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**Mrs. Hacker's Confession.**

Mrs. Hacker and her daughter sat in the little parlor behind the shop taking tea. It was a frosty winter night, and the brown teapot was kept on the back of the stove that it might not chill. So was the pan of sausages, which tasted all the more crisp and savory in consequence. The door between the store and the room stood open that any chance customer might be seen at once by the tea-drinkers, but the bell had not jingled since they took their seats.

"Trade is dreadful, Emma Jane," said Mrs. Hacker, dipping her bread into the sausage pan and transferring it to her plate by means of the long cooking fork. "Trade is dreadful! I should just give up if it got a little worse; but dear me, I never had any luck in anything. There's Mr. Ninnever putting plate glass—whole panes—into his windows, and beginning to talk of hiring the second floor for ready made suits; and my things hang on my hands, though I'm sure I make better selections than he knows how to. Another cup, Emma Jane—what a comfort tea is, to be sure."

"Then give me a cup, won't you, Mrs. Hacker?" said a voice behind them. "I want comfort, I'm sure. Here's grandma gone out and forgot to leave the key, and nothing for me to do but sit on the steps and cool my heels."

"Thomas! la! how you scared me coming in so sudden!" screamed Emma Jane.

"Sit down, do," said Mrs. Hacker. "Take a seat here, Tom, and have supper with us. Your grandma stopped in to tell me she wouldn't be back until late, and the key is in the money-drawer."

"About all there is there, too," said Emma Jane, with a pout, "and I want a new winter bonnet."

"Look here, Mrs. Hacker," said the young man, slowly turning himself toward the old lady. "Look here ma'am, here's some one ready and willing to buy that winter bonnet, and all the other bonnets Emma Jane will ever want. We've been engaged a year now, and at last I've got to be a foreman in the factory. Why should we put it off any longer? Tell Emma Jane that it's all nonsense. She won't listen to me."

"Well, I don't think long engagements are best," said Mrs. Hacker. "What I should say to Emma Jane would be, 'Have him now.'"

"Oh, well! I suppose I shall be bothered until I do say yes," replied Emma Jane; and then the anxious lover, pleading his cause earnestly, the wedding day was actually set for Christmas Eve, which was at that time about a month off.

This conversation, as well as the evening meal being over, Mrs. Hacker discreetly retired to the shop and left the lovers alone. However, she did not stay away long. In a few moments she came running in with her glasses on her nose, and an open letter in her hand.

"Read this, one of you," she said. "I have read it, but I can't understand it. It seems as though I must be crazy. See, here, you read it, Thomas—I have more confidence in you."

Then she put the letter into Thomas Hunt's hand and sat down at the table.

"I found it on the floor," said she. "The postman must have thrown it in at the sill. I don't know whether it is a hoax or not, but it's got the regular stamp on all. My gracious, how queer I do feel."

Meanwhile Thomas Hunt solemnly

laid the sheet of paper before him, read it through, and turned back to the first line.

"It isn't a hoax," said he. "It's a regular lawyer's letter, and what it tells you is that your old uncle, Simon Hacker, of London, England, is dead, and you are his heiress to the tune of about one hundred thousand dollars. It's down in pounds, but that's the sum in our own money."

"Pinch me, Emma Jane!" cried Mrs. Hacker. "I mean it, dear—and if I don't wake up I'll think it's true."

"Oh, pshaw, ma! It's true enough," cried Emma Jane. "How splendid. Oh, when are we to have the money? Oh, isn't it just lovely!"

But Thomas gave a little sigh.

"Mrs. Hacker," he said, "maybe you think a mechanic not rich enough or fine enough for your daughter, now you are as well off as that. If so, say so, out and out, and I'll bear it as well as I can."

"Why, Thomas, if I was a queen, I'd think you a good son-in-law," said Mrs. Hacker.

"And you, Emma?" said Thomas.

"I shall wait until I get my diamonds on before I take airs," said his lady love.

Nevertheless the fortune made a change in the programme. It was necessary for Mrs. Hacker to go to England, and Emma Jane must go with her, she said; and on the whole it seemed best to postpone the wedding for a while.

"It wouldn't be respectful to Uncle Simon to marry immediately," said the mother.

So Thomas had the unhappiness of seeing his lady love leave the shores of her native land, and went back to the shop with a very heavy heart.

However, he worked hard, and many letters comforted him; and at last his Emma Jane returned gorgeous in the latest London fashions; and there was all the bustle of buying a new house, furnishing it and taking possession of it—and very little time for lovers to be together.

"You see," said Mrs. Hacker to Tom, "you see Emma Jane is all stirred up. She'll settle down after awhile; but you know young people will be young people."

At home Tom got less comfort. "Emma Jane feels her money. She shows it," said Grandmother Hunt.—"And the place is too fine for me, and the servants stare too much. Sarah Hacker is a sensible woman, but Emma Jane is not to be depended on. You'll find that out, Thomas."

And poor Thomas did find it out.

"You see, Tom," said Emma, one day, twirling the cheap ring he had given her, softly about her finger. "You see, Tom, somehow I'd rather not be married for a long while. I don't want you to be angry with me, but I never was a rich girl before—and it's so nice. I get so much attention. I don't want to settle down as an old married woman yet."

"I'll wait, Emma," replied Tom.

"Ah, but—but you see it might be no use," said Emma. "Perhaps I never may want to marry, and if you don't mind taking back the ring, why we can be friends all the same."

"Can we?" said Tom, in a strange tone. "Well, I shall never be your enemy, Emma."

And he put the ring in his vest pocket, and shortly after departed. But he didn't trouble the servant to open the door of the big house again.

"What ails Tom, Emma Jane," asked Mrs. Hacker, one day, some time after. "Why don't he come here any more?"

"It's just as well he shouldn't," answered Emma, "and I wish you'd drop the Jane, ma; I hate it so."

"You didn't formerly hate your poor grandma's name," said Mrs. Hacker; "but money has spoiled you, Emma Jane, if it ever spoiled a woman."

"Don't be cross, ma," coaxed Emma. "Tom is very well, but he is common; and you know how elegant young Mr. Vreeland is, and—and he pays me a great deal of attention, ma."

"Ah, that's it," sighed old Mrs. Hacker. "He's cut Thomas Hunt out. You have jilted the poor boy."

And now Vreeland came often to see Emma Jane; was her escort every-

where, drove her out, walked with her, sang sentimental songs with his eyes fixed on her face, and did all that might be done to show "what his intentions were." And a year from the day on which Mrs. Hacker took possession of her new house, she was not surprised by hearing that Mr. Vreeland desired to see her alone.

"Yes, I'll see him, my dear," said Mrs. Hacker, putting on her best cap at the glass; "but I can't help thinking of poor Tom."

Mr. Vreeland sat in the parlor in exactly the proper attitude, wearing the proper dress, and properly excited—no more. He informed the old lady that he had lost his heart to her daughter, and that as he believed he had found favor in that young lady's eyes, desired to have her permission to set the wedding day.

And Mrs. Hacker listened calmly, and answered thus:

"Mr. Vreeland, I think you are what they call a very good match for Emma Jane, and I've nothing against you. It shall be as she chooses. Only it's but fair to tell you this. You must take her for herself, for in a week's time we shall leave this house, and I shall go back to my little shop. I've been speculating, and—well, you know how things go sometimes."

"Yes, I know," replied young Vreeland. He turned pale as death as he spoke, and sat looking down at the carpet.

After a while he said:

"Accept my condolences," and arose and bowed himself out of the front door.

An hour afterwards Emma Jane, to whom her mother had told the same story of speculation and loss, received a note, which the Vreelands' black servant had brought to the door. It ran thus:

"MY DARLING EMMA:—You know I adore and must adore you forever; but my habits are extravagant. My father, like your mother, has entered into disastrous speculations, and I will not bind you to a marriage which would result in nothing but misery. Yours ever, in deep despair,

REGINALD VREELAND."

Ah, it was all like a dream to Emma. They went back to the old house, and the shop was opened again. The dirty boxes were brushed, the counter oiled, the pins and buttons, and striped blue elastic, and boxes of cheap trinkets, and the card board mottoes stamped for working in silk, graced the glass case once more.

The same limited number of customers dropped in, and Emma served behind the counter, and washed the dishes in the back room. She was very, very wretched, and life looked dark indeed to her.

Old Mrs. Hunt and Thomas still lived on the upper floor. The old Grandmother told Mrs. Hacker that she thought Tom was beginning to like Fanny Earle, the hair-dresser's pretty daughter.

Sometimes Tom would pass the window, but he never looked towards it.

Emma used to sit behind the counter thinking of him. What a lover she had had, and she had cast him away for a fortune hunter. Her verdict was that she deserved her punishment, and she was very sad and very meek.

She expected nothing now but to die an old maid, living behind that little shop counter, and never having any admiration or attention again.

In this mood she sat beside her mother one winter evening. The table was spread with the thick stone china; the brown tea-pot and the pan of sausages hissed on the stove. The door stood open between the shop and the parlor. All that had happened since might have been a dream, and it might have been the same night, a year before, when the letter had come to them which had made such changes, and Emma had even poured out the second cup of tea for her mother, when the door of the hall creaked, and looking up, she saw Tom standing there. Tom, big and brown as ever, with such a look in his eyes. But it could not be for her; she did not deserve it. And Emma dropped her head upon her hands and burst into tears.

Then she felt Tom kneel down beside her and put his arm around her waist. "Look at me, Emma," he whispered. "Look at me, my dear. I cannot bear

it any more. I never can help loving you, and for all that's come and gone, I believe you do love me a little."

Then Emma found courage to put her hands upon his shoulders and whisper: "Oh, Tom, I believe I do."

They were married in a very little while, and it was only after the wedding that old Mrs. Hacker, with a very solemn face, informed them that she had a confession to make.

"I haven't lost my money at all, my dears," she said. "I'm half afraid of it, for it seemed to bring unhappiness with it. Yet, still it's comfortable to be rich. And now you are married to an honest man, that chose you when you were poor, my dear, we might as well make the most of it, and all go over together—Granny Hunt and all—to the big house the servants are keeping for us, thinking we're off on a journey. I shall never blame myself, and I don't think any of you will blame me, either."

Tom looked at Emma, but she only threw her arms about his neck, and hid her face in his bosom and said:

"The money cannot make me any happier than I am, Tom."

And even Grandmother Hunt declared: "The house don't seem too fine to me now, for there's love in it and truth in it, and my Tom is as happy as the day."

**Got What Was Not Wanted.**

At a meeting of philanthropists in New York, the other night, to consider the needs of prisoners, after the cause had been advocated in several speeches, Mr. Henry Bergh was called out, and said:

"I had no more idea of speaking when I came to this meeting to-night, than I had of dancing a pas seul. But you have called on me to speak, and you must take the consequences. All I shall say will be in direct opposition to the sentiments that have been here expressed. No man should commit crime. If a man cannot exist among us without committing murder, kill him; get him out of the way as soon as possible. What did we recently see in the Tombs? A man who was imprisoned for a most atrocious murder, whose heart was as black as his skin, was fairly besieged by beautiful women, who begged the favor of his autograph, fed him on luxuries, made his cell a bower of flowers and fruit, and did all in their power to make him imagine that he was a saint and a hero. This maudlin nonsense should stop. Why, kind-hearted, honest poor men were starving while this vile miscreant was being pampered in luxury. I have been sixteen years in the criminal courts looking after the welfare of what are called the lower animals, but I have a greater respect for them than I ever had before I had an opportunity of comparing them with some of the base and miserable samples of humanity that I have met in those courts. Animals never commit such acts as some of these horrible miscreants commit. A great deal has been said about penal institutions being reformed. I would abolish all of them except the high grade of prisons for the incarceration of the worst criminals, and I would set up whipping-posts everywhere to scourge the minor offenders. And to make sure that the lash would be put on feelingly, so that politics could not creep in to help the offender, I would offer a prize or reward for a steam machine that would have no mercy and could not be bribed. Criminals are pampered in such a manner and given such comfortable quarters in the Tombs and on the Island, and have so much better food and are so much better lodged than thousands of poor working people are, that they commit all the minor crimes in order to be sent to these comfortable public hotels. When will this nonsense stop? We should have the bastinado here. It is a charming style of whipping, and makes the recipient cry out justly that he will not do so any more, and be generally keeps his word. When I was in the East I asked my dragoman if these men kept their promises not to do so any more, and he looked at me with almost indescribable surprise as he responded, 'Oh, yes, they always keep their word; they are quite contented.'

"We want a good deal of that contentment here. The idea of a whipping

lowering a man in his own estimation is a farcical one. How much estimation has a man for himself when he preys on society? No; a whipping is the best kind of moral suasion you can give a criminal. Some want to take the confirmed criminal by the hand as soon as he comes out of prison, and do something for him—perhaps give him an office, perhaps send him to Congress; but they should not do that, for many bad men are already in office. The best thing you can do to a man who has served a term in prison is to get him sent off where he is not known and let him try life anew; there is no chance for him where he is known, and any attempted reformation based on the supposition that there is, is false and injurious. I have expressed my honest sentiments, and I hope I will be pardoned by those who differ with me."

**THEY ALL KNEW.**

Once in a lifetime you meet a man who will admit that he doesn't know all about a horse, but he may come around next day and claim to have been temporarily insane when he made the admission. As a rule, every man knows exactly what ails a horse, whether anything ails him or not, and can point out a dozen instances where nature could have improved on her work, no matter how well she did it.

Yesterday, a horse which had been looked over by the Fire Department, and rejected on account of size, was tied to a post on Griswold street. He was as sound as a dollar, not even showing a wind-puff. Pretty soon along came two lawyers, and one of them remarked:

"Pity such a fine animal as that is foundered."

"Yes, and I can see that he is wind-broken to boot," was the ready response.

Then the cashier of a bank halted and took a look at the horse's teeth. He was going away, when a mail carrier asked:

"How old do you call him?"

"Some men might buy him for twelve, but they couldn't fool me; that horse will never see sixteen again."

The best judges had called him six, and his owner had proofs that he wasn't a month older. The mail-carrier felt of the animal's ribs, rubbed his spine, and observed:

"He's got the bots, or I'm no judge of horses."

Then a merchant halted and surveyed the horse's legs, lifted its front feet, pinched its knee, and feelingly said:

"Been a pretty good stepper in his day, but he's gone to the crows now."

The next man was a book-keeper. It took him but five minutes to make up his mind that sweeny was the leading ailment, although poll-evil, heaves and glanders were present in a bad form.

"What is sweeny?" queried an innocent bootblack who had made up his mind that the horse had liver complaint.

"Sweeny!" repeated the book-keeper—"look at the way he carries his tail and learn what sweeny is."

"Oh, no," put in another—"sweeny affects the eyes."

"I guess not," said an insurance man, "I guess sweeny affects the lungs."

"Lungs!" cried a broker—"you mean the stomach!"

And they were jangling over it when the owner of the horse came and led him away.

**A Mouse That Drank Whiskey.**

A mouse intruded himself into a lady's chamber and found upon her toilet table a small vial of whiskey, which it is fair to say the lady used for the benefit of her crimps. The vial was stoppered with a paper cork, which of course was saturated with whiskey. The mouse nibbled off the top of the cork, and finally succeeded in drawing it, and then regaled itself with what the paper had absorbed. Under the stimulus thus obtained, it had made its presence in the room very evident and a careful search for it was instituted. It was soon discovered in the drawer of a bureau stretched out at full length on a comfortable bed dead drunk. When it was removed and thrown upon the ground the shock restored it to partial consciousness and to a staggering effort at locomotion. Moral—It is not safe even to smell the cork of a whiskey-bottle.