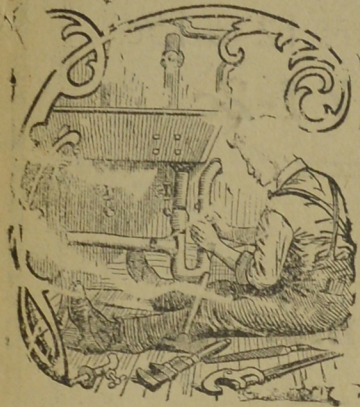


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# CY WHITTAKER'S PLACE

"Who said I was blamin' him?"  
queried the widow. "If he was that  
little Tidditt thing I might feel differ-



"How—how d'ye do, Mrs. BEASLEY?"  
ent. But, considerin' that I got this  
horn from Mr. Bangs, I'm willin' to let  
bygones be past. It helps my hearin'  
a lot. Them ear fixin's was good while  
they lasted, but they got out of kilter  
quick. I shan't bother Mr. Bangs. If  
he can square his own conscience I'm  
satisfied."

Bailey's conscience was not troubling  
him greatly, and he seemed relieved.  
Phoebe told of the damaged buggy.

"Humph!" grunted the widow. "The  
horse didn't get bent, too, did he?"

Mr. Bangs indignantly declared that  
the horse was all right.

"Um—hum! Well, then, I guess I  
can supply a carriage. My fust cousin  
Ezra that died used to be doctor here,  
and he give me his sulky when he got  
a new one. It's out in the barn. Go  
fetch your horse and harness him in.  
I'll be ready time the harnessin's  
done."

"You?" gasped the teacher. "You  
don't need to go, Mrs. Beasley. I  
wouldn't think of giving you that  
trouble."

"No trouble at all. I wouldn't trust  
nobody else with them trunks. And,  
besides, I always do enjoy ridin'. You  
could go, too, Miss Dorcas, but the sul-  
ky seat's too narrer for three. You  
can set in the settin' room till we get  
back. 'Twon't take us long. Don't say  
another word. I'm a-goin'."

## CHAPTER XVI.

THE number of reasons given by  
Mr. Bangs, one after the other,  
to prove that it would be quite  
impossible for him to be Mrs.  
Beasley's charioteer was a credit to  
the resources of his invention. The  
blacksmith might be back any min-  
ute; it was dinner time, and he was  
hungry; Henry, the horse, was tired;  
it wasn't a nice day for riding and  
he would come over some other time  
and take the widow out; he— But  
Debby had a conclusive answer for  
each protest.

"You said yourself the blacksmith  
wouldn't be back for an hour," she ob-  
served. "And you can leave word  
with the boy what he's to do when he  
does come. As for dinner, I'll be real  
glad to give you and Miss Dorcas a  
snack soon's we get back. I don't  
mind if it ain't a pleasant day. A little  
fresh air'll do me good. I been shut  
up here housecleanin' ever since I got  
back from out west. Now hurry right  
along and fetch your horse. I'll un-  
lock the barn."

"But Mrs. Beasley," put in the  
schoolmistress, "why couldn't you give  
us a note to Mrs. Atwood and let us  
stop for the diary on our way home?  
I could return it to you by mail, or  
you might get it yourself some other  
day and mail it to me."

"No, no! Never put off till tomor-  
row what you can do today. My hus-  
band was a great hand to put off and  
put off. For the last eight years of  
his life I was at him to buy a new  
go-to-meetin' suit of clothes. The one  
he had was blue to start with, but  
it faded to a brown, and toward the  
last of it I declare if it didn't com-  
mence to turn green. Nothin' I could  
say would make him leave it away  
even then; seemed to think more of it  
than ever; said he wanted to hang to  
it a spell and see what 'twould turn  
next. But he died and was laid out  
in that same suit, and I was so mortif-  
ied at the funeral I couldn't think of  
nothin' else. No; I'll go after them  
papers and the diary while they're  
fresh in my mind. And, besides, do  
you s'pose I'd let Sarah Ann Atwood  
rummage through my trunks? I guess  
not!"

Phoebe began to be sorry she had  
thought of sending for the diary, par-  
ticularly as the chance of its contain-  
ing valuable information was so re-  
mote. Mrs. Beasley went into the  
house to dress for the ride. The  
schoolmistress went with her as far as  
the sitting room. The perturbed Bal-  
ley stalked off, muttering, to the black-  
smith's.

In a little while he returned, leading  
Henry by the bridle. Debby, adorned  
with the beflowered bonnet she had  
worn when she arrived at the Cy  
Whittaker place and with a black cloth  
cape over her lean shoulders, was wait-  
ing for him by the open door of the  
barn. The cape had a fur collar, "cat  
fur," so Mr. Bangs said afterward in  
description.

"Pull the sulky right out!" command-  
ed the widow.

Bailey stared into the black interior  
of the barn.

"Which is it?" he shouted.

Mrs. Beasley pointed with her ear  
trumpet.

"Why, that one there, of course.  
T'other's a truck cart. You wouldn't  
expect me to ride in that, would you?"

Mr. Bangs entered the barn, seized  
the vehicle indicated by the shafts and  
drew it out into the yard. He inspect-  
ed it deliberately and then sat weakly  
down on the chopping block near by.  
Apparently he was overcome by emo-  
tion.

The "sulky," bequeathed by the late  
doctor had been built to order for its  
former owner. It was of the "carry-  
all" variety, except that it had but a  
single narrow seat. Its top was  
square and was curtained, the curtains  
being tightly buttoned down. Alto-  
gether it was something of a curiosity.  
Miss Dawes, who had come out to see  
the start, looked at the "sulky," then  
at Mr. Bangs' face and turned her  
back. Her shoulders shook.

"It used to be a real nice carriage  
when Ezra had it," commented the  
widow admiringly. "It needs lin' and  
sprucin' up now, but I guess 'twill do.  
Come!" to Bailey, who had not risen  
from the chopping block. "Hurry up  
and harness or we'll never get started.  
Thought you wanted to get back for  
dinner?"

Mr. Bangs stood up and heaved a  
sigh.

"I did," he answered slowly, "but,"  
with a glance at the sulky, "somebodin'  
seems to have took away my appetite.  
Teacher, do you mean to?"

But Miss Dawes had withdrawn to  
the corner of the house, from which  
viewpoint she seemed to be inspecting  
the surrounding landscape. Bailey  
seized Henry by the bridle and back-  
ed him into the shafts.

"Back up!" he roared. "Back up! I  
tell you! You needn't look at me that  
way," he added in a lower tone. "I  
can't help it. You ain't any worse  
ashamed than I am. There! The ark's  
off the ways. All aboard!"

Turning to the expectant widow, he  
"boosted" her, not too tenderly, up to  
the narrow seat. Then he climbed in  
himself. Two on that seat made a  
tight fit. Bailey took up the reins.  
Debby leaned forward and peered  
around the edge of the curtains.

"You!" she shouted. "You, Miss  
What's-your-name—Dorcas! Come here  
a minute. I want to tell you some-  
thin'."

The schoolmistress, her face red and  
her eyes moist, approached.

"I just wanted to say," explained  
Debby, "that I ain't real sure as that  
diary's there. I burnt up a lot of my  
old letters and things a spell ago, and  
seems to me I burnt some old diaries,  
too, but maybe that wan't one of 'em.  
Anyhow, I can get them Arizona pa-  
pers, and I do want you to see 'em.  
They're the most interestin' things.  
Now," she added, turning to her com-  
panion on the seat, "you can git dap  
just as soon as you want to."

Once out on the open road the sulky  
received the full force of the wind.  
Mrs. Beasley clutched her driver's  
arm.

Another gust tilted the carriage top.  
Debby clutched the arm still tighter.

"Why, it blows awful hard!" she  
cried. "I'd no idee it blew like this."  
"Want to 'bout ship and go home  
azin'?" whooped Bailey hopefully.

(To be Continued)

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