

arms with a great cry, laughing and weeping in one.

"What is the matter, child? What can it be?"

"O Max! my dear, wronged, slandered Max! At last you shall have justice."

"What has it to do with Max?" cried Mr. Hunt, in alarm. "Do speak! I thought it was from Clark, and that Clark was dying."

"Let him die!" she exclaimed. "My Max has suffered a living death for three years for this man's crime. He has risked his life more than once, he has suffered untold miseries, and despair. Oh, didn't I tell you, didn't I know, he was innocent? Mr. Hunt, it was Clark who robbed you and laid the crime to Max. It was Clark who struck you that blow. This is his confession. Oh, thank God! I am so happy!"

"We must send for him instantly," cried the old man, walked rapidly to and fro, wringing his hands. "Call John! Send for a lawyer this instant. We will send a dispatch to the warden."

His excitement quieted hers. Perhaps also she was better prepared for the shock. Her imagination had constantly dwelt on and called up visions of Max's innocence being proved, and she was now more delighted and exulting than astonished.

"The prison is closed before this time," she said, "and he wouldn't be told till morning. I want him to know it first. I will send Mr. Adams to you to see about the forms. There are always forms and little delays. But, O Mr. Hunt! mayn't I go down and tell Max myself? There is another train that will go down to-night. Cousin Charlie will go with me. I know. Let me go down there and see him the first thing in the morning."

"You shall, dear child," he said, kissing her. "You deserve to be first to tell him. Go, Lute, and bring him home!"

Although it was an express train that went up to B—that night, there was one passenger for whom it went not near fast enough.

"Aren't we slow for an express train, Charlie?" she would ask, trying to speak quietly, trying to sit quiet.

"Chain-lightning would be slow for you, Lute," was the answer.

If it were slow in the cars, how much harder to sit half a night almost within sound of his voice, and not see him! She persuaded her cousin out from the hotel, though it was near midnight, and walked up to the prison, and round it, and looked longingly at the doors. But he would not allow her to ring, and she was obliged to go back to the hotel and wait.

"Now, Lute, be good, and I will come in for you when it is time," said Cousin Charlie in the morning. "We can't get in till the prison is open to visitors. I will watch and come after you directly."

"Don't tell, Charlie! Oh, don't tell! Let him be the first to know."

"Nonsense! Do you think I am going to blab? Just keep quiet. Have you got any papers?"

"Yes, a letter from the lawyer, signed also by Mr. Hunt, and a copy of the confession."

After what seemed to her an age he came back, and they started for the prison, Lute leaning heavily on his arm, her face pale as marble. They had not far to walk, and soon they came in sight of the wall. As they approached the yard gate which they had to pass to reach the visitors' entrance, the heavy bolts were slowly lifted by the guard on the wall overhead, the gate opened, and a man came out pushing a light wagon toward them. The man had on a dark gray suit, and wore a black cloth cap, and his head was bowed forward in the effort of pushing.

"They make very nice carriages here," said her cousin. "There is one of their wagons."

The man with the wagon didn't seem to notice them, though they were directly in his path.

"Do you intend to run over this lady?" called out her cousin angrily.

The man looked up hastily, showing a pale, thin face, with glittering eyes, and closely shaven except for a moustache, which evidently was false. He started on seeing Charles, but dropped his wagon when he saw Charles' companion.

"Lute!" he cried, knowing that there was no need of concealment now, for she would not come there except to free him, she had promised.

"O Max! Max! You are free! It was Clark did it!" she exclaimed, too full of her news and her happiness to wonder how he came there.

The guard who had let him out, and who now looked after him with rather tardy suspicion, seeing this joyful meeting, and the party so evidently at ease and leisure, thought that all was right. He was a new watchman, and when he saw a man in citizen's dress wheeling a wagon down toward the gate, he supposed that it was his place to let him out. It was a bold and adroit attempt

to escape, and would probably have succeeded had there been any need of escape. Max had managed to be alone long enough to put on the clothes prepared for the occasion, then had boldly turned a wagon and wheeled it toward the gate. Nobody had missed him when Lute took him to the guard room, and with radiant face presented him to the astonished officials. Waving ordinary rules, the warden did not allow Max to go into his cell, but invited him to become his guest till he could be legally dismissed. Then Lute carried him off in triumph to his impatient grandfather.

At first Max thought that he could never live in his native town again, but the congratulations that poured in day after day from friends and strangers helped to wipe out the bitterness. His grandfather's sorrow and humility and weakness softened him; and, besides, could he ever refuse anything to Lute? She wanted him to stay, and he staid.

There was a grand wedding to please the old man, though they would have preferred it otherwise. Lute rustled up the church aisle in silk and lace, surrounded by a troop of lovely girls, and leaning on the arm of her uncle, who was her nearest relative, and who gave her away. Max stood at the altar waiting for her, and in his erect, proud form and flashing eye there was no sign of the convict, though his cheek was yet pallid, and his face closely shaven. The church was full, all eager for a glimpse of the bride, but the person most interested in them did not see at all, though he sat in the very front seat. Mr. Hunt sat and wept without ceasing all through the ceremony, and could scarce force a smile when Max came and presented his bride to him. When they both called him father, he broke out again.

They live there together, the old man sinking into his second childhood, but watched over and attended with ceaseless vigilance and affection; Lute trying to realize her happiness, which she hasn't been able to do yet, and Max beginning to think that his hard discipline did him, perhaps, more good than harm. After the first flush of anger, they heartily forgave the author of their misfortunes, and in all the land there is no happier household than that of him who was once Max the convict.

Deacon Grinder's Experiment.

"I HOPE the children haven't been any trouble to you Mrs. Peck?" said Deacon Grinder, as his one horse chaise drew up on the green in front of Philena Peck's house.

Miss Peck hurried out, all smiles to greet the portly widower.

"The little darlings?" cried she, effusively. "Trouble, indeed! Why, deacon, how you talk! It's a positive pleasure to have them here. I should like to keep them a week."

The deacon smiled and shook his head.

"That would be a little too much," said he. "Come, children, jump into the wagon."

And the three apple-cheeked little Grinders—two girls and a boy—were kissed, and hugged, and lifted into the wagon by the beaming spinster.

"I shall be lonely when they are gone," she said. "I do so dote on children. Remember, darlings, that the gooseberries will be ripe next week, and that your Pecky will be only too happy to see you again."

The Widow Clapp came hurrying out, as the chaise rattled by, with a tin pail in her hand.

"Dear me, Deacon Grinder," said she, "you are always in such a hurry. Do stop a minute, can't you? Here's a pail of our new honey in the comb. I know the darlings will like it on their bread of an evening. When are they coming to spend the day with me? I declare Josie is growing a perfect beauty!"

"Tut, tut, Mrs. Clapp!" said the deacon, his face shining all over with satisfaction. "Handsome is that handsome does." That's my motto."

"And nobody can't do handsomer than my little Joe," said Mrs. Clapp. "And there's Tommy grown as never was, and Dolly the very picture of you; drop into tea some evening this week."

The deacon had hardly guided his old horse around the corner of the village green when Miss Barbara Bowyer stepped out of the millinery store.

"I do hope you'll excuse me, Deacon Grinder," said she, with all the pretty confusion which naturally belongs to a maiden of six and thirty summers, "but I was so edified with your be-utiful remarks in prayer meeting, Monday night, that I couldn't help setting myself to work to think what I could do for you. And here's a collar I have stitched for dear Tommy, and a handkerchief I've embroidered for Josie, and a doll as I've took the liberty to dress for Dorothy. Oh, don't thank me, pray. It ain't nothing, compared with the peace of mind I got, listening to your precious remarks."

But Naomi Poole, sitting at her nee-

de-work, by the old red farm-house window, had only a smile and a nod for the party as they drove by.

"Pa," said Josie, who was a shrewd, sallow-faced child of eleven, "don't Miss Poole love us as well as Miss Peck, and Mrs. Clapp, and Miss Barbara Bowyer?"

"I hope so, my child," said the benign deacon. "Why do you ask the question?"

"Because she never gives us anything," said Josie.

"She is poor, child—she is poor," the deacon said. "But I'm sure you all have her good wishes."

"I'd rather have honey" Tommy said.

"And gooseberries and dolls," added little Dorothy.

But when the deacon sat alone by his hearth-stone, that evening, his sister, Miss Mahala Ann Grinders expressed herself on the subject with great plainness and perspicacity.

"If you've really made up your mind to marry again Joshua—" said she.

"I think it would add to my domestic felicity," said the deacon, serenely.

"In that case," said Miss Mahala Ann, "I do hope you'll make a sensible choice, and not allow yourself to be imposed upon by a pack of selfish widows and scheming old maids."

"Sister," said the deacon, mildly, "you are severe."

"No, I ain't," said Miss Mahala Ann. "If you wasn't well to do in the world, and hadn't a nice house and barn, and a farm, and money at interest, they wouldn't none of them, look twice at you."

"Do you think so?" said the deacon; and he pondered the question long and earnestly in his own mind. "Upon the whole," said he, bringing down his palm upon the table, "I ain't sorry that those investments of mine in the Mariposa Silver Mining Company have proved a failure."

"What do you mean?" asked Miss Mahala Ann, curiously eyeing him over the top of her spectacles.

But the Deacon only shook his head and smiled.

"Time will show," said he, "time will show."

The news that Deacon Grinder was wrecked in Mariposa Silver Mining stock flew like wildfire through the peaceful community at Fitchville Four Corners.

"Well, said Miss Philena Peck, "I'm beat!"

"He never had no judgment in money matters," said the widow Clapp.

"I've thought all along that he was living too fast," said Barbara Bowyer.

"Those poor little children—what is to become of them?" said Naomi Poole, wistfully.

The next day the deacon made his appearance at Miss Peck's homestead, pale and rather shabby, with a child in each hand, and one following him.

"Miss Peck," said he, "I suppose you have heard the news?"

"Yes," said Miss Peck, looking vinegar and tack nails. "If it's your failure as you mean?"

"I think of going to California," said the deacon. "to see what I can do, and if, in the meantime, you could be induced to give my children a home?"

"Oh, dear, no!" said Miss Peck. "I never could get along with a pack of children! I dare say you could find some half orphan asylum, or place of that sort, by inquiring around a little."

Miss Peck sat so very upright, and glared so frightfully out of her light blue eyes at the deacon, that he was fain to beat as rapid a retreat as possible.

He knocked next at the widow Clapp's door. A slip shod servant maid opened it.

"Is Mrs. Clapp at home?" asked the deacon.

A head was thrust over the stair railing and the widow's shrill voice cried out:

"Is that Josiah Grinder, with his swarm o' young ones? Tell him I'm particular engaged. Do you hear, Betsy? particular."

Miss Barbara Bowyer was arranging trimmed hats and rolls of bright colored ribbons in her bow window as the deacon and his little ones entered the shop.

"Miss Bowyer," said the deacon, "you were ever a genial and charitable soul. It is to you that I trust to make a home for my motherless little ones, while I endeavor to retrieve my fortune in the Far West."

"I couldn't think of such a thing!" said Miss Barbara, dropping a box of artificial rose buds in her consternation.

"And I really think, Deacon Grinder, you haven't no business to expect it of me. It's all I can do to support myself, let alone a pack of unruly children. I dare say the poor master could do something for 'em, or?"

"I thank you," said the deacon, with dignity. "I shall trouble neither you nor him."

"Well," said Miss Bowyer, with a toss of her head, "you needn't fly into

a rage because a neighbor offers you a bit of good advice."

But Naomi Poole ran out to the little garden gate, as the forlorn deacon went by.

"Deacon Grinder," hesitated she, turning rose-red and white by turns, "is this true?"

"About my Mariposa investment?—Yes."

"And that you are going to California?"

"I am talking of it," said the deacon.

"Would—could you let me take care of the little ones while you are gone?" said Naomi, tenderly drawing little Dolly to her side. "I am very fond of children, and I would take the best care of them. And you have been so kind to mother and me, Deacon Grinder, that we should feel it a privilege to be able to do something for you."

And poor, soft hearted little Naomi burst into crying.

There was a moisture on the deacon's eye-lashes, too.

"God bless you, Naomi!" said he.—"You are a good girl—a very good girl."

"Ain't it true?" said Philena Peck.

"Well," said Mrs. Mopsley, "it is, and it ain't. He did lose what he invested in the Mariposa mines, but it was only a thousand dollars, and the rest of his money is all tight and safe in U. S. bonds and solid real estate."

"Bless me!" said Barbara Bowyer.

"Well, I never!" said the widow Clapp, with a discomfited countenance.

"And," went on Mrs. Mopsley, with evident relish in the consternation she was causing, "they are building a new wing to the house, and he is to be married to Naomi Poole in the fall."

"A child like that!" said Mrs. Clapp. "With no experience whatever!" said Barbara Bowyer, scornfully.

"I only hope he won't repent of his bargain," sighed Miss Philena Peck.

And Miss Philena's charitable hopes were fulfilled. The deacon never did repent his bargain.

A Royal Detective.

REVILLAGGEDO was the very hard name of a very good viceroy of Mexico during the Spanish rule, who displayed as much shrewdness in discovering crimes as justice in dealing with them. Altogether he was a sort of christian Haroun Al Raschid, who took much pride in being a good ruler. On one occasion a noble young lady borrowed a thousand dollars from her rich uncle and gave him a case of valuable jewels as security, which this amateur pawnbroker, like a wicked uncle, swore he never had seen, when at the end of the allotted time she brought him back the money and asked for the jewels.—The young lady immediately went to the viceroy and made as long a story of it as a young lady would be expected to do. Revillagigedo rebuked her severely for making such a bargain without witnesses.

"But he was my uncle."

"Uncle be d—d," said Revillagigedo, with several *carajos* and *carambas*, in pure Castilian; "don't you know, Senorita, that an uncle will steal just as well as any other man, and that a niece cannot be as dear as diamond?"

"No," says the young lady, beginning to cry in the usual way.

"Does he smoke?" asked the viceroy in a consoling tone.

"No," said the Senorita, drying her eyes; "but he takes snuff."

"That's just as bad. Tell him to come here. No, on second thoughts, don't. I'll send for the rascal, and you wait in the next room till I get the jewels." Saying which he pushed the young lady in one door, and sent a soldier through another after the wicked uncle, who presently arrived, and was delighted to hear from the viceroy that he was to be consulted on matters of State.

"But," says Revillagigedo, feeling in his pockets, "I've forgotten my snuff-box, and I can never start on politics except with a sneeze."

"Your excellency, do me the great honor to take a snuff from mine," said the uncle, bowing low and passing his own snuff-box.

The viceroy took it in his hand, and had just begun to sneeze, when it suddenly seemed to occur to him that he had left his handkerchief in the next room. So he excused himself and went out with the snuff-box, and giving it to an officer, told him to take it to the uncle's wife, and tell her from her husband by that token to send him a case of jewels he had recently gotten. Sure enough, in half an hour the officer brought a case of jewels, which the Senorita gazed on with such rapture and described with such particularity that Revillagigedo knew them to be hers.

So he fined the wicked uncle a thousand dollars for being found out, and sent the young lady home so happy that she immediately married and named a son Revillagigedo, which causes the difficult name to be still preserved in commemoration of the good viceroy; and also the moral, which is—not to lend except on business principles.

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