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A Worthless Lot
It Was Used For a Bridal Outfit

By MARGARET C. DEVEREAUX

One of the men who went to Colorado on the breaking out of the gold fever there was Amos Clark. His family consisted of his wife and his daughter, Maria, the latter sixteen years old. Clark was an uneducated man, but with a good deal of grit. Mrs. Clark was a sickly woman, while the daughter was a sprightly girl, but unsophisticated.

The Clarks were Missourians, and the natural route for them to take was overland from St. Joseph. Clark purchased an outfit consisting of a "prairie schooner"—the name given to the wagon used by emigrants crossing the plains—drawn by four horses, in which were stored such articles as would be needed on the journey. Jacob Cowdry, a young man who had been a neighbor of the family in Missouri, volunteered to go with them, and the offer was gladly accepted.

One leaving the Missouri river today in a palace car and skimming along over the plains can hardly realize what that journey was sixty years ago. True, the alkali plains are there; but, protected by the comfortable car, it is hard to appreciate what toiling along in a wagon would be over the limitless, unshaded stretch of country between the Missouri and the mountains. The route was infested with Indians, the atmosphere was so dry that the wheels of the wagons would shrink and fall apart, and there was lack of good water. On the way Clark fell ill, and Cowdry, who was only twenty years old, assumed the leadership. To his strength of will and his management was due the safe arrival of the family at the foot of the mountains, where, in the salubrious climate, they rested till Clark recovered. Then they ascended till they reached what afterward became Georgetown.

Gold was being taken out all along Clear creek, and Clark and Cowdry occupied themselves in washing for the precious metal—a process which consisted in putting dirt from the margin of the creek into a pan, washing it out and leaving tiny bits of gold, which sank to the bottom of the water in the pan. In this way they made a living, occasionally stopping their work to do some prospecting.

But the story of the Clark family is the same as that of nearly all gold hunters. No great luck came to them. Mrs. Clark died, and Maria, who by this time was eighteen years old, was obliged to supply her place. It was hard work for the girl, and she repined that she had been brought to a rough country, where she was spending her youth without the advantages of education or refinement.

Cowdry adored her. She appreciated his worth, but there was not in him that culture to which she aspired. The country was filling up with men who were bringing capital with them or representing capital, and Maria had her eyes open for a husband from among them.

Clark entered a number of claims, but had not the means to develop them. He was tied down to rocking pans of dirt in order to support himself and his daughter. Cowdry did some digging for himself and his friend, but did not strike pay dirt.

Such was the situation when Clark died. Maria, being cut off from her father's support, lived by disposing one by one of the claims he had left her. Cowdry would have gladly married her, but she looked higher. While her property was passing out of her hands a young man named Stapleton came from the east, representing or claiming to represent eastern capitalists desirous of investing their money in Colorado gold property.

One day some prospectors went to Stapleton and set him into the secret that they had struck a vein of rich ore and would like to get some money with which to develop it. Stapleton made an investigation and found that the vein widened toward a five-acre claim to the west. He represented no capital, as he pretended, but had gone out to Colorado, to try to make money by his wits. Telling the prospectors that he would write to his principals of the find and endeavor to secure the capital necessary to develop it, he set about to discover the owner of the lot lying to the west, with a view to getting possession of it before the owner became aware of its value.

Now, this lot was the last of the claims that Amos Clark had left his daughter, Maria. The only reason it was the last was that it was supposed to be the least valuable. At any rate, so she considered it.

Learning that the property belonged to Maria Clark, Stapleton sought her and, finding that she was a marriageable young woman, laid his plans accordingly. Without saying anything about her property, he began to pay court to her. This was exactly what she wished, and had not Stapleton been an unscrupulous adventurer there would have been no reason why she should not encourage him. He did not delay his courtship, enhancing his suit by telling Maria that he had secret information of a mine which promised to be a bonanza and for the development of which he was about to procure capital. As organizer of the com-

pany he expected to receive a stock of stock that would make him rich.

Stapleton was so far above Maria in outward appearance that she was troubled by the difference. She was very desirous of lessening this gap by improving her wardrobe and was planning for this when her lover came to her and announced that the mine which he was to promote had assayed \$2000 to the ton, that he was anxious to get his company organized at once and some one else should hear of its value and get ahead of him. He had really got an assay of ore from the vein showing the proportion of gold he obtained, and this was all the truth there was to his story. He asked Maria to marry him at once and go east with him on his quest.

Maria demurred at such haste simply for the reason that she did not consider herself presentable as a bride, especially to the grand folks in the east to whom her lover would introduce her. She did not give him this as a reason; she told him that he was a stranger to her and she didn't like to take the risk of marrying him without his being vouched for. Stapleton, failing to persuade her to marry at once, gave her references in Denver.

This suited Maria's plans exactly. She would go to Denver, get some apparel that would be more appropriate for a bride than her cheap, soiled garments, see the persons referred to and return without a word to her fiancé of what she was going to do. But one thing interfered with her plans—she had neither money for the journey nor for the clothes.

There was but one way for her to secure the necessary funds, and from this she shrank. Jacob Cowdry might possibly have enough for the purpose and would doubtless let her have it, but she knew that he loved her, and how could she ask him for money with which to buy a trousseau for marriage with a rival?

While she was trying to throw off her repugnance Jacob came to see her. She received him with so much graciousness that it excited in him a hope that she might yet be won.

"Jake," she said, "I need some money."

"How much do you want?" he asked.

"Oh, about \$500."

"I've got something over \$400. Can you make that do?"

"Reckon."

"All right; I'll go and get it for you."

"But I've only one way of paying you—the last of the claims father left me, and that isn't worth \$50. I've been trying to sell it for that, and I can't."

"I don't want any return, Maria. You know that anything I have you're welcome to."

This staggered her. She was not dishonorable and would not accept such a favor without telling the truth. She did so and was pained at the impression her revelation made on him. He did not speak for some time, then said:

"Maria, I'll not deny that this is a shock to me, but we must stand what is meted out to us, and I will do anything to make you happy."

The girl winced, but she had made up her mind to better her condition for the present and the future, and she steeled herself to what she was doing. She permitted Jake to go for the money and when he had gone unlocked a tin box in which she kept the deed to the last of the lots her father had left her and, taking it out, assigned it to Jacob Cowdry. When Jake returned with the money she hung her head in silence for awhile, then handed him the deed, saying:

"It's all I have to repay you, Jake, but I shall never forget your kindness."

"I don't want it," said Jake.

"Take it. I will feel better if you do and will be happier if it should some day turn out to be valuable."

Jake took the deed, remembering that he would need a wedding gift and this was all he had to offer. Then he went away. As soon as he had gone Maria sat down and cried.

Stapleton missed Maria the next day, and he concluded that she had gone to Denver. The references he had given her were his pals, and he knew they would give a good account of him, so he rubbed his hands gleefully and awaited her return with impatience.

When he saw Maria again she was dressed becomingly, and it occurred to him that if he really wanted a wife he might be inclined to keep her after he had married her. He complimented her on the clothes she had purchased.

"They're all I have in the world," she said. "You'll have to take me as I am or not at all."

"I love you for yourself alone. But how," he asked presently, "did you get money to buy this outfit?"

"I owned five acres of worthless land. I sold it for \$400."

Stapleton started—started inwardly, not outwardly. His cold gray eye was fixed upon her, but gave no sign of what was passing within him. Then, after having secured a promise from her to marry him the next day, he departed.

That was the last Maria ever saw of him. Where he went she did not know. On the day the wedding was to be celebrated he did not appear, but Cowdry came with the deed, re-assigned to her for a wedding gift. Throwing her arms about his neck, she said with tear dimmed eyes:

"Jake, I'm going to be married to-day, and I'm going to marry you if you'll take me."

Jake took her gaily, and the ceremony had no sooner been performed when a man appeared and offered Jake \$10,000 for his lot. Jake concluded to look into the matter and refused to sell. He and his wife owned it in one of the large gold mines of Colorado.

WOLVES OF LABRADOR.

Story of a Child and the Squaws Who Tried to Save Her.

A Labrador missionary, says Mortimer Batten in the Wide World Magazine, told me a curious story which occurred on the Labrador coast some years ago. One night the little daughter of a certain brave was missing, and, on discovering the child's tracks in the snow, a party of squaws set out to look for her.

What was their alarm when, a little way from camp, they found that the footprints of a great gray wolf accompanied those of the child. The brute did not appear to have harmed her, but had apparently frisked along ahead, enticing the child farther and farther from camp. In all probability the child mistook it for a dog and followed readily, though the superstitious Indians, of course, believed that the brute had exercised some devilish influence over her.

Darkness was creeping on and, though much afraid, the squaws continued to follow the tracks of the wolf and the child. Night found them far from home, when what was their horror to find that they themselves had been deceived and were now surrounded by wolves!

Only one squaw survived the night of horror that ensued to return next morning to bear tidings of the calamity to camp.

SHORTHAND BLUNDERS.

Misplaced or Wrong Vowels Lead to Queer Translations.

A volume could be filled with amusing stories of shorthand mistakes, the greater number of them due to misplaced vowels. For instance, "This day is big with fate," while "Do not indulge in spite" came out "Do not indulge in spit," and "A house of many gables" was transcribed into "A house of many gabbles."

The use of the wrong vowel may have the most amusing result, as in the phrase "Man, know thyself," which was once converted in the report of a sermon into "Man, gnaw thyself." To replace a vowel is in shorthand the easiest thing in the world. T. A. Reed, the well known reporter, tells of a pupil who by this means turned "mighty acts" into "mighty cats," and another report of a sermon was spoiled by the advice "Return a blow with an ax." Instead of "a kiss."

The "reporting style" in which the vowels are omitted altogether for the sake of rapidity, is responsible for the famous American story of the short-hand clerk who took down a note of his wife's instruction to "be sure to remember to bring home some castle soap" and, as a result, returned home with a tin of oxtail soup—London Strand Magazine.

No Airs About Her.

"Airs" exclaimed the proud mother and shook her head vigorously. "My Elsie, for all her learning, hasn't any more airs, so to speak, than her poor old dad."

"Then she won't turn up her nose at her old friends?" queried the visitor.

"La, no!"

"How refreshing! Most girls who go through college nowadays will hardly look at you after they're graduated."

"Well, they ain't like my Elsie, that's all I can say," retorted Elsie's ma. "She's become a carnivorous reader, of course, and she frequently importunes me, but stuck up—my Elsie? Not a bit! She's unanimous to everybody, has a most infantile vocabulary and, what's more, never keeps a calmer waiting while she dresses up. No, she just runs down, nom de plume, as she is."—Philadelphia Ledger.

Her Dainty Speech.

There was one young woman in the box party at the theater who took no part in the noisy clatter and giggle. With her gaze fixed upon the stage she watched the progress of the play, indifferent to the gayety around her except that her delicate, aristocratic, finely chiseled features bore a look of weariness and a scornful smile curled her lips. At last, however, she turned her head slowly and looked at the other members of the party. Then she spoke to the elderly matron sitting by her side. "That chicken in the blue kimono," she said, "thinks she is the whole 'custard!'"—Argonaut.

Lines of Bohemia.

One of the oldest and most important industries of northern Bohemia is that of linen weaving, which furnishes employment under favorable conditions to fully 25,000 people, who are so skilled and clever in the production of fine linens that these goods are favorably known and find a ready market in all parts of the world.

Chloroform.

Chloroform was the result of ages of experiment in an effort to do away with the pain of surgical operations. Opium and many other drugs had been tried with more or less success. In executions by crucifixion vinegar and gall or myrrh were given to the victim to stupefy him.

Not Deceived.

"Never in my life have I deceived my wife."

"Same here. Mine only pretends to believe the yarns I tell."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

He Loved Nature.

Roskin's injunction to his servants: "Call me from my study whenever there is a beautiful sunset or any unusual appearance in the sky or land escape."

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