light in Jolo, where a white baby proved a great curiosity. He went back to the land of his fathers by the Suez route, and now, still short of the age of 2, is completing his tour of the globe. The little lad is destined to make these trips back and forth many times with the fortunes of the army. It is the same with other children of the service.

much of my family to bring them with me."  
 "Sometimes a family gets out there to find its head assigned to so disagreeable a place that the wife and children have to be left to exist by themselves in Manila, and there it is often about as hard to reach them as if they were in the States. If anything happens to an officer his family is 10,000 miles from home and home consolation is out of the question."

Houses are scarce in Manila. Everything that civilized people want is high. Some men say they cannot afford to leave their families at home, thus dividing their salary between two establishments; but the officer already quoted wrote that he could not afford to take his family with him.

The women on board a transport discuss little else, according to reports, than the prospects of life in the Philippines. One of the stock conundrums of the transports is this:  
 "Which looks better: Manila over the stern, or San Francisco over the bow?"  
 There is a kind of fatalism inbred in army service, and this in a measure pervades wives and families as expressed in the saying: "We like to go wherever we are sent," but back and behind all this the human element comes into view, on close acquaintance, with its fondness for the fatherland.

There are as many answers to the domestic question which each order to the Philippines involves as there are family conditions. The small baby usually holds the family back in the States. Manila offers only condensed milk.

School age children prove another argument for having the family home retained in America. Some wives, however, go out with their husbands, intending to return a little earlier than the men are able, while many officers who now go out alone expect their families to join them later.

**Much Moving About.**  
 The regular army officer learns to live, and to like to live, in places that the general public would not consider desirable. His life at home is a preparation for Philippine experiences such as few Americans ever get.  
 Some officers boast of furniture and personal effects stored in nearly every army post from the Missouri river to the Presidio, and soon this western limit will be ex-

tended to the 20th meridian east of Greenwich. Their heavier woollens need protection against enemies in such a range of temperature more versatile than the familiar moth miller of the Atlantic coast. Moving becomes the regular experience of the army family, and its children need little school-book instruction in geography, political or physical. Before the Spanish war the terms of service at different posts were relatively long, but the changes of the last few years have been rapid and upsetting.

"We have lived, in the last three years, in as many posts," is the mournful comment of the army wife, as she relates the successive changes which the vicissitudes of the service have brought to pass. Prudent husbands tell of the enormous cost of moving, and the inadequacy of the government's allowance in mileage and freight. Officers of the regiment which was stationed for fourteen years at Vancouver barracks, before the Spanish war, relate that they have lived in five places since their return from the Philippines, two and a half years ago. Benjamin Franklin said that three moves were as bad as a fire.—New York Sun.

**'PHONE GIRLS CATCHING ON**  
 Surprise Their Callers by Gradually Drifting from "Ought" to "Naught."

The telephone girl is progressive. For years and years in repeating a number which had a zero included she would always call it "ought." For instance, if a subscriber called for "twenty-four thirty," the telephone girl would repeat "two-four-three-ought." When some subscriber had a little feeling of compassion for the king's English, which was being so cruelly murdered right before his ears, would gently object and say, "Two-four-three-naught," the girl would again repeat, "ought," and tell the subscriber to "look in the dictionary."

But the world moves. The "naught" is commencing to be realized in the most exclusive telephone circles. It could not be expected that the telephone girl would surrender all at once. She has fought that "ought" too long to drop it immediately, and thus confess that she has been wrong. So, while she dropped the "ought," she has taken up "o" instead. So now she re-

**Not Hungry**  
 when you should be means disordered nerves, which will lead to nervous prostration. Dr. Miles' Nervine is guaranteed to benefit you or money refunded. Book on nerves sent free.  
 DR. MILES' MEDICAL CO., Elkhart, Ind.