

# BLESSINGS OF JIM ROBBINS

## How He Distinguished Himself Under an Inspiration.

### Old Friends Had a Pleasant Visit—The Girls Aunt Lived Down by Palmyra.

Spencer Gifford was quite too ready to admit that he was just an average sort of fellow. That was really all he cared to be. What he could do he did fairly well, but he did just as little as was decently possible. At college he had gone in a little for athletics, and made a very creditable record, but he shrank from anything really brilliant. He was a good scholar, too, but was quite willing to rank with the intellectual second raters. When he left college he went abroad and dawdled about in an aimless way, and came home with few impressions that he cared to mention. Then he went in for society, and there seemed to be reasonably contented. Society amused him and wasn't too exacting. Society coddled him; he was young, handsome, clever and rich.

And yet he would admit that he felt a little conscience stricken when Anna Goldie gravely asked him one day about his future hopes. There was a look in her eyes that he didn't like when he laughed off the query. It set him to thinking, and thinking was an occupation he rarely indulged in. Thinking almost disquieted him. He avoided Anna Goldie for a time, and found that was still more disquieting. And then just as he was thinking he would invite another talk with her on the original disquieting subject she suddenly went away. She went—they told him, to visit an invalid aunt in the interior of the state. She might be gone some time. It was more a visit of duty than of pleasure, and its continuance would depend altogether upon the failing health of the aunt. In what part of the state did Miss Goldie's aunt live? Somewhere near Palmyra.

Palmyra? That was where Jim Robbins lived. Good old Jim Robbins, whom he hadn't seen since his last college year. Jim was somebody down in Palmyra. Member of the legislature, or something. He saw Jim's name in the papers occasionally. Jim was a rising man. As the days wore along the desire to visit Jim grew upon him. He had a standing invitation to come down at any time. There was a pressing note in his desk of quite recent date in which he was told of the treat he was missing in not making the acquaintance of Jim's matchless wife and equally matchless girls. He wondered if Jim would know the abiding place of Anna Goldie's aunt. If he was a politician, he probably knew everybody. He decided to go down at once and make Jim a visit, and he wrote to him to that effect.

Then he went to the bank and called on his father. And while he was there his uncle Tom came in and the three were closeted for a long time in his father's private room. When they came out, his uncle Tom shook hands with him and patted him on the back in his usual hearty fashion. And his father shook hands with him in grave fashion, and both the elder men seemed highly elated. Spencer shook his head a little doubtfully as he left them. Then he braced up with a swift stiffening of his fingers and clinching of his hands and accelerated his pace. He was going to his rooms to fill his dress suit case for the visit to Jim.

He arrived at Palmyra early in the evening. He had meant to reach there in the afternoon, but the train was delayed. He hadn't told Jim just what day he would start, and so his old friend wasn't bothering over his non-appearance. Spencer concluded he would look Jim up in the morning. He went to the hotel and had his supper. After supper he strolled up to the clerk's desk and inquired about his friend.

"Oh, Jim Robbins?" cried the clerk. "Yes, yes. Jim is one of our leading citizens. Has a nice home up on the West hill. He's a great hustler, Jim is. Going to send him to the senate state next fall. Friend of yours?"

"Yes," said Spencer, "an old friend. Came down to visit him."

"Tell you what to do," said the clerk. "Jim is the chairman, toastmaster, whatever you call it, of the big banquet at Raymond hall tonight. It's a complimentary feed given in honor of Col. Jack Speed, who is home for a brief visit, and everybody, pretty much, is going. Col. Speed is our congressman, you know, and he's in high favor in Palmyra. Hon. Dwight Perkins from somewhere out west, one

of the big national lights of the house, is to be the speaker of the occasion, and they'll have plenty to eat and good music. Better go over."

A half hour later Spencer ascended the stairway of Raymond hall. He noticed a number of ladies in the crowd that steadily marched into the hall, and he was rather glad to find that the banquet was not to be of the usual political for men only character. At the head of the stairs he noticed a door standing open, and looking through into the brightly lighted ante-room he saw his old friend. The impulse was too strong to resist, and he passed in the doorway and held out his hand.

"What's the matter with Jim Robbins?" he laughingly called.

In an instant his friend's hand gripped his.

"Spencer, old man, so glad to see you!" He pushed Spencer off a little and held him there. "You are looking prime," he said. "And, by George! you are just in time." He laughed as he spoke, and looked at Spencer with such comical expression that it instantly recalled to the latter some amusing experiences of the dear old school days.

"What mischief are you up to?" he cried. "But, here, I'm in the way. Don't let me bother you. I'll see you in the morning." And he drew back and half turned toward the door.

"Hold on," cried Jim, with a plunge at him, "you don't get away from me tonight. You stay right here until I can properly dispose of you."

Hon. Jack Speed was seated at Jim's right and Spencer at his left, much to the latter's increased uneasiness. Then the banquet commenced, and for an hour the clatter and chatter continued without a break. Jim was as delightful as of yore, dividing his attention very equally between the guest of the evening and Spencer, but the latter's heart was filled with a vague distrust.

When the clatter finally ceased, Jim rapped on the table, and in a nice little speech told of the purpose of the banquet. He introduced the mayor, who briefly welcomed back Hon. Mr. Speed to Palmyra. Then Hon. Mr. Speed responded in a brisk speech, testifying to his delight in returning home to such friends and such a welcome, a sentiment which was greeted with loud applause. Then Jim rose again, with a crumpled telegram in his hand. He much regretted, he said, to be obliged to announce that Hon. Dwight Perkins could not be with them. A telegram he had just received announced a railway accident that blocked the road and held back Mr. Perkins, 60 miles away.

"Our regret, however," said Jim, "is somewhat mitigated by the fact that we fortunately have with us as an honored guest one of the most prominent of New York's young political and social leaders, Mr. Spencer Gifford, who will talk to us on the question of the hour."

As Jim sat down a patter of applause ran round the hall and the long lines of faces assumed an expectant expression.

"Remember your old debating triumphs," whispered the perfidious Jim, "and sail in."

Spencer gave him a horrible scowl as he rose to his feet. Then he turned to the auditors with a pleasant smile. He put his teeth together hard. He wouldn't be bluffed. And deep down in his soul he felt gratified that Jim, despite his consummate meanness, had confidence in him. Jim knew he wouldn't fluke. He would say a word or two and retire as gracefully as possible.

When Spencer, after an eloquent wind up, finally took his seat, the applause was vigorous and long drawn out, and Jim, his face flushed and his eyes sparkling, grabbed Spencer's hand under the table and squeezed it hard and said: "Great, my boy, great! You ought to get down on your bended knees to me for bringing you out."

When it was all over, Jim said: "We must get our coats and hunt up Minnie. Minnie is Mrs. Jim. She's a little jealous of you now. Don't make her more so. By the way, she is a young woman from your overgrown town in town tonight, and we'll have to escort her to her aunt's home. Know her? She's a Miss Anna Goldie."

A little later they were out in the open air, Anna walking with Spencer and Mr. and Mrs. Jim going ahead, that acute married dame having apparently sized up the situation.

"After hearing you this evening," said Anna softly, "I think this is the field you are fitted for."

There was a pause. They fell back a little farther.

"Do you know," he asked abruptly, "what it is that has awakened me?"

"No," she answered.

"It is love," he said.

He looked down at her. Her face was averted.

"Do you know what brought me down here? Do you know what carried me through that speech tonight?"

"No," she softly murmured.

"You?"

A half hour later he stopped Mrs. Jim as she excused herself to the two men smoking in the library.

"One moment," he said, "I want you to know that I had mentally promised your scamp of a husband a sound thrashing for the liberty he took with my name tonight, but I've found he blundered into doing me a favor. I'm going to forgive him. I've even gone so far as to bless him." He held out both hands. "Congratulate me, dear friends," he cried, with a radiant smile. "I'm a very happy and a very fortunate man."

And then he told them about Anna. —Cleveland Plain Dealer.

**Liszt's Feat of Memory.**  
In the July Century, William Mason, the veteran American musician, tells of a remarkable feat of memory performed by the composer Liszt:  
My friend knew Liszt very well, and having taken a fancy to a composition of mine, "Les Perles de Rosee," which was still in manuscript, he said: "Let me have it for publication. Dedicate it to Liszt. I can easily get Liszt to accept the dedication. I am going directly from here to Weimar, and will see him about it. At the same time, I will prepare the way for your reception later as a pupil."

Not long afterward I received a letter from my friend in which he told me that when he handed the music to Liszt, the latter looked at the manuscript, hummed it over, then sat down, and played it from memory. Then, going to his desk, he took a pen, and accepted the dedication by writing his name at the top of the title page. Encouraged by this I wrote a letter to Liszt, expressing my desire to become one of his pupils, and asking what my chances were. Unfortunately, I misinterpreted his reply, and received the impression that it amounted to a refusal; but at the same time he gave me a cordial invitation to attend the festival about to take place in Weimar in commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of Goethe's birth. I still have this letter, which is dated August 18th, 1849. Had I understood then that Liszt was ready to accept me as pupil, I should have taken up my residence at Weimar at once, instead of waiting until I learned my mistake, as I did during a call which I paid to Liszt nearly four years later.

**Beyond His Comprehension.**  
An Indian's respect for women increases a hundredfold after his visit to England. But he finds it difficult to reconcile himself to the low necked dress which society imposes upon women, nor does he understand the ethics of an English dance which affords a friend or stranger an opportunity to place his arm around the waist of a fair lady who happens to be the wife of another. And he finds neither rhyme nor reason in the rule of society which, while permitting a lady to drink with male friends, denies her the privilege of smoking. Above all, the Indian has a horror of the new woman. She has very properly been described as the "third sex."—A Hindoo in Universal Magazine.

**Outside and Inside Weather.**  
By Jessie M. Anderson.  
In the morning, when our eyes pop open early, very early,  
And we creep and peep to watch the sun arise  
If he's trying and a cloudy sky a-glowing,  
grim and surly,  
Has no streaming golden beams for our eyes—  
Why, then, lightly as a feather  
Must our spirits dance together,  
And our faces must be sunny all day long.  
For as fresh as highland heather  
We can make the inside weather  
When the outside seems to be so very wrong.

But if with the outdoor sunshine all the happy birds are singing,  
And the trees are budding in the glad, warm light,  
And the arbutus is peeping from its brown leaves tender keeping,  
And the face of day is fresh and sweet and bright—  
Why, then, why not all together  
Make our faces match the weather?  
Fresh and sweet and bright and sunny all day long!  
For as fragrant as the heather,  
Is the charming outside weather,  
And the inside cannot be so very wrong.  
—From St. Nicholas.

**Better Stayed With Papa.**  
After the wreck of the steamer Florence S. one of the passengers of the ill-fated steamer informed a Nugget representative that the woman, Mrs. Stewart, who, with her 14-year-old daughter, was drowned as a result of the accident, had told him on the steamer that she had left her husband on account of trouble between them, and that she and her daughter were coming to Dawson to endeavor to make their own livings as best they could. The following which was clipped from the Vancouver Province, having originally appeared in a Victoria paper, substantiates the woman's statement to her fellow passenger. The article was headed "Wanted His Daughter," and was:  
"There was quite a scene on the C. P. N. wharf last evening just prior to the sailing of the steamer Amur for Vancouver on her way to Skagway. Among the passengers booked for the trip were Mrs. Stewart and her 14-year-

old daughter. Capt. John Stewart, the woman's husband, appeared on the dock and demanded his daughter, as a result of which, so he says, he was attacked and beaten by his son and Albert Virtue, a blacksmith, who was also going north on the steamer."

It is not known here what became of the son or the vulcanite, and as nothing was ever said about their being in company with the woman and girl, it is likely that they had stopped off at Skagway or were coming down on a scow.

The death of the little girl will be doubly sad to the father after such a parting.

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