

HELENA'S JEWELS

The drooping branches of the giant pepper trees, laden with their rich red berries, for it was the fall of the year, were casting their shadows on the bare ground beneath them, worn brown and hard by the scraping of many feet.

For a generation he had kept the curio shop which had been a source of income from the pockets of the tourists who came daily to visit the little frontier town.

He had long been contemplating a certain match for his nephew, and now some twinges of hereditary gout in his limbs, ascending higher and higher, warned him that the hand of the grisly skeleton, death, might at any time be stretched forth to seize his own in an eternal grasp.

Pedro Nunez loved the boy as well as it was possible for him to love any one, but his heart was in his purse.

The gate clicked on its hinges. "Is it thou, Pedrocito?" he called out, in a thin, cracked voice.

"Yes, uncle," was the reply, as a tall, handsome young fellow, with dark, olive skin and flashing black eyes, came forward smilingly.

"Is the store closed?" "Yes, uncle."

"Good sales to-day?" "Very good. There was a great crowd. I have sold all but four of the Navajo blankets."

"That is well, and so early in the season! Sit thee down, my boy. I have been thinking."

Pedro sat down as commanded. "I wish thee to marry, my boy—and soon."

"Yes, uncle," replied the young man, lighting a cigarette. "I, too, have been thinking of it."

The old man glanced sharply at his nephew. Could it be possible that he had placed his affections on some one? But no, he had neither heard nor seen anything in his conduct that would indicate a preference.

"I have chosen a wife for thee, my boy."

"Chosen a wife for me!" exclaimed the youth, unable to conceal his surprise at this proceeding on the part of his uncle, who, though in some respects arbitrary, had never been a tyrant.

To young Pedro this last move on the part of the old man was both strange and tyrannical.

"Yes," answered his uncle shortly, not well pleased with his nephew's tone. "She who will be thy wife very soon—I hope—is Maria Ascension Velasquez."

Now, if there was a girl in the pueblo whom young Pedro disliked, it was that same Maria. Neither beautiful, amiable nor industrious, she queened it over the others by reason of the position of her father, the alcalde, and also because, after old Pedro Nunez, he was the richest man in Santa Marta.

"Hast thou spoken to her, uncle?" inquired Pedrocito, sarcastically. The tone was not lost on the old man.

"I spoken to her?" answered he. "That is for thee to do, my boy."

"And that I shall never do," was the reply. "I do not like her—no one likes her. It is only for the riches of her father that she will ever be married. Not for all the wealth of the City of Mexico would I be tied to such a one as Maria Velasquez."

Then before his astonished uncle could reply, he cleared his throat, and in a voice which endeavored to be firm, but which trembled unmistakably, he added, "Besides, I have already chosen."

"Thou hast already chosen!" cried the old man, his shaking hands closing above his polished black staff.

"And whom, pray?" "The little schoolmistress."

"The little schoolmistress," repeated old Pedro, his thin, high voice palpitating with rage. "That daughter of a—"

"Of a very good man, uncle, as thou well knowest. More than once he was a friend to thee and thine."

"That white-faced, slender, puny, poverty-stricken—"

"Have a care, have a care, uncle," again interrupted Pedro the younger, rising to his feet. "Thou art old, and I owe thee gratitude, but I can not bear too much from thee. White-faced she is indeed, and I marvel greatly that she could see ought to favor in my brown skin. Slender is she, as thou sayest, but that I much prefer to the awkward stoutness of—"

"Now, now, no more," shouted the old man, also on his feet. "What dowry will she bring thee?"

"Jewels," answered the young man with great promptness.

"Jewels! Where hath she even the gold to buy them? She hath deluded thee."

"They are of a quality which cannot be bought," said Pedro, his eyes and lips smiling. "They were given her."

"When, and by whom?" "At her birth, by a fairy godmother."

"Thou dost rave, boy."

"Nevertheless it is true, uncle."

"Bov, thou art a fool! I will disown thee."

"Very well, uncle. I am sorry, but it must be—"

"So be it. I am young and strong. I can work. I have still the ranch my father left me."

Leaning heavily upon his stick, grumbling as he went, the old man disappeared within doors. Not a word was spoken between uncle or nephew during the evening meal. And the breach widened daily.

But the bark of Pedro Nunez was worse than his bite. No more was said of disinheritance, though the old man had changed toward his nephew.

He simply endured what he could not prevent, and a few days before the marriage announced that he was going to live with his niece, Dolores Tata, the daughter of his late wife's sister, as the house had really belonged to the father of young Pedro.

This project he at once carried into effect, much to the satisfaction of Dolores, who hoped entirely to supplant the young man in the affections of his uncle.

Her attentions were so assiduous as almost to become wearisome. She hovered constantly about him, while his desire was to be left alone. She was continually inventing new dishes for his delectation, while he preferred those, few and simple, to which he had been accustomed.

At length this assiduity and unwonted vigilance in his regard awakened his suspicions of her motives. He began to sigh so heavily by day, and to groan in his sleep so persistently by night, that Dolores grew alarmed.

"Uncle! she said one morning, "are you ill?"

"No, heja mia," replied the old man. "Put I am sad and troubled."

"Why, uncle?" "For that I am a poor man in my last days, instead of being able to count my possessions up into the thousands, as I had hoped."

"But how is that, uncle?" "Did you not know, then, that I gave up all to Pedro?"

"Not the store?" "Yes, the store and all its contents."

"Without compensation?" "Surely, heja mia."

"But what folly! It is not like you."

"Pedrocito, I feel very unhappy where I am," said the old man, after he had settled himself satisfactorily. "I am sorry to hear it, uncle," rejoined his nephew.

"Dolores is a deceitful woman. She is kind only because she hopes to enrich herself later."

"How do you know that?" "Never mind, but I do know it. I am bothered besides, with her officiousness."

"That is a pity. What will you do?" "I long for the old home, Pedrocito. For my own room, with the great bed and the heavy hangings, keeping one so warm in winter time, for the old bench under the big pepper tree—my favorite seat during forty years."

"You would have us go elsewhere, then, and take back the house?" "Go!" exclaimed the old man. "Is it not thy own house?"

"But we could—to please you and make you happy."

"Thou stupid one! Thor pig-headed boy! Dost not understand?" "No, uncle, I do not," answered his nephew. "Explain what you want."

"To live there—with thee and thy wife, if she will take me. Doubtless she will not, since thou hast told her what I said of her."

"That I have never told her, uncle. I love her and thee too well," answered the young man, relapsing into the affectionate address of former days.

The old man was silent; a tear shone in his eye.

"Thou wilt be welcome," Pedro continued. "Thy old room has never been dismantled."

The uncle Pedro wiped his nose with his big red handkerchief.

"Go, prepare her," he said, "and then send to Dolores for my goods. I will follow thee."

An hour later he appeared at the gate of his former abode. The young wife, arm in arm with her husband, came to meet him, kissed him on both cheeks as though he had been her father, and led him to his former apartment. He said little, but content and joy shone in his every feature. The days flew quickly, and he was happy. Domenica, the old servant, had been retained and between her and the new mistress, the house

in that way. And I, too, have good news," he went on. "Some money has come to me that I did not expect. An old debt—with interest for many years."

"How much?" inquired Dolores, assuming her sweetest manner.

"Three thousand dollars." Then sotto voce, "He can not live long."

"Yes, it was a windfall."

"Indeed it must have been, uncle. And thou art tired of thy present house, I am sure. What kind of cooking can the Americana do for thee? I have such a large kitchen I could turn the dining room into a pleasant bedroom for thee. Whenever thou wilt, thine mayest come, uncle."

"I thank thee, Dolores," said the old man, preparing to depart, "but I am very well contented with Helena, and there are jewels in that home to which I have become so attached that I could not bring myself to leave them."

"Jewels! To whom do these jewels belong, uncle?"

"To Helena. I see them every day."

"Where did she get them?" "They were given to her at her birth."

"At her birth? Why does she not sell them?"

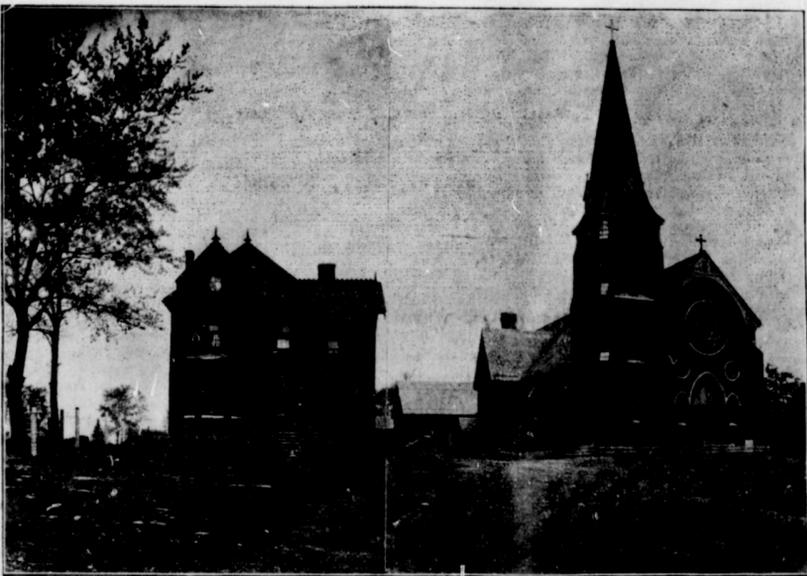
"They would be worthless then. They cannot be bought or sold."

"Thou art a silly, drivelling old man," cried Dolores, shaking her fist in his face. "Why dost thou come here with thy nonsense? I believe neither in the tale of the money nor the jewels—one is as false as the other."

"That is as thou pleasest, Dolores," said old Pedro in a slow, drawling voice, getting out of the way as he spoke. "I think it is the last time I shall visit thy house, as I have no desire to be insulted by thee."

Ten months later the old man died. Some time before his last illness he paid several visits to the only notary of the village, who came two days after the funeral, on a Sunday afternoon, to read the will at the house of young Pedro in the presence of such among the friends and relatives as desired to hear it.

He had remembered a few old acquaintances, together with Domenica, in small amounts; the church and Pa-



PRESBYTERY AND NEW CHURCH Of St. Columbkille, Uptergrove, of which Rev. Jas. B. Dollard is Pastor.

"Perhaps not; the evil is done."

"But Pedro surely supports you?" "Barely. And now he refuses to do that, unless I go to live at his house. He does not feel able, he says, to pay my board here."

"Is it he who pays, uncle?" "It is he who pays."

"And little enough," said Dolores, sharply.

"It seems I shall have to go, Dolores. So kind have you been, and so attentive, for the little that has been given you. I can never forget it. I am sad to leave you. If I could but remain in this comfortable home, where I do not feel that I am a stranger. I have not long to live and—"

"Quien sabe?" replied the woman, shrilly. "You may live till you are a hundred. If Pedro will no longer pay your board, it is better that he keep you under his own roof. I am a poor woman, and am not able to house paupers."

"Thank you, daughter," said old Nunez, rising and slowly hobbling into his room, where he began to pack up his possessions, a work which was soon accomplished. Leaving his effects in readiness to be moved, he took himself to the store of his nephew, which he never entered now save as one business partner calling upon another in search of his dividends. Therefore it was with no little surprise that Pedro saw his uncle approaching. He went to meet him, received him kindly, and pushed forward a comfortable arm-chair.

had taken on a more pleasant and comfortable aspect. Love, and the peace love brings reigned in that little household; the old man basked in its sunshine. Nothing was ever said on either side about remuneration. The nephew would have scorned to ask money from the one who had given him nearly everything he possessed, and it never entered the mind of Ellen Nunez, or Helena, as the old man called her, to wonder or inquire regarding the subject.

One day as they were seated side by side under the pepper-tree, she with her sewing, and he with his inextinguishable cheroot, he said:

"Helena, where dost thou keep thy jewels?"

"My jewels, uncle! I have none."

"Hast never had?" "Never. You know very well I was only a poor girl."

"Yes, yes, but some one told me once that thou hadst some."

"They jested, then, or mocked me," said Ellen. "Pedro will tell thee I had not as much as a gold ornament until he placed the wedding ring upon my finger."

"I believe thee, my child. It is nothing. Let it pass. An old man's memory is often at fault."

The next day he went into the store.

"Where does Helena keep her jewels, Pedro?" he inquired.

"Her jewels!" laughed the young man. "Hast thou not seen them yet? Thine eyes must be failing—she wears them every day."

The old man looked at him curiously.

"Ah!" he said. "I believe I understand. I am not so slow or so stupid. I believe I understand," and he hobbled home again.

A few days after this he went to the house of Dolores. She received him very coolly. Scarcely was he seated in the parlor when she remarked:

"I have rented thy room to the commercial traveller who runs between here and San Diego. He makes two trips a week, and is away half the time. And he pays a good rent."

"That is well," said the old man, "that is well. I am glad to know that thou canst turn an honest penny

dre Juan Bautista also came in for a share, while his nephew received the store, all the merchandise and the land on which it stood. The will then went on as follows:

"To my niece-in-law, Dolores Tata, in consideration of her loving care and attention—when I did not need it—and her contempt of me when she thought I did—I leave the sum of three dollars, together with three counsels, viz., First, to try to cultivate respect for the aged; second, to look about her for some roots of charity and plant them in her heart; third, to make an effort to hide from her countenance, if she can not banish them from her breast, the evil passions of avarice and ill-nature which now disfigure it, that her neighbors may not flee from her in disgust and abhorrence."

"Lastly, I leave to my dear niece, Helena, the wife of my beloved nephew, Pedro Nunez, the sum of three thousand dollars, wherewith to purchase an appropriate setting for the three priceless jewels in her possession, and with which she was endowed at her birth, and which she has kept bright and beautiful through all the years of her sweet and useful life. These jewels are the virtues of kindness, cheerfulness, and industry, which can neither be bought, sold, given away, nor stolen, and I pray God that their luster shall never diminish, nor their value decrease in her kind and affectionate heart."

"That night there was joy and gratitude and prayers for the departed in the house of Pedro Nunez and his sweet young wife, but I am afraid that behind the closed and darkened windows of Dona Dolores Tata there were more maledictions than blessings—and perhaps, a few angry tears.

—Mary E. Mannix.

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THE LAST OF MAY

(By Father Ryan.)

In the mystical dim of the temple, In the dream-haunted dim of the day, The sunlight spoke soft to the shadows, And said: "With my gold and your gray, Let us meet at the shrine of the Virgin, And ere her fair feast pass away, Let us weave there a mantle of glory To deck the last evening of May."

The tapers were lit on the altar, With garlands of lilies between; And the steps leading up to the statue Flashed bright with the roses' red sheen;

The sunbeams came down from the heavens Like angels, to hallow the scene, And they seemed to kneel down with the shadows That crept to the shrine of the Queen.

The singers, their hearts in their voices, Had chanted the anthems of old, And the last trembling wave of the Vespers On the far shores of silence had rolled.

And there—at the Queen-Virgin's altar— The sun wove the mantle of gold, While the hands of the twilight were weaving A fringe for the flash of each fold.

And wavelessly, in the deep silence, Three banners hung peaceful and low— They bore the bright blue of the heavens, They wore the pure white of the snow—

And beneath them fair children were kneeling, Whose faces, with graces aglow, Seemed sinless, in land that is sinful, And woeless, in life full of woe.

Their heads wore the veil of the lily, Their brows wore the wreath of the rose, And their hearts, like their flutterless banners, Were stilled in a holy repose.

Their shadowless eyes were uplifted, Whose glad gaze would never disclose That from eyes that are most like the heavens The dark rain of tears soorest flows.

The banners were borne to the railing, Beneath them, a group from each band; And they bent their bright folds for the blessing That fell from the priest's lifted hand.

And he signed the three fair, silken standards, With a sign never foe could withstand. What stirred them? The breeze of the evening? Or a breath from the far angel-land?

Then came, two by two, to the altar, The young, and the pure, and the fair. Their faces the mirror of Heaven, Their hands folded meekly in prayer.

They came for a simple blue ribbon, For love of Christ's Mother to wear; And I believe, with the Children of Mary, The Angels of Mary were there.

Ah, faith! simple faith of the children! You still shame the faith of the old! Ah, love! simple love of the little, You still warm the love of the cold!

And the beautiful God who is wandering Far out in the world's dreary wold, Finds a home in the hearts of the children, And a rest with the lambs of the fold.

Swept a voice, was it wafted from Heaven? Heard you ever the sea when it sings, Where it sleeps on the shore in the night time?

Heard you ever the hymns the breeze brings From the hearts of a thousand bright summers? Heard you ever the bird, when she springs To the clouds, till she seems to be only A song of a shadow on wings?

Came a voice; and an "Ave Maria" Rose out of a heart rapture-thrilled,

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And in the embrace of its music The souls of a thousand lay stilled. A voice with the tones of an angel, Never flowed such a sweetness distilled; It faded away—but the temple With its perfume of worship was filled.

Then back to the Queen-Virgin's altar The white veils swept on, two by two; And the holiest halo of heaven Flashed out from the ribbons of blue;

And they laid down the wreaths of the roses Whose hearts were as pure as their hue; Ah! they to the Christ are the truest, Whose loves to the Mother are true!

And thus, in the dim of the temple, In the dream-haunted dim of the day, The Angels and Children of Mary Met ere their Queen's Feast passed away.

Where the sunbeams knelt down with the shadows And wove with their gold and their gray A mantle of grace and of glory For the last, lovely evening of May.

Inspection of House of Providence, Toronto

I made an official visit of inspection to the House of Providence, Toronto, April 26, 1906, when I found 571 inmates in residence, 83 of whom were infants specially cared for in separate apartments.

On inspection I found the building in good condition of repair. The beds and bedding, halls, dormitories, closets, drainage, ventilation and water supply were all found satisfactory.

The dietary is good, and the quality of the food supplied is nutritious and wholesome.

This institution is under the management of Mother Superior and thirty Sisters, and the neat, clean and tidy condition in which I found all apartments of the institution on the occasion of my visit was evidence of the care and attention manifested by those in charge.

The capacity of the House is always taxed, on account of the large number of applications from indigent persons seeking admission.

Since my last visit there have been many improvements. The fire protection is much better. A stand-pipe has been installed, and there is now hose on each flat, ready at a moment's notice in case of fire.

Fire escapes are also in good order. Many parts of the building have been recently painted, and gas is being introduced in order to do away with the use of coal-oil lamps.

Splendid new boilers have been installed and the equipment of the institution throughout is very satisfactory.

A new building is about to be erected on one portion of the property, which will afford a very desirable home for the infants, who will then be removed from the apartments they now occupy in the main building.

This will not only be very much better for the welfare and safety of the infants, but it will also afford more enlarged accommodation for the old people in the institution. The plans for the new Infants' Home have been submitted to the Department and duly approved of.

When completed the new building is likely to be a model one for the purposes to which it will be dedicated.

On examining the books I found the entries were neatly and correctly made. The receipts and expenditures are carefully looked after, and the whole institution managed with the utmost economy and prudence.

My visit of inspection gave me an opportunity of seeing every part of the institution and carefully inquiring into its management. I was favorably impressed with the discipline and order. The Sisters in charge are evidently kind and attentive to those committed to their care.

The inmates appeared cheerful and contented. (Signed) R. W. BRUCE SMITH, Inspector.

My five-year-old daughter was eating pancakes for breakfast. She cut off a little piece and said: "This is the baby pancake"; then a larger piece, saying: "This is the mamma pancake." Then she ate the little piece, and, taking the larger piece on her fork, said: "Don't cry, baby, your mamma is coming."

What coat is finished without buttons, and put on wet? A coat of paint.

Why should a housekeeper never put the letter "M" into her refrigerator? Because it would change ice into mice.

