

THE CUSTOM OF THE COUNTRY

"Well, thank you just as much—I haven't done anything, Brig," answered Bowles with a reassuring smile. "But," he added, "that's no reason for not getting out of town."

They packed their horse hurriedly, and Bowles rode on ahead, but once on the open prairie he gave way to a hearty laugh.

"Brig," he said, "what in the world do you think I've done?"

"Well, I dunno," mumbled Brig, looking him over shrewdly. "Of course, I knowed all along they was nothin' to that Christabel talk—stands to reason a man wouldn't leave home for a little thing like that. About that aunt, now, that sounds a little more likely—but I've knowed fellers that come out here jest fer fun."

"Yes, but this deputy sheriff—and all that!"

"We-ell," drawled Brigham, with a sly twinkle in his eye, "I heeard a little more from him than what I told you at the first!"

"Oh, indeed! And what else did you hear?"

"Well——" Brig stopped and stuck his tongue in his cheek roguishly. "He said it was a woman that wanted you!"

"My aunt!" exclaimed Bowles, striking his leg; but Brig only spat and grinned.

"Sure!" he said, and grinned again.

"I have it!" cried Bowles. "Mrs. Lee wrote back and told her sister I was here—and then my