**Dougherty’s Eye-Opener**

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Big Jim Dougherty was a sport. He belonged to that race of men. In Manhattan it is a distinct race. They are the Caribs of the North — strong, artful, self-sufficient, clannish, honorable within the laws of their race, holding in lenient contempt neighboring tribes who bow to the measure of Society’s tapeline. I refer, of course, to the titled nobility of sportdom. There is a class which bears as a qualify-ing adjective the substantive belonging to a wind instrument made of a cheap and base metal. But the tin mines of Cornwall never produced the material for manufacturing descriptive nomenclature for “Big Jim” Dougherty.

The habitat of the sport is the lobby or the outside corner of certain -hotels and combination restaurants and cafes. They are mostly men of different sizes, running from small to large; but they are unanimous in the possession of a recently shaven, blue-black cheek and chin and dark overcoats (in season) with black velvet collars.

Of the domestic life of the sport little is known. It has been said that Cupid and Hymen sometimes take a band in the game and copper the queen of hearts to lose. Daring theorists have averred - not content with simply saying - that a sport often contracts a spouse, and even incurs descendants. Sometimes he. sits in the game of politics; and then at chowder picnics there is a revelation of a Mrs. Sport and little Sports in glazed hats with tin pails.

But mostly the sport is Oriental. He believes his women-folk should not be too patent. Somewhere be-bind grilles or flower-ornamented fire escapes they await him. There, no doubt, they tread on rugs from Teheran and are diverted by the bulbul and play upon the dulcimer and feed upon sweetmeats. But away from his home the sport is an integer. He does not, as men of other races in Manhattan do, become the convoy in his unoccupied hours of fluttering laces and high heels that tick off delectably the happy seconds of the evening parade. He herds with his own race at corners, and delivers a commentary in his Carib lingo upon the passing show.

“Big Jim” Dougherty had a wife, but be did not wear a button portrait of her upon his lapel. He bad a home in one of those brown-stone, iron-railed streets on the west side that look like a recently ex-cavated bowling alley of Pompeii.

To this home of his Mr. Dougherty repaired each night when the hour was so late as to promise no further diversion in the arch domains of sport. By that time the occupant of the monogamistic harem would be in dreamland, the bulbul silenced and the hour propitious for slumber.

“Big Jim” always arose at twelve, meridian, for breakfast, and soon afterward he would return to the rendezvous of his “crowd.”

He was always vaguely conscious that there was a Mrs. Dougherty. He would have received without denial the charge that the quiet, neat, comfortable little woman across the table at home was his wife. In fact, he remembered pretty well that they bad been married for nearly four years. She would often tell him about the cute tricks of Spot, the canary, and the light-haired lady that lived in the window of the flat across the street.

“Big Jim” Dougherty even listened to this conversation of hers sometimes. He knew that she would have a nice dinner ready for him every evening at seven when he came for it. She sometimes went to matinees, and she bad a talking machine with six dozen records. Once when her Uncle Amos blew in on a wind from up-state, she went with him to the Eden Musee. Surely these things were diversions enough for any woman.

One afternoon Mr. Dougherty finished his breakfast, put on his bat and got away fairly for the door. When his hand was on the knob be heard his wife’s voice.

“Jim,” she said, firmly, “I wish you would take me out to dinner this evening. It has been three years since you have been outside the door with me.”

“Big Jim” was astounded. She bad never asked anything like this before. It had the flavor of a totally new proposition. But he was a game sport.

“All right,” be said. “You be ready when I come at seven. None of this ‘wait two minutes till I primp an hour or two’ kind of business, now, Dele.”

“I’ll be ready,” said his wife, calmly.

At seven she descended the stone steps in the Pompeian bowling alley at the side of “Big Jim” Dougherty. She wore a dinner gown made of a stuff that the spiders must have woven, and of a color that a twilight sky must have contributed. A light coat with many admirably unnecessary capes and adorably inutile ribbons floated downward from her shoulders. Fine feathers do make fine birds; and the only reproach in the saying is for the man who refuses to give up his earnings to the ostrich-tip industry.

“Big Jim” Dougherty was troubled. There was a being at his side whom be did not know. He thought of the sober-hued plumage that this bird of paradise was accustomed to wear in her cage, and this winged revelation puzzled him. In some way she reminded him of the Delia Cullen that be had married four years before. Shyly and rather awkwardly he stalked at her right band.

“After dinner I’ll take you back home, Dele,” said Mr. Dougherty, “and then I’ll drop back up to Seltzer’s with the boys. You can have swell chuck to-night if you want it. I made a winning on Anaconda yesterday; so you can go as far as you like.”

Mr. Dougherty had intended to make the outing with his unwonted wife an inconspicuous one. Uxori-ousness was a weakness that the precepts of the Caribs did not countenance. If any of his friends of the track, the billiard cloth or the square circle had wives they had never complained of the fact in public. There were a number of table d’hote places on the cross streets near the broad and shining way; and to one of these he had purposed to escort her, so that the bushel might not be removed from the light of his domesticity.

But while on the way Mr. Dougherty altered those intentions. He had been casting stealthy glances at his attractive companion and he was seized with the conviction that she was no selling plater. He re-solved to parade with his wife past Seltzer’s cafe, where at this time a number of his tribe would be gathered to view the daily evening procession. Yes; and he would take her to dine at Hoogley’s, the swell-est slow-lunch warehouse on the line, he said to himself.

The congregation of smooth-faced tribal gentlemen were on watch at Seltzer’s. As Mr. Dougherty and his reorganized Delia passed they stared, mo-mentarily petrified, and then removed their hats - a performance as unusual to them as was the astonish-ing innovation presented to their gaze by “Big Jim”. On the latter gentleman’s impassive face there appeared a slight flicker of triumph - a faint flicker, no more to be observed than the expression called there by the draft of little casino to a four-card spade flush.

Hoogley’s was animated. Electric lights shone as, indeed, they were expected to do. And the napery, the glassware and the flowers also meritoriously performed the spectacular duties required of them. The guests were numerous, well-dressed and gay.

A waiter - not necessarily obsequious - conducted “Big Jim” Dougherty and his wife to a table.

“Play that menu straight across for what you like, Dele,” said “Big Jim.” “It’s you for a trough of the gilded oats to-night. It strikes me that maybe we’ve been sticking too fast to home fodder.”

“Big Jim’s” wife gave her order. He looked at her with respect. She had mentioned truffles; and be bad not known that she knew what truffles were. From the wine list she designated an appropriate and desirable brand. He looked at her with some admiration.

She was beaming with the innocent excitement that woman derives from the exercise of her gregarious-ness. She was talking to him about a hundred things with animation and delight. And as the meal progressed her cheeks, colorless from a life indoors, took on a delicate flush. “Big Jim” looked around the room and saw that none of the women there had her charm. And then he thought of the three years she had suffered immurement, uncomplaining, and a flush of shame warmed him, for he carried fair play as an item in his creed.

But when the Honorable Patrick Corrigan, leader in Dougherty’s district and a friend of his, saw them and came over to the table, matters got to the three-quarter stretch. The Honorable Patrick was a gallant man, both in deeds and words. As for the Blarney stone, his previous actions toward it must have been pronounced. Heavy damages for breach of promise could surely have been obtained had the Blarney stone seen fit to sue the Honorable Patrick.

“Jimmy, old man!” he called; he clapped Dougherty on the back; be shone like a midday sun upon Delia.

“Honorable Mr. Corrigan - Mrs. Dougherty,” said “Big Jim.”

The Honorable Patrick became a fountain of entertainment and admiration. The waiter had to fetch a third chair for him; he made another at the table, and the wineglasses were refilled.

“You selfish old rascal!” he exclaimed, shaking an arch finger at “Big Jim,” “to have kept Mrs. Dougherty a secret from us.” And then “Big Jim” Dougherty, who was no talker, sat dumb, and saw the wife who had dined every evening for three years at home, blossom like a fairy flower. Quick, witty, charming, full of light and ready talk, she received the experienced attack of the Honorable Patrick on the field of repartee and surprised, vanquished, delighted him. She unfolded her long-closed petals and around her the room became a garden. They tried to include “Big Jim” in the conversation, but he was without a vocabulary.

And then a stray bunch of politicians and good fellows who lived for sport came into the room. They saw “Big Jim” and the leader, and over they came and were made acquainted with Mrs. Dougherty. And in a few minutes she was holding a salon. Half a dozen men surrounded her, courtiers all, and six found her capable of charming. “Big Jim” sat, grim, and kept saying to himself: “Three years, three years!”

The dinner came to an end. The Honorable Patrick reached for Mrs. Dougherty’s cloak; but that was a matter of action instead of words, and Dougherty’s big band got it first by two seconds.

While the farewells were being said at the door the Honorable Patrick smote Dougherty mightily between the shoulders.

“Jimmy, me boy,” he declared, in a giant whisper, “the madam is a jewel of the first water. Ye’re a lucky dog.”

“Big Jim” walked homeward with his wife. She seemed quite as pleased with the lights and show windows in the streets as with the admiration of the men in Hoogley’s. As they passed Seltzer’s they heard the sound of many voices in the cafe. The boys would be starting the drinks around now and discussing past performances.

At the door of their home Delia paused. The pleasure of the outing radiated softly from her countenance. She could not hope for Jim of evenings, but the glory of this one would Tighten her lonely hours for a long time.

“Thank you for taking me out, Jim,” she said, gratefully. “You’ll be going back up to Seltzer’s now, of course.”

“To — with Seltzer’s,” said “Big Jim,” em-emphatically. “And d— Pat Corrigan! Does he think I haven’t got any eyes?

And the door closed behind both of them.