

**THE KNAVE OF  
HEARTS; A  
FAIRY STORY**

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The Knave of Hearts; A Fairy Story by Robert Grant

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**ROBERT GRANT**

**THE KNAVE OF  
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THE  
KNAVE OF HEARTS

A Fairy Story

BY

ROBERT GRANT

AUTHOR OF

"THE CONFESSIONS OF A FRIVOLOUS GIRL," "AN AVERAGE MAN,"

"THE LITTLE TIN GODS-ON-WHEELS," ETC.



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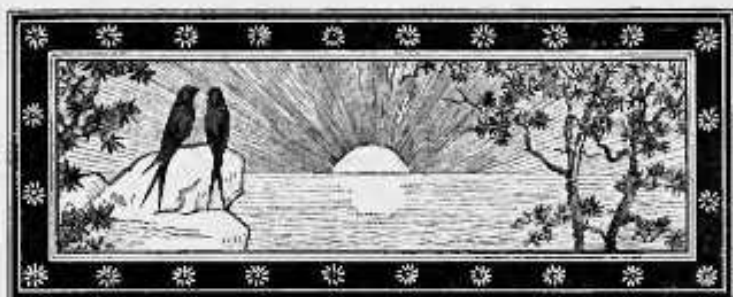
*"Vixi puellis nuper idoneus  
Et militavi non sine gloria."*

*"Nunc arma defunctumque bello  
Barbiton hic paries habebit."*

1618449







## I.

"HE shall be a lawyer and go to Congress,"  
said my father.

"He shall be a banker and control railroads,"  
said my mother.

These were very natural assertions, for I was the descendant of distinguished families on both sides. My maternal great-grandfather was killed at Bunker Hill, my maternal grandfather was a judge of the Supreme Court of the United States, while my father's folk for several generations had been merchant princes.

I was an only son, and my three sisters, sitting side by side on the sofa, with luxuriant fluffy golden hair flowing over their shoulders, looked very proud at the parental prophecies. Yet,

like true daughters of a free soil, they were not content to have their opinions formed for them. Cried Alice Maud, the eldest, a maiden of fifteen summers: —

“O mamma, I do hope Arthur will be a sailor! I adore sailors!” She knocked the heels of her little bronzed kid boots together in her ecstasy.

“No, dear Alice,” said Julia Pierson, who was quiet and pensive, yet a firm child; “he would look much nicer in canonicals. I should love to see him a clergyman.”

Medora (my mother had pleased herself in the choice of a name for the youngest) shook her yellow mane like a colt in her impatience at the choice of her sisters.

“How hateful, Julia! And I don’t care much for sailors, either! They walk all crooked.” The child slightly protruded her nine-year-old tongue. “I want him to be an actor and go on the stage.”

I, the subject of this dialogue, sat meanwhile with one leg thrown listlessly over the arm of a

chair smoking a cigarette. I was just graduated from college, and very well content with my own importance. Something was to become of me in the future, I knew, but the precise character of my destiny I was disposed to leave to the selection of others. It was sufficient for me now to be aware that the points of my collar met unexceptionably, and that my mustache was waxing in importance daily. Nevertheless, I fingered the ends of the latter between the puffs, and assumed a slightly meditative air. After all, my affairs were being discussed, and mere politeness demanded some display of interest on my part.

A short pause followed the infant Medora's expression of opinion. It seemed almost as if the family were awaiting a remark from still another source. The delay was not long, however, for a frail cough from an obscure corner of the room was followed by an old woman's quaver:—

“You are all of you wrong, my dears; he is to be the Knave of Hearts.”