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A GIRL'S STORY.

I GUESS pa and ma were pretty rich one time, for when they came to California it was on their wedding tour and cost lots; they came by way of New York and Washington, and Panama City in a steamboat, and ma brought a maid to wait on her, and pa had a black feller named "Jim," and when they got to California pa had lots of money. I was born at the Lick House, and you ought to see my baby clothes. Jones & Co. haven't the kind of goods there was, because Maud has dragged them all to pieces. Maud is the baby. Six years old Maud is, and it won't be long before she will be a clerk in Jones & Co.'s store. First babies always have the nicest things. Ma said first babies are like second wives. But I keep getting away from Jones & Co.

Well, I am of the opinion that after pa bought his house on Van Ness avenue, he went into stocks, whatever that means. Going into stocks must be a very curious business, and sometimes pa came home looking splendid, and wanted to buy everything, and laughed at ma for being so mean, and not getting better clothes, and then he wanted to drive in the park and go to the theatre. One day he came home with a bran new carriage and a span of long-tailed horses, and a negro coachman, and a funny little darkey for footman. It was for ma, and we rode every day. Then sometimes pa came home and looked very blue, and talked about stocks, and I began to watch pa, and noticed that sometimes when he laughed the loudest he looked just as if he wanted to cry, and then he sold the horses, and then the house, and the furniture was sent to auction, and ma she felt very bad, and pa wasn't like himself any more, and never told me stories nor kissed me; and once when baby Maud was asleep in his arms, he kissed her and cried, and when I told ma, she said she guessed pa did not feel very well, and that I musn't notice it, and then she cried.

After this we went to a boarding-house—a nasty, musty boarding-house. Everything was well enough, only a boarding-house ain't like home.

Then the baby came, and it died, and ma almost died, and I heard pa say to the man that kept the boarding-house that "he was pretty tight up, but it was all comin' out right," and the next day pa didn't have any watch, nor any sleeve buttons. I didn't seem to notice it because I seen that maybe pa had sold them to pay board, and I heard pa and ma talk away into the night, and sometimes ma cried, and pa would look in the morning just as if he hadn't slept a wink, and I don't believe that he had. Once it was dreadful. Pa come home tipsy, and I never seen ma feel so bad, never; and then they talked it over, and finally ma went home to grandpa's, in New York, with Maud, and I stayed with pa to go to school.

Then pa kept getting worse and worse, and we went to live in rooms and eat at restaurants, and pa stayed out late of nights, and I guess he drank more than was good for him and I thought something had to be done. So I said to pa one day:

"Pa, less go into business and open a store."

And he laughed and said: "What kind of a store?"

And I said: "Oh, a candy store, or a stationery store, or a thread and needle store, just such as women keep and little girls help in."

And pa laughed and said he would think of it, and when he came home that night I asked him if he had

thought about it, and he said he hadn't, and I said he had better, and he said he would, and that morning he didn't go out, but stayed at home and wrote ma a long letter.

So next day I went into a store on Polk street, kept by a nice lady who had a bad husband, where they sold everything, and she said in France they called it *lingerie*.

I didn't know what that meant because it was French, and I asked her if she didn't want to sell her store, and she said:

"Do you want to buy a store, little girl?"

And I said: "My pa does." And she smiled and she said she guessed the sheriff would have a store to sell in a few days, and I said I would tell pa, because he knew Mr. Nunan the sheriff. It was one of Mr. Nunan's men that sold pa's horses and furniture for him.

And the next day I told pa about the store, and what a nice one it was, and he said he had been a dry goods man once, had a large store, and sold silk dress goods, and velvets and furs and laces, worth ever so much a yard, and India shawls worth more than a thousand dollars apiece.

I don't know exactly what pa did, but I think something "turned up" a few days afterward, for I heard him say he had made a "raise," and he showed me more than a thousand dollars in gold, and for a day or two he carried it in a side pocket, and mostly kept his hand over it for fear it would jump out and fly away; and pa bought me some shoes and a hat, and stuff for aprons, and I made them myself, and I never saw pa look so happy since ma went away; and one day he said to me:

"Vevie, I have bought the store on Polk street, and you are to be my saleswoman and partner."

And sure enough, in a few days we went into the store, and over the door was a great big sign of "Jones & Co." and pa said I was the "Co." And when I said, "and so, pa, you are 'Jones,'" he blushed and I guess he didn't like his old friends to know that he was selling needles, and thread, and tape and things.

We had two snug little rooms in the back of the store to sleep in, and I made pa's bed and swept out the rooms, and tidied things. At first pa shut up the store when he had to go down town on business, but after a while I tended it and when there were customers in the store I waited on one, and it was not long before I could make change and sell things and add up almost as good as pa could; and by and by when he went down town I tended store, and we had splendid times. We went out to a nice place across the street for our meals. I tended store when pa went and pa tended store when I went.

One day pa came in and looked dreadful troubled, and when I said, "Pa, ain't I a partner, and don't partners have a right to know everything, and ain't you hiding something about Jones & Co.?" And then I found out that pa had bought too many things for the store, and that a note for a thousand dollar had to be paid, and there wasn't any money to pay it with, and that's what made pa feel bad. And then I thought and thought, and wondered how I could get a thousand dollars, and I kept on thinking over everybody that I guessed had a thousand dollars, and every one I guessed had it I guessed wouldn't let it go to pa.

And then I thought about Mr. Flood, and said, "I'll go down to his bank and get it, for he's got more than a thousand millions, and down in the Bank of Nevada the cellar is full of gold, and of course he don't want to use it all the time, and I'll borrow a thousand dollars for pa, and before Mr. Flood wants it I'll take it back to him, and pay the interest."

And then I jumped up and hurried for "Jones & Co.," took my best bonnet, and took off my store apron, and combed my hair, and got into a car and went to the Nevada Bank, and told the clerk I wanted to borrow a thousand dollars; and he laughed and said he "guessed I had better see Mr. M'Lane." And I asked who Mr. M'Lane was. The clerk said M. M'Lane was the president, and was in the back room, and I went into the back room, and Mr. M'Lane said:

"Well, little girl, what can I do for you?"

"And I said: 'I want to borrow a thousand dollars.'"

Mr. M'Lane opened his eyes, and twisted his chair round, and looked at me, and said, "A thousand dollars!" with as much surprise as though a thousand dollars was all he had in the bank. Then I began to get scared and cry, and then I told Mr. M'Lane all about pa and "Jones & Co.," and what we wanted to do with the money, and that I would pay it back to him; and he looked kind 'a puzzled, and asked me what my pa's name was, and all about ma, and Maud, and how the baby died. I guess that was not very much like business, and I don't know what Mr. M'Lane wanted to know all that for. Then he looked at me again, and I guess he wasn't going to let me have the money, when a gentleman at the other desk came up to where I was sitting on a chair, and Mr. M'Lane said:

"Well, Flood, what do you think of this young merchant?" And then I knew it was the rich Mr. Flood; and I looked into his eyes, and they kind of laughed, and he said:

"Let her have the money. I will endorse the note."

Then I jumped up and kissed him, and he kissed me back, and Mr. M'Lane made a note for ninety days, and I signed it "Jones & Co.," and Mr. Flood wrote his name on the back of it. I took the money away in a canvass bag, that Mr. M'Lane said I must bring back, and I took the money to pa, and didn't he look surprised when I poured out the great big gold twenty dollar pieces on the counter?

Then I told him what happened at the bank, and when I asked him if he didn't think I was a pretty good business woman after all, I guess he felt real ashamed.

In a few days a beautiful carriage drove up to the door, and a nice young lady came in and bought nearly twenty dollars' worth of things. I never sold so many goods to any one person before, and the young lady was real kind, and helped me to add up the bill. I saw pa didn't offer to help me at all, and looked kind of comical when she and me was puzzled over the figures to get them all right. The ninepence I dreaded in adding, and so I hauled me in the way of making figures either fives or nothing, so they will add up easier. When the young lady drove away, I went to the carriage and saw the letter "F" on the panel and on the harness. "F," said I to myself, "I wonder who it can be?" I should have thought it was Miss Flood, only she hadn't any diamonds in her ears or on her fingers, and was dressed only just nice and plain; and I said, "of course it wasn't Miss Flood."

After this, I never saw anything like it—such lots of carriages and such nice ladies kept coming every day, and most all of them traded with me, and pa was just as pleased and happy as he could be. "Jones & Co." were making lots of money.

When I took Mr. Flood's money back, I just marched right through the bank, past the big counters, into Mr. M'Lane's room, and took very good care to let the clerk that laughed at me before, see the bag. Mr. Flood was in there, and Mr. M'Lane and I opened the bag and turned out the money on Mr. M'Lane's desk, Mr. Flood came up and laughed, and Mr. M'Lane laughed, and I heard Mr. Flood tell Mr. M'Lane they would have that champagne lunch today. And then Mr. Flood told me if I wanted to borrow money again not to go to any of the other banks, but to come to his, and I thanked him, and Mr. M'Lane brought me my note, cancelled by a great blue "Paid" stamp across the face, right over where I wrote "Jones & Co." Then I told Mr. Flood that perhaps when we felt able to send for ma I should come and borrow some more money, because I wanted to buy a house for ma and Maud, so that they wouldn't have to go into any more nasty boarding-houses, and Mr. Flood said I should have all the money I wanted.

Then we sent for ma and Maud.—Grandpa gave ma the money to come, and so we didn't have to borrow any more; and we took a nice cottage, not

very near the store, for pa didn't want ma to know about "Jones & Co.," though I was just crazy to tell her.

For several days we fooled her. She thought pa had a store down town, and I was going to school. I told lots of fibs about being detained at school, going down town and all sorts of stories to account for being home late.

One day who should I see coming into the store but ma.

"Have you any pearl shirt-buttons, little girl?" said ma.

"Yes, ma'am," said I, looking her right square in the face.

"Goodness gracious!" said ma, "is that you Vevie?"

I said: "Beg pardon, ma'am, what did you want?" And then ma looked at me again.

I had a store apron on, and a small cap like a French girl, and because I wasn't very high, pa bought me a pair of wooden brogans, with felt on the bottoms, into which I slipped my feet, and they made me about four or five inches taller. And ma stared at me, and then laughed and said:

"Oh! I beg your pardon, little girl. You look so much like my daughter Genevieve that I thought you was her."

Then I heard pa sneaker down behind the counter; he had seen ma come in, and hid. Just as soon as ma went out pa jumped up and laughed, and said:

"Snatch off your apron and cap, Vevie, and run round the block and get home before your mother."

I did, and when ma got home she was the most surprised woman you ever seen. We knew this thing couldn't last, and so that night we told ma all about the house of "Jones & Co.," and ma kissed pa, and said he was a "splendid, noble fellow, and just as good as gold," and that she "never was so proud of him in all her life," and fell to kissing him and to crying and taking on. I never saw ma act so foolish in all her life, and pa said she "was making love to him over again."

Well, now, the story is about over. Ma came down to the store to help. At first she looked kind 'a sheepish, especially when some lady came in that she had known at the Lick House; but soon she got over all that, and began to make bonnets, and we had a milliner store; and then she insisted upon saving the expense of a separate house, and we moved into a larger store next door, with nice rooms fixed up to live in, and a nice show-window for bonnets, and little Maud is beginning to be handy about, and all of us work, and we are just as happy as the day's long, and we have lots of money.

I have never seen Mr. Flood but once since, when I went down to the bank unbeknown of pa, and I told Mr. Flood and Mr. M'Lane that any time they wanted to borrow a thousand dollars, "Jones & Co." would lend it to them; and they laughed, and I said "they couldn't tell, stocks might go down;" and then Mr. Flood said, "if all the people he had given and loaned money to would pay it back as I had, he didn't think he would get busted in a long time."

And then I saw the clerk that laughed at me, and I smiled at him and bowed, and since then he has been buying all his gloves at the store. I told him I thought he used a great many pairs of gloves, and he said they wore out very fast counting the money. He is dreadful particular about his gloves, and if there is nobody in the store but me he is sometimes half an hour picking out just the kind he wants.

Pa has bought a splendid gold watch—a real stem-winder—and we—Jones & Co.—have bought a nice lot out on Gov. Stanford's new cable railroad, and I paid for it, and if times are good this summer, as pa thinks they will be, we shall have a house of our own again, where we shall live in peace, die in Greece, and be buried in a cake of tallow.

The Right Woman in the Wrong Place.

NO particular attention was paid to her when she came into the office—lots of the women come into the office for corrections and one thing and another, and so when this lady sashayed up to the table around which six scribes were grinding out information, she stood for the space of a minute glaring

upon the force with a scowl upon her not altogether classic features.

"You might ask a lady to take a chair," she snapped, with an ugly looking gleam in her eyes.

The blueglass man aroused himself and watched a blue-bottle fly that had been inserting its fangs into his bald head all morning, slowly wing its way out of the window into the calm, autumn sunlight. Then with a look of pain he brought his gaze to bear upon the lady he said:

"Cert, madame, cert. Take two chairs."

With a vicious jerk the visitor seized a chair, plumped into it, knocked a paste pot off the table with an overgrown parasol that resembled an umbrella, and exclaimed:

"Look here! I've got a boy!"

The blueglass man laid his pencil down and regarded the lady thoughtfully. "That's all right," he said at length, "I presume you are a married lady?"

"Yes, you bald headed bulldozer, I am a married lady!" shrieked the woman, hitting the tin telephone a whack with her parasol, "and you bet your dollar that if my husband, Mr. M'Gregor, was home from New Orleans it wouldn't be two minutes till he would clean out this office!"

"Oh, I don't know," observed the blueglass man, scratching his head irritably with a paste brush, "I don't know. There was a man come from Memphis once especially to clean us out, but he was knocked down four flight of stairs and had his skull fractured, and was sued, and is now making shoes in the penitentiary. Something of that kind might happen to M'Gregor, you know."

"I know this," howled Mrs. M'Gregor, "I know that I don't want you to badger me. I won't have it. I came here for satisfaction about the boy, and I'm going to get it." And Mrs. M'Gregor got up, walked around the table, sat down again and breathed hard.

"What boy?" asked the blueglass man.

"My boy."

"Whereabouts?"

Mrs. M'Gregor eyed the blueglass man viciously. She secured a tighter grip on her parasol and screamed; "For two pins I would hit you with this parasol. You can't play with me. I am too smart a woman. Do you pretend to say that your paper didn't publish an item yesterday that John George M'Gregor had upset an apple stand, gone through the till and had been sent to jail? Do you mean to say that you didn't publish this base libel on my son? You villain!"

"I don't know anything about John George M'Gregor, and I don't want to know anything about him," said the head of the blueglass department. "We never published a line in regard to him, although I have no doubt that if he is not in jail he ought to be. I am very positive, however," continued the blueglass man as he arose and kicked a waste basket across the room, "that if you yawp around here much longer I'll have you bounced."

"Look here," shrieked the lady, "isn't this the *Commercial Gazette*?"

"No, it isn't."

"Well, then I'm wrong. The *Commercial Gazette* wretch is the man I want to lay my eyes on, and if I find out he's the fellow who put the piece in about my John George I wouldn't stop much to batter his nose to a jelly," and then Mrs. M'Gregor knocked a whole row of empty ink bottles off a shelf for spite, and walked out with the remark that she would lick the *Commercial Gazette* man if she had "to go to the cooler for it."

Sir John Herschel has declared that "if he were to pray for a taste which should stand under every variety of circumstances and be a source of happiness and cheerfulness to him through life, it would be a taste for reading."—Give a man, he affirms, that taste and the means of gratifying it, and you cannot fail of making him good and happy; for you bring him in contact with the best society in all ages, with the tenderest, the bravest, and the purest men who have adorned humanity, making him a denizen of all nations, a cotemporary of all times, and giving him a practical proof that the world has been created for him, for his solace, and for his enjoyment.