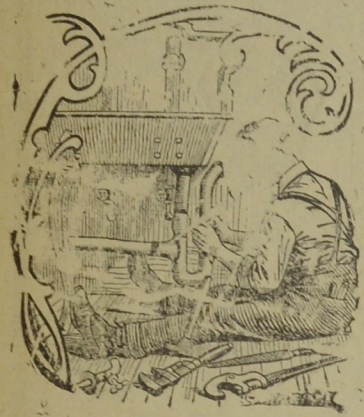


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CY WHITTAKER'S PLACE

Up at the Cy Whittaker place the
days were run ones. There also re-
gular questions were discussed with
Georgianna, the board of strategy, Jo-
siah Dimick occasionally and more
infrequently still Miss Dawes as par-
ticipants with Captain Cy in the dis-
cussions. Rumors were true in so far
as they related to Mr. Atkins' appeal
to the courts and the captain's retain-
ing Lawyer Peabody of Ostable. Mr.
Peabody's opinion of the case was not
encouraging.

"You see, captain," he said when his
client visited him at his office, "the
odds are very much against us. The
court appointed you as guardian with
the understanding that this man
Thomas was dead. Now he is alive
and claims his child. More than that,
he has the most influential politician
in this county back of him. We
wouldn't stand a fighting chance ex-
cept for one thing—Thomas himself.
He left his wife and the baby; desert-
ed them, so she said; went to get work,
he says. We can prove he was a
drunken blackguard before he went
and that he has been drunk since he
came back. But they'll say—Atkins
and his lawyer—that the man was des-
perate and despairing because of your
refusal to give him his child. They'll
hold him up as a repentant sinner an-
xious to reform and needing the little

girl's influence to help keep him
straight. That's their game, and they'll
play it—be sure of that. It sounds
reasonable enough, too, for sinners have
repented before now. And the long
lost father coming back to his child is
the one sure thing to win applause
from the gallery—you know that."

Captain Cy nodded.
He stopped, rose and, striding over
to the window, stood looking out.

"How does she feel about it her-
self?" asked Peabody.

"Her? Bos'n? Why, that's the
hardest of all. Some of the children
at school pester her about her father.
I don't know's you can blame 'em—
young ones are made that way, I guess
—but she comes home to me cryin',
and it's 'Oh, Uncle Cy, he ain't my
truly father, is he?' and 'You won't
let him take me away from you, will
you?' till it seems as if I should fly
out of the window. The poor little
thing! And that puffed up humbug
Atkins blivin' about his Christianity
and all! I've seen heathen Injuns,
who never heard of Christ, with more
of His spirit inside 'em. There! I've
shocked you, I guess. Sometimes I
think this place is too narrer and
cramped for me. I've been around,
you know, and my New England
bringin' up has wore thin in spots.
Seem's if I must get somewheres and
spread out or I'll bust."

He threw himself into a chair. The
lawyer clapped him on the shoulder.

"There, there, captain," he said.
"Don't 'bust' yet awhile. Don't give
up the ship. If we lose in one court
we can appeal to another, and so on
up the line. And meantime we'll do a
little investigating of friend Thomas'
career since he left Concord. I've
written to a legal acquaintance of
mine in Butte, giving him the facts
as we know them and a description
of Thomas. He will try to find out
what the fellow did in his years out
west. It's our best chance, as I told
you. Keep your pluck up and wait
and see."

The captain repeated this conver-
sation to the board of strategy when
he returned to Bayport. Miss Dawes
had walked home from school with
Bos'n and had stopped at the house
to hear the report. She listened, but
it was evident that something else
was on her mind.

"Captain Whittaker," she asked, "has
it ever struck you as queer that Mr.
Atkins should take such an interest in
this matter? He is giving time and
counsel and money to help this man
Thomas, who is a perfect stranger to
him. Why does he do it?"

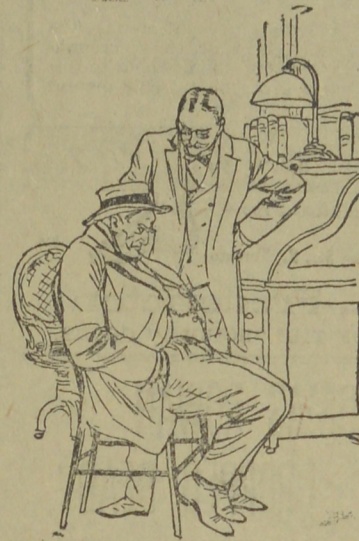
Captain Cy smiled.

"Why?" he repeated. "Why, to down
me, of course. I was gettin' too ever-
lastin' prominent in politics to suit
him. I'd got you in as teacher, and I
had Lanzo Snow as good as licked for
school committee. Goodness knows
what I might have run for next, 'ordin-
in' to Heman's reasonin', and I simply
had to be smashed. It worked all
right. I'm so unhealthy now in the
sight of most folks in this town that I
call 'em they go home and sulphur
smoke their clothes after they meet
me, so's not to catch my wickedness."

But the teacher shook her head.

"That doesn't seem reason enough to
me," she declared. "Just see what
Mr. Atkins has done. He never open-
ly advocated anything in town meet-
ing before. You said so yourself.
Even when he must have realized that
you had the votes for committeeman
he kept still. He might have taken
many of them from you by simply
coming out and declaring for Mr.
Snow, but he didn't. And then all at
once he takes this astonishing stand.
Captain Whittaker, Mr. Tidditt says
that the night of Emily's birthday party
you and he told who she was by ac-
cident and that Mr. Atkins seemed
very much surprised and upset. Is
that so?"

Captain Cy laughed.



MEYER

"DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP."

"His lemonade was upset. That's
all I noticed special. Oh, yes! And
he lost his hat off goin' home. But
what of it? What are you drivin' at
now?"

"I was wondering if—if it could be
that for some reason Mr. Atkins had a
spite against Emily or her people or if
he had any reason to fear her."

"Fear! Fear Bos'n? Oh, my, that's
funny! You've been readin' novels.
I'm afraid, teacher, though I didn't
suspect it of you."

He laughed heartily. Miss Dawes
smiled, too, but she still persisted.

"Well," she said, "I don't know. Per-
haps it is because I'm a woman and
politics doesn't mean as much to me as
to you men, but to me political reasons
don't seem strong enough to account
for such actions as those of Mr. At-
kins. Emily's mother was a Thayer,
wasn't she? And the Thayers once
lived in Orham. I wish we could find
out more about them while they lived
there."

Asaph Tidditt pulled his beard
thoughtfully.

"Well," he observed, "I was kind of
callin' to go to Orham next week on
a little visit. Seth Wingate over there
—Barzilla Wingate's cousin, Whit—is a
sort of relation of mine. Seth's been
Orham town clerk about as long as
I've been the Bayport one, and he's
lived there all his life. What he don't
know about Orham folks ain't wuth
knowin'. If you say so I'll pump him
about the Thayers and the Richards."

So it was settled that Mr. Wingate
should be subjected to the "pumping"
process when Asaph visited him. He
departed for this visit the following
week and remained away for ten days.
Meanwhile several things happened in
Bayport.

One of these things was the farewell
of the Hon. Heman Atkins. Congress
was to open at Washington, and the
honorable heeded the call of duty.
Alicia and the housekeeper went with
him, and the big house was closed for
the winter.

And on the day following Mr. Thom-
as, the prodigal father, also left town.
A position in Boston had been offered
him, he said, and he felt that he must
accept it.

(To be Continued)

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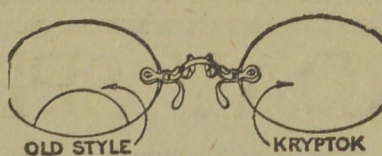
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