

That Man That Knows It All.

Washington Post:

Sing hey, the man who knows it all! Who hasn't heard him prate? He loves old stories so well...

Sing hey, the man who knows it all! There's nothing can rejoice His soul, unless it forth may call...

UNCLE PAT.

CHAPTER I.

DALCHOISIE.

"It's an abominable nuisance!"

The speaker, old Pat Monsell, was one of those occasional men one "honors at sight."

"Ah!" said Mr. Monsell, with a sigh that was almost a groan; "you see, Dawleigh, you don't quite know—"

"Well, he is coming, of course. The more the merrier. By the way, who is this Harry Wynter?"

"Who is he? He is a cousin of these Hanovers! the old man blurted out with an intonation which indicated a different feeling from the half-humorous discontent with which the conversation had hitherto been carried on."

"For a moment the shaggy white eyebrows were drawn down in a heavy frown, and there was a stern light in the old man's black eyes, but it was for a moment only, and Mr. Monsell refrained from any more definite answer than might be gathered from these vague intimations."

"He is a harmless old plutocrat if ever there was one," Dawleigh ran on, "and to tell you the truth, I feel at times a sort of sneaking pity for him. Poor beggar! What's the good of millions, after all, if you have neither heart nor health to enjoy them?"

"No! I don't think he does enjoy them!" said Mr. Monsell, reflectively. "However, we were speaking of Wynter. It is a curious fact, Dawleigh, that nowadays young fellows who can do nothing else take to the Art business, just as the old ones take to the wine business."

"He is a harmless old plutocrat if ever there was one," Dawleigh ran on, "and to tell you the truth, I feel at times a sort of sneaking pity for him. Poor beggar! What's the good of millions, after all, if you have neither heart nor health to enjoy them?"

"Yes! Calf love, of course, but there was no mistake about it. No mistake at all, Dawleigh," and Mr. Monsell repeated the last words with a grim smile of amusement, as he noticed a wrinkle of annoyance on his companion's face.

"Is he as rich as his golden cousin?" asked Dawleigh. "Four hundred a year, all told! I've known, Dawleigh, I have observed that more young fellows go to the devil on that sum than on any other!"

"It has been done on me, sir, I assure you. Still, when it comes to marrying on it, City office, Camberwell stucco—"

"That! tut! Fanny will never want!" rejoined Monsell, quickly. "I shall take care of that. It is not the money, and I am not sure it is the man, but I—the fact is, I can't explain it to you, Dawleigh. As I said before, there are complications, but I don't like the match, and I don't care about these two coming here, but I could not help myself. How on earth could I know these Hanovers were here till I came? Then after the rumpus at the rectory your aunt took the matter in hand and so the girl is coming."

"The dear girl, Chief. Come now, you know it is the dear girl," said Mr. Dawleigh, as the old man rose and paced the room uneasily. "So it is, Dawleigh," said the old man, gladly, a look of tenderness brightening his rugged face. "I wish it had been any other place but this!"

"I daresay she will be glad enough to be quit of the Rectory for a time, sir," said Dawleigh. "She would have been happy enough there but for Mrs. Baldeu," rejoined Monsell, sharply. "I might have known there would be a rumpus some day or other. Any girl of spirit was bound to break out sooner or later. This is the result!"

"A very proper and natural result too. I can't understand why it upsets you. Why, as long as I can remember you have been in the habit—an exasperating habit, let me tell you, Chief—of raving about this Fanny. To my certain knowledge you carry her letters in your baocoy-pouch, and fetch 'em out when you think I am not looking; and now that she is coming—"

her in Edinburgh and she comes on here the next day."

"Bless the man! D'ye mean to say you are not going to meet her yourself?" "Well, I had not thought of it. You see she travels with her maid, and—"

"Of course you must go and meet her. Your parson brother and his wife ought to have seen to this. Upon my word, everything seems to have been muddled at the Rectory."

"I'll see to it, Miss Dawleigh. I'll see to it," said Mr. Monsell, nervously. "To be sure you will. I want to know the rights of this engagement. Oh, it's no use asking you about it," she ran on, with good-natured contempt. "Men don't understand these things. I shall ask Fanny herself. But you can tell me about young Wynter."

"I've just been telling Dawleigh, ma'am, that your friend, Miss Joanna Hanover, used to take an interest in him."

"Many years ago, I should think," she interposed, sharply. "Well, of course, it was before Miss Joanna was in Camden Town. Before she was called to the exalted duties and splendors of Upper Brook street."

"Miss Dawleigh stood looking abstractedly at her nephew. She was a very shrewd-sighted little lady, indeed, and this reference to Miss Joanna suggested some interesting points of speculation."

"I will wait for the rest till Fanny comes," she said at last with a brisk little nod, and a sharpening of the combative look about her mouth. "As you are going by the first train you will have to make an early start, so I'll wish you a good night. Everything in apple-pie order."

"I am off, too," said Mr. Dawleigh, with a yawn. "Good night, Chief. Another peep at the secrets of that baocoy-pouch, and you will have pleasant dreams."

As soon as Mr. Dawleigh left him, the old gentleman proceeded to light another pipe—first of all, however, removing Miss Fanny's last letter from his tobacco-pouch for re-perusal.

"Dear Uncle Pat,—Hurray! It is all settled! Susan and I start on Wednesday morning, and Harry will meet us at the Waverley station. I am so glad, for since the 'row' I can't bear the Rectory. Everything is changed. It was awful while it lasted; but I could not help it. Mrs. Baldeu went on like a mad woman about that horrid Mr. Marshall, till at last I gave her a bit of my mind, and said that Harry was worth a dozen of her Marshalls. Then she lost her head entirely, and called me—"

"what do you think? 'Nobody's child!' Never would she have dared say that if you had been there. Never! I felt dreadfully ill and cold. I believe all my color must have jumped on to Harry's cheeks, for he came up flaming, and told her to her face she was a cruel woman. Fanny that from Harry! Then he kissed me—and we are engaged. Oh, dear, I wish you had been there; you are so strong and good. I remember how you used to carry me about as if I was a baby in that fever. But I am coming! I am coming! My heart's in the Highlands already!"

"Your loving FANNY."

"P. S.—Dear uncle Pat, you must tell me what Mrs. Baldeu meant." He conned it over till his pipe was finished, and then sat gazing abstractedly at the folded paper. There was very deep trouble in the old man's face. Fanny's proposed visit to Dalchoisie filled him with vague alarm and anxiety. The half-humorous reticence he had expressed to emotion which he could not wholly control into silence. The one happiness of his life (for years now it had filled his world with the brightness and gladness of a dream) seemed at last to be slipping away from him, and old age lay before him, solitary, cheerless, without a gleam of sunshine.

And yet what could he do? Nothing but hope. Hope and try to persuade himself that he was suggesting the danger he foresaw.

With a heavy sigh Mr. Monsell returned the letter to his pouch, and lit his bedroom candle. On his way upstairs he looked into her bedroom. Everything was as trim and neat, as sweet and cozy, as a woman's hand could make it.

He parted the lace curtains and threw open the window. Late as it was, the daylight of the northern summer still lingered in that tender luminous circle along the hills which is called the weather gleam—a pure grey green brightness between the dark ridges and the dull statuary clouds. Here and there a thin film of vapor floated motionless, and the eye rested on it as on some happy isle in some celestial sea.

Before him rose the black ridge line of Schiehallion, with its great quartz cone islanded in the tranquil light, and beside the peak a solitary star shone clear and silvery.

He looked up at the stern peak with a momentary feeling of earnestness, then laughed at his own foolishness, and the clear solitary star shone tranquilly in the weather gleam.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING MR. MONSELL.

The Monsells were known as a dead-level family. There had been doctors, lawyers, clergymen, county squires, authors, and university professors among them, but until the advent of this Patrick never a Monsell stepped out of the dead-level rut. In Patrick, however, the dormant dash and devility of the family seemed to have concentrated.

His mother was Irish, and that might have had something to do with it; but then, again, his brother Jack, the Parson at Peckham (the living was an appendage advowson belonging to the family), glided into the dead-level business with conservative inertia.

Pat was a wild boy at school, where he fought himself into lasting friendships, and still wilder at Oxford, where he reversed the traditions of the family, and became known as "Mad Monsell." According to accepted history his escapades had been bad enough to earn him the title ten times over; but how far they had been planned as a protest against certain undergraduate grievances or by way of reprisal for certain wrongs, will never be known. Those two uneasy ladies at Peckham—Parson Jack's wife and her sister Mrs. Baldeu—had so enlarged and colored their eyes for the benefit of their hearers that poor Pat shared with Napoleon and other distinguished personages the honor of owning a legend.

Though no one could tell what he had or had not done, every one knew that he had been sent down, and that forthwith the Wanderlust had seized him and hurried him over half the globe. He had tracked the lion's spoor on the snowfields of the Himalayas; he had bought blue and scarlet fish from Cingalese fishermen perched far out at sea on the outriggers of their catamarans; he had run down wapti on the sandy plains of the North Platte; he had sipped mate with Santa Coloma in those fiery outbreaks in the Banda Islands; he had sledged under the weird glow of the midnight sun. If it so happened that any old schoolfellow had come to grief, if any friend had had the misfortune to get on the shady side of the street, Pat was sure to be there or thereabouts to help him, not only with his purse (for he was a rich man), but with all his heart and soul.

But Woman, the ideal Woman, was his weak point. In his reckless and uncompromising championship for the sex the knight of La Mancha was nowhere.

Came back to London at forty every whit as young as he had left it—just as indomitably energetic, just as ready to be up and doing something for somebody. There was plenty to do. They were hard times. Want and misery crept and covered on all sides of them. He could not be idle, so he took to what has since become the fashionable pastime of slumming.

He gave his money freely, and no doubt was as freely taken in, but he had the satisfaction of knowing that he had at least snatched one family from destitution and death.

There they were—three of them, man, wife and child, refined people, literally dying of starvation in a poor garret, within half a mile of the rectory gates.

And this was their story. A younger brother, clerk in the great house of Hanover & Co., had been accused of embezzlement. Now old Hanover, a "down" sort of man, whose soul was in the city and city ways, had never liked this young Burford. He was the "Idle Apprentice"—a fellow who liked to out the dash and ruffle it with others who could juggle ten times his money in their pocket; a fellow who would dress up in the latest mode, ride in the row, talk of his sporting club, and flutter his race-book in your face. In short, according to Mr. Hanover's idea, he was travelling the well-worn road to ruin in the most approved fashion.

Burford's father, a Manchester man, had started the very business that Hanover had built up into such gigantic proportions. He was poor and dreamy; Hanover was rich, unscrupulous and energetic. Burford sowed the seed and Hanover reaped the grain. Some said old Burford had been badly used. Others that Hanover had long squared any balance by having borne so long with the Idle Apprentice.

At any rate Hanover was glad of this chance of getting rid of him. Doubly glad when the miserable inquiry disclosed the startling fact that his own and only son—the man in trust—had not only winked at young Burford's defalcations, but was actually married to his sister!

Old Hanover, the man of action, grasped his nettle at once. Absolutely and unconditionally they must abide by his decision, or the law must take its course.

Burford must be sent about his business; the rest of the family must clear out of London; and as for the recalcitrant son he too should go to the right about. No half measures for Hanover here! The offender should be sent straight off to Bermuda, and there stay at the tyrant's will and pleasure belonging to the house. He must go with-out his wife, too, for there must be nothing to hamper him in recovering his position. Moreover, there should be no non-sensical leave-taking—no scenes—no stipulations. The thing must be stamped out then and there.

So utterly cowed was the young man by this burst of parental anger, so afraid of being out of for ever from London, from his Club, and from all that made life so delightful, that he yielded without a struggle.

Never was so abject a cur! Within twenty-four hours he actually sailed for the West with no more leave-taking than a letter preaching patience and submission to his young wife.

The Idle Apprentice was hustled off to Australia, where he shortly died, and the dispersal was completed by the elder Burford (who had already pinched himself in keeping the prodigal from utter ruin) taking his small household to the village of Beckenham.

And then formally proposed a separation. To such a length did he carry his persecution that when the child was born they determined he should not know of it.

And he never did! There was no difficulty in keeping it from him, and the death of the unfortunate mother, which happened some ten days after, put an end to his hostility.

Now as the young wife had never hinted one word about the expected baby to her husband, intending to keep it as a tender surprise and an irresistible living appeal to the grandfather, it so happened that the poor soul was buried there at Beckenham without the father or grandfather having the slightest notion of the child's existence.

Burford took charge of it with the solemn injunction that it was to be kept from old Hanover. The father—in spite of his weakness, his selfishness, his desertion, she loved him still—the father would return and claim it, but still then no one must know of it.

Burford's resentment leaped with the dying mother's wishes. He had never taken to young Hanover; events had proved him a poor, spiritless egotist, without even sufficient pluck to defend either himself or his wife. And now the wife lay dead and cold, the tie that bound them to the Hanovers was broken forever. No Hanover should ever have the child! None! None! They had been the bane of the Burfords from first to last. Now let them rot!

Accordingly, with all possible speed, the baby was sent to an out-of-the-way farmhouse in Essex. Burford sold his scanty furniture, returned to London, and settled down under the assumed name of Pentland.

And a tough job Mr. Pentland had of it! He could point in a nigging way at got a nigging price for his productions. What cared he, though, so long as his wife came back from her little pilgrimages to that Essex farm-house and could tell him that the baby was growing and growing and becoming the very image of her mother.

When Lever seized him the wife took up the bread-winning, and then began the struggle in grim earnest. No one would have recognized Burford's wife in the shabby, hollow-eyed woman that tramped about with the poor sketches. She never despaired, though; she had abundant faith and patience. As long as little Fanny thrived it did not matter; and, with the proud obstinacy that belongs to hypersensitive people, they sought help from no one.

Then came the dark hour when she could tramp no longer, when there was no food or fire in the house, when the trembling lips could scarcely cry patience. Humbly and earnestly she prayed for help; and lo! one fine morning, in stalked this big, burly deliverer, and her prayers were heard. The papers were tearing with hard cases, but Pat Monsell firmly believed this particular case to be the most pitiful that had ever come to light. In a couple of days they were in good, clean, airy lodgings; and there, as regularly as the sun, came the supplies for the day; not merely the necessary beef and mutton, but what is so inexpressibly dear to the invalid, fresh fruit and flowers; and, perhaps the most precious of all, the strong, rugged face of their big, breezy, bustling saviour.

Small wonder they took fresh life and heart! It was during convalescence, when an extraordinary friendship had already begun to spring up between the two men, that Monsell heard the story and gnashed his teeth at it.

Young Hanover have the child, after that! Never! And a huge drop splashed from the eyes of the recording angel, as for form's sake he inscribed Pat's mighty protestation. No! What they would do would be to take the child to some quiet country place, and there bring her up as Pentland's own. Why, happily thought! he was building a yacht at Gosport. There was a large, red brick cottage at Stok's Bay, with a capital garden, to be let; thither they could go, and Pentland could look after the embellishments and fittings of the boat.

So, with another turn of fortune's wheel, the Pentlands found themselves one sunny June established in snug quarters overlooking the Solent. The wife fetched the child. Pentland arranged a studio after his own heart, and Mr. Monsell bounded into all the new arrangements with red hot sympathy. He knew no more about art than the man in the moon, but he would sit and smoke and nod away for an hour at a stretch while his friend discoursed learnedly on the merits of this school and that. And, sympathy—his veritable inspiration had fallen on Pentland. His canvases began to reveal possibilities of actual genius; to Monsell they were marvels of art; and Pat, too, felt the happy quiver of the place. He no longer chafed at a humdrum life—no longer itching to go a gadding; he became domesticated, worked like two men in the garden, and began to take an uncommon interest in the child.

Baby Fanny made a lodging for herself in his heart, from which, as long as that heart beat, she was not to be ejected. He was head nurse as well as head-gardener, and the child would be quiet with him when she would be quiet with no one else.

All these matters were discussed at Parson Jack's rectory with no little heart-burning by the ladies. Mrs. Baldeu was especially bitter. But what cared Pat Monsell? He was happy—when he came to think of it, he wondered when he had been so happy. Then, suddenly, without warning, the end came. No one quite knew how it happened.

He had parted with them one evening at Southampton on his way to London. The Tern was to drop back with the tide and land them at Stokes Bay. An awkward breeze sprang up though, and in the oily darkness that overtook them the yacht's boat was capsized as they were landing. Little help on such a night as that! All that mortal man could do Captain Boyd did. He flashed lights—he threw life-belts—he even beached the yacht in his frantic endeavors to give some help—but poor Pentland was the only soul who managed to reach the shore alive.

The shock killed him, though. And Monsell arrived just in time the next morning to take his hand and hear his last words.

Simple enough they were! "God bless you! Take care of Fanny!" Then Monsell went out and stared vacantly at the blue sea. Of late his life had been so interwoven with theirs that he wondered he was standing there alive. The

soft round hills of the Isle of Wight got hazier and hazier when he recalled the poor fellow's simple life, his misfortunes, his brave wife's devotion, and their tragic end. It did him good to repeat aloud the uncomplaining words in which they had spoken of their own troubles and of their undying gratitude to him.

In an hour he went in with his mind and purpose set. He would break up his home of bitter memories and leave England at once. Baby Fanny should be his life charge. He would place her at the Rectory with his brother and his wife, where she would be tenderly reared as Pentland's child, and where he could watch her growth.

A message flashed up to Parson John, and Parson John came down. "John," said he to him, "don't talk much, but listen. You are a good fellow at heart, and Mary is a good woman. I want you to take charge of Pentland's child. Understand, I adopt the child and it will be my business to provide for her. I shall give you 2400 a year, and the only condition I make is that no inquiry shall be made about her parents. Tears is the saddest story in the world. Let it be buried with them. Ask yourself if she agrees. If she does, she must get a good-tempered nurse and I will bring the child to the Rectory myself. Attend the funeral with me to-morrow morning and wire Yes or No when you get back."

Mrs. John did not hesitate long. They were not rich, and here were five hundred solid reasons why she should accept the trust and respect the conditions. Apart from this, though, her womanly instincts had been touched. She was sensible, and when her John came back with bated breath told his story, from that moment her heart yearned towards the forlorn babe.

"Tis true she prepared smart little speech for Mr. Patrick, but was, about a week after the funeral, he did come—at the very first sight of the big, sick man, with the sleeping child in his arms—the words died on her lips and instinctively held out her hands.

"Thank you, Mary," he said, giving her the child with secret elation in his heart at this good augury. "Thank you both. John has told you my wish. We will go to you lawyer to-morrow and make the arrangements secure. You see, be under no anxiety as to the future; remember, write regularly—once a week at least—and tell me how she is getting on."

He came the evening before he started again on his wandering answer the nurse and saw little Fanny in bed. Then he jumped into a hansom and went away to catch the Continental express—en route for Brindisi.

At that moment the sun was westering over Bermuda, and young Hanover, sick of his exile, was wondering if much longer he would have to wait for a man-of-war to give him permission to return to the delights of civilization—once a free man.

CHAPTER I.
CONCERNING MISS FANNY.
Mrs. John kept her true loyalty. She devoted all her energies to her charge, and to Mr. Monsell's satisfaction and delight, little Fanny there appeared filled the hitherto sombre Rectory with new life and light.

Mrs. Baldeu was Mrs. John's counsellor and guide in all nursery triles. She had married two husbands and was a lady of immense experience. Mrs. Baldeu's sympathy was only equalled her curiosity. She dearly wanted to know rights about the child and whether Fanny's money was to go clean out of the way. But Mrs. John was waxy. She kept lively remembrance of the particular sin which her bread was buttered, and moreover, she could say, and say truthfully that she knew nothing but what Mr. Pat had told her.

When Miss Fanny, at the age of four, chose to be very ill with mites, these two good ladies wore themselves with watching and nursing. So ill was that Uncle Pat had to be summoned, happily, when he arrived the danger was ir, but he took his turn at the nursing, when the little patient was able to sit up! filled the nursery with toys. It was favorite pastime with Miss Fanny to take him out every animal in the big N's Ark, from the elephant to the mousetail wonderful impersonations of the law with a string tied to his coat for a tail, d his extraordinary squeak when this pulled, sent her into paroxysms of delirium.

To the child there was we like Uncle Pat, and Uncle Pat knew nd rejoiced. These screams of laughter and the old man's never tiring playless set Mrs. Baldeu thinking more and more. At last a happy thought struck her. She had been taking a look at Fanny's face child lay asleep, when suddenly starting idea flashed upon her.

"Mary!" she whispered, pointing to the child with drastic intensity, "do you see it?"

"See what, dear?" palps Mrs. John. "Her mouth! If that's a Monsell mouth, what is it?"

"Good gracious!" exhaled Mrs. John, leaning over the child. She looked and she gazed. She turned her head this way and that way. She peered into the little sleepface with its small red lips half open, and Mrs. Baldeu held the candle over her like a second Cassandra.

In the midst of this in ted Mr. Patrick himself. The strangestitude of the two ladies alarmed him.

"Is she—is she worse?" asked, in an eager whisper. Whereupon the two ladies, caught in flagrant delicto, jumped up. "We were noticing quietly she sleeps," stammered Mrs. J, as she took refuge in a chair. "My dear Mary!" said Mrs. Baldeu, afterwards, "the likeness is imitable!—and did you notice, my dear, that a strange look he had when like if she was worse? Mary! take your word for it." And Mrs. Baldeu flared sentence with a series of six grey nods which made her sister vager uneasy. Once on this mysterious and bawling track Mrs. Baldeu pursued her inquiry with inexhaustible ingenuity, but though it was easy to accumulate questions, it was impossible to obtain a most roof. In course of time it was covered, and Mrs. Baldeu made it shockily true, that Fanny was a dunce, that Fanny was rebellious, that Fanny had books, shirked her lessons, and rnlidit. She needed restraint and scine, and