

The Daily Astorian

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THE MAN WHO KNEW MEN.

A Character Sketch.

Mr. Jonas Fitzbaron was a man who "knew men." He knew them with a sir, after the fashion of those prompt, peremptory people who are logic proof and demonstration blind, and on whom any other person's experience or knowledge has no more effect than rain on a duck's back. What they know, sir, they know—and there's an end on't.

Mr. Jonas—as we will take leave to call him—was at the head of a flourishing manufacturing business in Boston. He was short, stout, and sixty. Originally a slender youth, he began to accumulate flesh when he was near forty, and before his half century mile post was turned he could fill the belt of an ideal Santa Claus, with what his sons irreverently styled his "bay-window." At first he was proud of his increasing weight, as all men are until it comes to be a burden—as though size were synonymous with some scientific principle of fat when one walks, an indication of high condition. But his two hundred pounds so weighed him down that he was often heard to say, when mopping his brow and puffing for breath after unusual exertion, that he hoped his spiritual body wouldn't weigh over a hundred and thirty; for Mr. Jonas was too sensible a man to believe in the cross of a vapory habitation as the soul's tabernacle on the other shore. He had a large head, covered with bristling gray locks, each particular hair standing at an upright angle peculiarly and individually its own. Under a massive forehead, marked by busy eyebrows of such thickness and length that the young chaps often coveted them for mustaches, yet a pair of small but very bright and steady blue-gray eyes—like the glint of steel where it has been newly cut off. His nose was a beak, arched and strong; and his mouth was made for either smiles or commands, with a capacity for ringing laughter one moment and a snap like a steel trap the next. His heart was warm with all sweet sympathies, yet subject to sudden surface chills—like the Gulf stream, where the iceberg drifts across it.

Mr. Jonas's strong point, as I have intimated, was his knowledge of men. In his own estimation, he could read them like so many books; and he was, therefore, very intolerant of errors of judgment in this particular in any of his subordinates. "You ought to have known better!" was his customary outbreak, when some of them had been deceived. "Didn't you see the man or hear him—or did you trust him by mail or telegraph? See a man, and not know he was a blank rascal!" he would sputter. "Bring 'em in to me, when you doubt! Let me read 'em! Do you suppose the Almighty is a liar or a bad penman? He writes characters on the face, and it's there to be read. You don't think, sir. Thinking is the hardest work that's done in the world, and the most commonly shirked, therefore. Now, I use my faculties. That's what they were given me for, as I understand it. I just put two and two together. Product, four. It's the simplest thing in the world."

"Don't talk to me of phrenology, or physiology, or any of the otherologies," he would say, in dwelling on his favorite theory. "Match men's heads with their deeds and characters, and you can upset all the lunatic theories in the world. Chaps with big heads, as bumpy as a cobblestone pavement,—shaped just like one of the phrenologists' plaster casts,—sell peanuts or tin snappers; while men with little craniums, as a billiard-ball, lead their party, or rule the market, or charm the senate. You stick one of the 'professors' with such examples, and he falls back on the 'quality of the brain.' Quality of fiddlesticks! All humbug! All humbug, sir!"

And, this point being settled beyond the chance of argument,—for not one of the Fitzbarons impugned and disposition would as soon think of arguing with Niagara that it doesn't fall as of disputing Mr. Jonas's dictum,—he would proceed:—"How do I know men, then? Why, sir, it's by all those things which, taken together, sir, we call the 'look' of a man. That tells. The eye, the mouth, the way in which the lines lie and the wrinkles cross, the nose, the hair, and the twist of the beard,—and the voice! Why, sir, let me hear a man talk in the next room,—in the dark,—and I can tell you whether he has come from a prayer-meeting, or is after your silver,—or both, by Jove, sir, hypocrite and knave together!"

"The laugh,—who was it that called laughter a true detective? Emerson? Well, he talks straighter sense than I suppose, but the class of mooning soft-shells, I hear prating about him. A laugh often blows a man's mask off right before your eyes, sir. He comes to me as a man; but I hear from his own mouth that he is a wolf, a fox, or a hyena. I always look to see if the safe is locked, and the invoice lists turned bottom side up, when I hear one of those forced, cold, automaton sort of chuckles the women men have." Then the simpleton snickers,—the laughing that is all done with the lips and teeth, like a dog's; the artificial laugh, that is always the same, like the striking of the clock,—look out for 'em all! But the merry laugh; the infectious laugh, child-like in its freedom and full of contagion; the great hearty laugh that uses the voice, the eyes, the muscles of the face, and the whole frame, and then doesn't seem fully expressed,—you can tie up to these.

"But this alone isn't enough. You can't always hear a man laugh or talk naturally. If you can, and put your eyes on to him besides you ought to know him."

"But what about the women?" once asked a curious friend.

"Women," he continued, almost in a whisper, looking furtively around as though he apprehended some one might be near,—a performance that threw a whole reflector-full of light on his domestic relations.

"Nobody understands women,—at least, more than one or two. Men pretend to, but they don't. All fustian, sir. Woman, considered generally, is a Sphinx,—a Sphinx, sir. I dare say the Maker knows the answer to the riddle, but he has never revealed it."

"And yet, as the old wit said, riddle though she be, men will never give her up," suggested his friend.

"Why, no, of course not. God bless her! Of course not!" Mr. Jonas was rather particular in the matter of jokes.

"The fact is," he continued, as though no interruption had occurred, "the women are not trained rightly. They have ever so many thousand years of subjection, of various sorts, back of them. We men have never given 'em a fair chance from Adam's time down to the scientific gentlemen have left us any Adam. We have acted as though we had a divine commission to settle her state for her on this earth, when we haven't a scrap of warrant for our assumption. Man is a living soul. Woman is a living soul. God made each for the other, not both for one. And in one or two hundred years more, when her rights as an individual soul are recognized, she may have a fair chance."

"But at present," continued Mr. Jonas, rousing from his unusual preachment, "women are trained to deceit and dissembling, and seeming to be and to feel other than they are or do, vastly more than men are. Much of it is innocent enough, perhaps; but it is bad—bad. She is taught to appear unconscious, when she is painfully otherwise; to look in different, when she is intensely interested; to seem pleased, when she is bored; and happy, when she has the heartache. If the command, 'Thou shalt not lie,' has more than one meaning, society, or the woman it makes, has much to answer for. I am a plain man, sir; and I say it is a blank sheet."

"Take the matter of social calls, and all the routine life of fashionable women—take the matter of health. Except the professional invalids and the chronic symptom-watchers, the women are all 'Pretty well,' or 'Quite well, I thank you.' Nonsense, sir! Stuff! No woman is quite well—not one in five hundred, sir. Some of them do complain enough for all the rest, but there's commonly reason for it. 'One old maid I know,' said the philosopher, a smile rippling over his rosy features, 'who never heard any body speak of illness that she hadn't experienced herself. She had been through, according to her tell, the whole line of ills that flesh is heir to; and the only way my wife could stop her sympathetic but unconscious lying was to go to talking about one even. That stumped her!' And Mr. Jonas laughed till his fat sides shook.

"Then take home life—domestic affairs, sir—how many women are really and thoroughly happy, out of those that look so, or try to? I am not quite blind, myself, and a woman friend of mine, who has been in the world a long time, and under no ends of roofs, with her keen eyes wide open, says there are just nine perfectly mated, utterly lover-like, ideally happy married couples out of five hundred that she knows; not even the finger-joint of a skeleton in their closets, you understand—no mere housekeeping or family-rearing partnerships, but homes of love with all that includes. Call it ten out of a hundred, and, before you doubt it, even, run up the list of your intimate acquaintances carefully, and you see what actresses society makes of its seeming-happy wives!"

"Why, when I was a young fellow, sir, thirty years ago, I knew intimately a lovely girl, with splendid capacities for enjoying and bestowing the best happiness this world affords, who married to please her family, not herself, though nobody knew it but the lord, himself, whom she frankly told, like the thoroughbred lady she was. Of course he took her, notwithstanding; we men always do. The day before the wedding, I met her; and she said to me, with almost her usual radiant smile, 'you are coming up to the sacrifice to-morrow aren't you?' It was like being stabbed with an icicle. After the ceremony, I ran up to tender congratulations with the rest, not one of whom knew or guessed her secret, she looked me through with her glorious, great, serene eyes,—looked farther away, both as to distance and time, than any glance I ever saw before,—and killed with the look the words of formal congratulation that were on my lips. I pressed her cold hand, and said only, 'God help you!' But she was an angel of a wife to the good man she married, while she lived, and carried the face of one through it all with a courage and sweetness that made me a worshiper of the sex. How is a man going to know such a splendid creature as that, unless she voluntarily opens to him a corner of her heart?"

"I tell you, sir, you have got to marry your woman to know her; and, if she is at all smart, she will keep on giving you revelations and surprises for a dozen years at that. At least, I've found it so," said Mr. Jonas, with a comical twist to his eye, as he took up his gold-headed cane and went out.

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Columbia	9 State of California	10
Oregon	14 Columbia	15
State of California	18 Oregon	19
Columbia	23 State of California	24
Oregon	29 Columbia	30
State of California	34 Oregon	35

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Astoria and lower Coos Bay	7:30 A.M.					
Dayton	7:30 A.M.					
Clifton	7:30 A.M.					
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LEAVE	ARRIVE
Portland	4:00 P. M. Lebanon
Lebanon	4:45 A. M. Portland

The Oregon and California Railroad Ferry makes connection with all Regular Trains on Eastside Division.

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LEAVE	ARRIVE
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Corvallis	8:30 A. M. Portland

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LEAVE	ARRIVE
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Fare to Fort Canby and Ilwaco, 75 cts.

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An additional trip will be made on Sunday of Each Week, Leaving Portland at 9 o'clock Monday Morning.

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The popular steamer FLEETWOOD, Which has been refitted for the comfort of passengers will leave Wilcox and Fisher's dock every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 9 A. M. arriving at Portland at 1 P. M.

Returning leaves Portland every Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6 A. M. Arriving at Astoria at 1 P. M.

An additional trip will be made on Sunday of Each Week, Leaving Portland at 9 o'clock Monday Morning.

Passengers by this route connect at Home for South ports.

C. K. BOY.

WHEELER & ROBB.

GENERAL Real Estate & Insurance Agents.

We have very desirable property in Astoria and Upper Astoria for sale. Also, the farms throughout the county. Accounts carefully adjusted and collections made.

We represent the Royal, Norwich Union and London & Lancashire Insurance Co. of New York.

We are agents for the Daily and Weekly, Northwest News, and the Oregon Vidette.

All business entrusted to our care will receive prompt attention.

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