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# CY WHITTAKER'S PLACE

"Position offered him! Um—ya-as!" quoth Dimick, the cynical, in conversation with Captain Cy. "Inspector of sidewalks, I shouldn't wonder. Well, please don't ask me if I think Heman sent him to Boston so's to have him out of the way and 'cause he'd feel consider'ble safer than if he was loose down here. Don't ask me that, for, with my strict scruples against the truth I might say no. As it is, I say nothin' and wink my port eye."

The ten day visit ended. Mr. Tidditt returned to Bayport. On the afternoon of his return he and Bailey called at the Whittaker place, and there they were joined by Miss Dawes, who had been summoned to the conclave by a note intrusted to Bos'n.

"Now, Ase," ordered Captain Cy as the quartet gathered in the sitting room, "here we are, hangin' on your words, as the feller said. Don't keep us strung up too long. What did you find out?"

"Well," said Mr. Tidditt, with a glare at Bangs, "I asked Seth about the Thayers and the Richards folks the very first night I struck Orham. He remembered 'em."

"Folks used to call John Thayer a smart young feller, so Seth said. They used to call late that he'd rise high in the seafarin' and shipownin' line. Maybe he would, only he died somewhere in California 'long in '54 or thereabouts. 'Twas the time of the gold craziness out there, and he left his ship and went gold huntin'.

"And the next thing they knew he was dead and buried."

"When was that?" inquired the schoolmistress.

"In '54, I tell you. So Seth says."

"What ship was he on?" asked Bailey.

"Wan't on any ship. Why don't you listen instead of settin' there moonin'?" He was gold diggin', I tell you."

"He'd been on a ship, hadn't he? What was the name of her?"

"I didn't ask. What difference does that make?"

"Wasn't Mr. Atkins at sea in those days?" put in the teacher. The captain answered her.

"Yes, he was," he said—"that is, I think he was. He was away from here when I skipped out, and he didn't get back till '61 or thereabouts."

"So that was all you could find out, hey, Ase?" asked the captain. "Well, it's at least as much as I expected. You see, teacher, these story book notions don't work out when it comes to real life."

Miss Dawes was plainly disappointed.

"I wish we knew more," she said. "Who was on this ship with Mr. Thayer, and who sent the news of his death home?"

"Oh, I can tell you that," said Asaph. "Twas some one boss doctor out there, gold minin' himself, he was. John died of a quick fever; got cold and went off in no time. Seth remembered that much, though he couldn't remember the doctor's name. He said if I wanted to learn more about the Thayers I might go see—Humph, well, never mind that. 'Twas just foolishness, anyhow."

But Phoebe persisted. "To see whom," she asked—"some one you knew, a friend of yours?"

Asaph turned red. "Friend of mine!" he snarled. "No, sir, she ain't no friend of mine, I'm thankful to say—more a friend of Bailey's here, if she's anybody's; one of his pets, she was, for a spell; a patient of his, you might say—anyhow, he prescribed for her. 'Twas that deaf idiot, Debby Beasley, Cy; that's who 'twas. Her name was Briggs afore she married Beasley, and she was hired help for Emily Thayer when Mary was born and until John died."

Captain Cy burst into a roar of laughter. Bailey sprang out of his chair.

"De-Debby Beasley!" he stammered. "Debby Beasley!"

"She was that deaf housekeeper Bailey hired for me, teacher," explained the captain. "I've told you about her. Ho, ho! So that's the end of the mystery huntin'. We go gunnin' for Heman Atkins, and we bring down Debby! Well, Ase, goin' to see the old lady?"

Mr. Tidditt's retort was emphatic. "Goin' to see her?" he repeated. "I guess not! Godfrey scissors! I told Seth, says I. 'I've had all the Debby Beasley I want, and I callate Cy Whittaker feels the same way.' Go to see her! I wouldn't go to see her is she was up in paradise a-hollerin' for me."

CHAPTER XV.

"MRS. BANGS," said the schoolmistress as if it was the most casual thing in the world, "I want to borrow your husband tomorrow. I want him all day, too, because I'm thinking of driving over to Trumet, and I need a coachman. You'll go, won't you, Mr. Bangs?"

Bailey, who had been considering the advisability of asking for a second cup of tea, brightened up and looked pleased.

"Why, yes," he answered, "I'll go."

Mrs. Tripp ventured a hinted question concerning the teacher's errand at Trumet. The reply being noncommittal, the widow cheerfully prophesied that she guessed 'twas going to rain or snow next day. "It's about time for the line storm," she added.

But it did not storm, although a brisk cold wind was blowing when aft-

er breakfast next morning the "horse and team," with Bailey in his Sunday suit and overcoat and Miss Dawes on the buggy seat beside him, turned out of the boarding house yard and started on the twelve mile journey to Trumet.

In Trumet Center, which is not much of a center, Miss Dawes alighted from the buggy and entered a building bearing a sign with the words "Metropolitan Variety Store, Joshua Atwood, Prop'r. Groceries, Coal, Dry Goods, Insurance, Boots and Shoes, Garden Seeds, Etc." A smaller sign beneath this was lettered "Justice of the Peace" and one below that read "Post-office."

She emerged a moment later, followed by an elderly person in a red cardigan jacket and overalls.

"Take the first turnin' to the left, marm," he said, pointing. "It's pretty nigh to East Trumet town hall. First house this side of the blacksmith shop, about two mile, I'd say. Windy day for drivin', ain't it? That horse of yours belongs in Bayport, I callate. Looks to me like—Hello, Bailey!"

"Hello, Josh!" grunted Mr. Bangs, adding an explanatory aside to the effect that he knew Josh Atwood, the latter having once lived in Bayport.

"But, say," he asked as they moved on once more, "have we got to go to East Trumet? Jerushy! That's the place where the wind comes from. They raise it over there. Anyhow, they don't raise much else. Whose house you goin' to?"

He had asked the same question at least ten times since leaving home, and each time Miss Dawes had evaded it. She did so now, saying that she was sure she should know the house when they got to it.

The two miles to East Trumet were worse than the twelve which they had come. The wind fairly shrieked here, for the road paralleled the edge of high sand bluffs close by the shore, and the ruts and "thank-you-marms" were trying to the temper. Bailey's was completely wrecked.

"Teacher," he snapped as they reached the crest of a long hill and a quick grab at his hat alone prevented its starting on a balloon ascension, "get out a spell, will you? I've got to sweat or bust, and 'long's you're aboard I can't swear. What you standin' still for, you?" he bellowed at poor Henry, the horse, which had stopped to rest.

"I callate the critter thinks that last cyclone must have blowed me sky high, and he's waitin' to see where I light. Git dap!"

"I guess I shall get out very soon now," panted Phoebe. "There's the blacksmith shop over there near the next hill, and this house in the hollow must be the one I'm looking for."

They pulled up beside the house in the hollow. A little story and a half house it was, and, judging by the neglected appearance of the weeds and bushes in the yard, it had been unoccupied for some time. However, the blinds were now open, and a few fowls about the back door seemed to promise that some one was living there.

The wooden letter box by the gate had a name stenciled upon it. Miss Dawes sprang from the buggy and looked at the box.

"Yes," she said, "this is the place. Will you come in, Mr. Bangs? You can put your horse in that barn, I'm sure, if you want."

(To be Continued)

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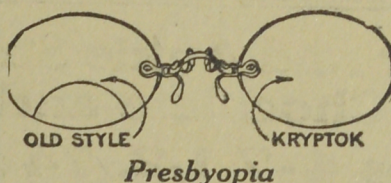
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