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CY WHITTAKER'S PLACE

"Then what ails you?" asked Asaph hotly.

"Why, nothin' maybe, only I'm always suspicious when Tad pats Providence on the back. I generally figure that I can see through a doughnut when there's a light behind the hole. Who is Lonzo's best friend in this town? Who does he chum with most of anybody?"

"Why, Darius Ellis, I guess. You know it."

"Um-hum. And Darius is on the committee—why?"

"Well, I s'pose 'cause Heman Atkins thought he'd be a good feller to have there. But—"

"Yes, and Lonzo's pew in church is right under the Atkins memorial window. The light from it makes a kind of halo round his bald head every Sunday."

"Well, what of it? Heman nor nobody else could buy Lonzo Snow."

"Buy him? Indeed, they couldn't. But there are some things you get without buyin'—the measles, for instance. And the one that's catchin' 'em don't know he's in danger till the speckles break out. Fellers, this committee voted in Phoebe Dawes by just two votes to one, and one of the two was Lem Myrick. Darius was against her. Now, with Tad and his Providence puttin' in Lonzo Snow and Heman Atkins settin' behind the screen workin' his normal school music box so's they can hear the tune—well, Phoebe may stay this term out, but how about the next?"

"Hey? Why, I don't know."

"From what I hear, this Phoebe Dawes, for all her pesky down east stubbornness, is teachin' pretty well, and, anyhow, she's one little woman against Tad Simpson and Heman Atkins and—"

"And Tad's special brand of Providence. She deserves a fair shake, and, by the big dipper, she's goin' to have it! Look here, you two—how would I look on the school committee?"

"You?" repeated the pair in concert.

"Yes, me. I ain't a Solomon for wisdom, but I callate I'd be as near the top of the barrel as Darius Ellis and only one or two layers under Eben Salters or Lonzo Snow. I'm a candidate, see?"

"But—but, Whit," gasped the town clerk, "are you popular enough? Could you get elected?"

"I don't know, but I can find out. You and Bailey'll vote for me, won't you?"

"Course we will, but—"

"All right. There's two votes. A hundred and odd more'll put me in. Here goes for politics and popularity. I may be president yet; you can't tell. And, say, this town meetin' won't be dull, whichever way the cat jumps."

This last was a safe prophecy. All dullness disappeared from Bayport the moment it became known that Captain Cyrus Whittaker was "out" for the school committee. The captain began his electioneering at once. That very afternoon he called upon three people—Eben Salters, Josiah Dimick and Lemuel Mulek.

To be Continued

Vice-President Loomis and ex-Secretary of Navy Meyer are mentioned in connection with the New Haven presidency.

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CHAPTER IX.

TOWN meeting was called for the 21st of November.

With the summer boarders gone, the cranberry picking finished, state election over, school begun and under way and real winter not yet upon us Bayport in the late fall distinctly needs something to enliven it.

This year there were several questions to be talked over and settled at town meeting. Two selectmen whose terms expired were candidates for reelection. Lem Myrick had resigned from the school committee, not waiting until spring, as he had announced that he should do. Then there was the usual sentiment in favor of better roads and the usual opposition to it; also there was the ever present hope of the government appropriation for harbor improvement.

Mr. Tidditt was one of the selectmen whose terms expired. In his dual capacity as selectman and town clerk Asaph felt himself to be a very important personage. To elect some one else in his place would be, he was certain, a calamity which would stagger the township.

There had been much discussion concerning the school committee. Who should be chosen to replace Mr. Myrick on the board was the gravest question to come before the meeting. Many names had been proposed at Simmons' and elsewhere, but some of those named had refused to run, and others had not after further consideration seemed the proper persons for the office. In the absence of Mr. Atkins Tad Simpson was our leader in the political arena. But Tad so far had been mute.

"Wait awhile," he said. "There's some weeks afore town meetin' day. This is a serious business. We can't have no more—I mean no unsuitable man to fill such an important place as that. The welfare of our posterity," he added, and we all recognized the quotation, "depends upon the choice that's to be made."

A choice was made, however, on the very next day but one after this declaration. A candidate announced himself. Asaph and Bailey hurried to the Cy Whittaker place with the news. Captain Cy was in the woodshed building a doll house for Bos'n.

Mr. Tidditt was all smiles.

"What do you think, Cy?" he cried.

"The new school committee man's as good as elected. Lonzo Snow's goin' to take it."

The captain laid down his plane. "Lonzo Snow!" he repeated. "You don't say! Humph! Well, well!"

"Yes, sir!" exclaimed Bailey. "He's come forward and says it's his duty to do so. He—"

"Humph! His duty, hey? I wonder who pointed it out to him?"

"Well, I don't know. But even Tad Simpson's glad. He says that he knows Heman will be pleased with that kind of a candidate and so he won't have to do any more huntin'. He thinks Lonzo's comin' out by himself this way is a kind of special providence."

"Yes, yes! I shouldn't wonder. Did you ever notice how dead sure Tad and his kind are that Providence is workin' with 'em? Seems to me 'twould be more satisfactory if we could get a sight of the other partner's signature to the deed."

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Asaph. "You ain't findin' fault with Lonzo, are you? Ain't he a good man?"

"Good! Sure thing he's good! Nobody can say he isn't and tell the truth."

No one could truthfully speak ill of Alonzo Snow—that was a fact. He lived at the lower end of the village, was well to do, a leading cranberry grower and very prominent in the church. A mild, easy going person was Mr. Snow, with an almost too keen fear of doing the wrong thing and therefore prone to be guided by the opinion of others. He was distinctly not a politician.

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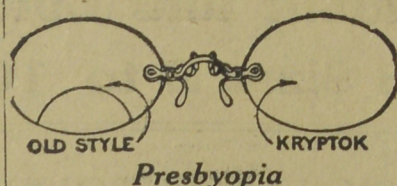
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