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Select Poetry.

PAYING COMPLIMENTS.

A bashful lover tried to woo
A maiden fair and slender;
She trifled at the interview,
And scorned his accents tender.
Said he aside, "I will invent
A little necromancy;
I'll launch at her a compliment
To try and catch her fancy."
Quoth she, with careless unconcern;
"Your words they may be true, sir;
I wish that I could make return,
And say the same of you, sir."
"O, you can do that very well,
And do it now—provided
That you make up your mind to tell
As big a lie as I did."

The Secrets of Dolly's Chair.

MEETING had gone in. Parson Holbrook was in his seat in the high, ugly pulpit, with the sounding-board overhead; the singers, in the singing seats in the gallery, had taken their pitch from Uncle Jethuron's tuning fork, and were fuguing "And on the wings of mighty winds came flying all abroad;" the first families of Pilgrim Vale were seated in the square pews, each furnished according to the taste or the means of its owners; and the little boys, perched upon the high wooden seats, with no foot-stools near enough for their little dangling feet to reach, had begun their two hours' fidget—when the door, just closed by black Pompey, the sexton, opened slowly, and Major Cathcart walked up the broad aisle in his usual dignified and deliberate manner. Every head was turned to gaze upon him, every face wore an expression of astonishment and disapproval; the singers, finishing their hymn with hasty quavers of discomfiture, leaned over the front of the gallery and gazed down upon him, and even Parson Holbrook bent his powdered head aside to look sternly at the great square pew where his wealthiest parishioner was uncomfortably seating himself with an attempt at unconscious dignity.

A moment of silence fell upon the place—that awful, pregnant silence which speaks as no words can—and then Martin Merivale, the man whom Pilgrim Vale always sent to General Court when he would go, and who led public opinion as he willed in the town where his honorable, steadfast life had thus far passed, rose in his place, deliberately put on his heavy cloak, took his hat in his hand, cast one meaning glance across the aisle into the questioning eyes of Major Cathcart, his old associate and neighbor, and then walked slowly down the aisle.

He had not reached the door before Dr. Holcom rose to follow his example, and then Squire Vale, and then the Oldfields, father and son, and finally every man in the congregation who counted himself a person of the least consequence, or able to set an example, until, when black Pompey at last closed the door, and with a joyous grin sat down beside it, the church, so lately filled with the pith and sinew of the stanch old colony town, was empty, save of women, children, and Major Reginald Cathcart, whose ashen-gray face had never moved after the first from its stern straightforward gaze, or his dark eyes blanched, or his heavy eye brows unrent from the frown of defiant endurance which with some men is the only sign of agony.

And agony it could not fall to be; for this man, to-day so openly and deliberately thrust from their midst by his fel-

low-townsmen, counted himself only three days earlier their autocrat, claiming by birth, wealth, and haughty self-assertion the place yielded to him in virtue of these qualities, as that of Martin Merivale was thrust upon him in recognition of his own personal character.

And why this terrible insult? why this stern intimation that the men of Pilgrim Vale considered the presence of one so lately their magnate so great a pollution that they preferred even to lose the privilege of public worship to suffering him to join them in it?

Why? O men of 1876, yours is not the temper of your fathers; but yet you must thrill with admiration of their earnestness of purpose, their mighty trust, their contempt of their own advantage, or safety, or comfort, when a Right full of danger and suffering called upon them to oppose a tyrannous and encroaching Wrong!

It was 1774, and the Governor of Massachusetts, in right of his commission from King George of England, had sent to demand the payment of a tax levied upon the support of the foreign soldiers, sent over with the avowed purpose of holding the mutinous province in subjection. Pilgrim Vale considered this demand of "the man George," argued upon it, prayed over it, and finally declined to accede to it, but in so mild and temperate a manner that the Governor considered their refusal only a formal protest, and proceeded to enforce his demand by appointing certain collectors of the revenue through the colony, and for the town of Pilgrim Vale commissioning Major Reginald Cathcart to this odious office.

When the news came down to Pilgrim Vale, its men smiled after the slow and solemn fashion of their kind, and said:

"The Governor does not know the mind of Pilgrim Vale even yet, it seems."

But the next day a rumor pervaded the town—a rumor of dismay and incredulity, yet deepening hour by hour to certainty. Yes, Major Cathcart had accepted the commission, and announced his intention of carrying out its instructions. This was on the Saturday, and we have seen the result upon the Sunday.

As the door closed Parson Holbrook rose and played long and earnestly for the welfare of his native land, and the safety of those whose fathers had been led to those shores, even as the children of Israel were led out of Egypt to find safety and freedom in the land their Lord had promised them, and he closed with a petition for protection against all enemies, both without and within—the foreign foe and those of their own household who had turned against them and whose evil counsels might, he prayed, be turned to foolishness and dishonor.

Then came the sermon; and, laying aside his carefully written discourse upon the Urim and Thummim, Parson Holbrook preached extemporaneously and mightily from the text, "Put not your faith in princes," diverging finally into the story of Judas, and the high crime of domestic or social treachery.

When all was over, and the choir had sung, "See where the hoary sinner stands," black Pompey threw open the doors, and stood aside, as usual, to meet and return the kindly greetings of the congregation; but as Major Cathcart strode down the aisle, his head erect, but his face white and withered, as if he had just arisen from a bed of torture, even Pompey turned his back and stood staring intently out of the open door as the stricken man passed by. But Major Cathcart looked neither to the right nor the left; and if others besides Pompey had intended to show their disapproval of his presence, they found no opportunity, for the king's collector passed quickly through the little throng outside the door, and down the main street until he reached the grave, handsome, middle-aged house so strongly resembling its master, and quietly opening the front-door, passed directly up stairs, and was hastening to the shelter of a room at the back, known as "the major's study," when the open door of one of the principal bedrooms came a gentle yet eager call, "Reginald do come in here."

The husband paused reluctantly, and turning his head toward the door, but

without showing his face at it, replied:

"What is it, Hepzibah? I am going to my study."

"Not first, dear. Please come and see me for a moment. I am all alone."

Without replying, the major obeyed, and passing into the handsome shadowy room, stood beside the bed, where lay a woman whose fair and delicate face bore the patient, almost angelic, look of one who had suffered very long and very cruelly, but whose pains, meekly borne, are consciously drawing to a final close. She was Major Cathcart's wife, and the only being the cold proud man had ever loved, and she was dying.

He stooped and kissed her tenderly, asking:

"How have you been this morning, dear?"

"As well as usual. But you, Reginald? how has it been with you? I knew by your step upon the stair that you were suffering, and your face tells the story. Oh, my darling husband, they have insulted you, as we feared.—Is it not so?"

"Yes, Hepzibah, they have insulted me, and so cruelly that I will no longer live among them. I have resolved that we will go to the northern provinces. We have good friends at Halifax, good and loyal to the king whom these anarchists are preparing to defy."

"Even the parson and the doctor, reasonable and law-abiding men as they are, say that the colony should be free," said the invalid, timidly, and stealing her thin hand into her husband's. But he frowned impatiently.

"This is not talk for women or children," said he, coldly. "And you are of those who conversation should be on heaven. It would better become Parson Holbrook to tell you so, instead of disturbing your mind with matters so unfit for it at any time."

The wife remained meekly silent for a moment, and then, softly pressing her husband's finger, said:

"My love, you will wait until I am gone, will you not, before you leave Pilgrim Vale?"

"Gone, Hepzibah!—gone where?"

The wife looked up with tearful eyes, but her reply was prevented by the sudden entrance of a young girl, her cheeks flushed and her eyes bright with anger and excitement.

"Father, John Belknap has been in, and told me of the insult they have offered you," exclaimed she. "It is a shame, a burning shame, and I hope you will show them—"

"Dolly, I am not very strong to-day, dear, and you are speaking loudly and unadvisedly."

It was the mother's gentle voice, and Dolly, who would have joyfully taken the part of Joan of Arc, or even Boadicea, fell upon her knees directly beside her mother's pillow, soothing the invalid, and accusing herself of all manner of evil in forgetting even for a moment the consideration and tenderness owing to her.

Major Cathcart stood looking at the two for a few moments, then quietly left the room, and a little later dispatched a servant with a note requesting the immediate attendance of Dr. Holcom. The worthy physician was one of those who had left the church so pointedly a few hours earlier, and the proud man, thus insulted, by no means forgot or forgave the insult, but the feelings of the husband were stronger than all others at that moment, and Hepzibah's words had startled him with a new and terrible idea.

The doctor came, was closeted for half an hour with the major, made a short call upon his patient, and left the house. A little later Major Cathcart summoned his daughter to his private room, and addressed her, briefly and almost sternly:

"Dolly, Dr. Holcom does not disguise from me the cruel truth known for some time to him and to your mother. She is dying, surely and swiftly. Did you know it?"

The girl hid her pale face between her hands.

"Mamma has said it, but I hoped—" Her voice died away, and her father's filled the space.

"Hope no longer. He says two or three months are as much as we may look for, and even that brief respite depends upon quiet and her accustomed

comforts. She must on no account be removed from the room where she now lies. But this people about us will not wait two or three months before they carry out in act the treason they already talk, and I, the avowed friend of the king, and ready and willing to execute his will in this rebellious province, will very probably fall one of their first victims; or if not personally, I shall surely suffer in property, and be stripped of land and house and even personal belongings. Were your mother able, we should all migrate at once to the still loyal northern provinces; but as it is, you shall go alone, carrying such valuables as we can collect, and remain with your uncle in Halifax until—Perhaps—God's goodness is without limit—perhaps I may bring her with me."

"Must I leave my mother?" cried Dolly, in dismay. "What matter for our possessions, compared with the comfort of her last hours! And how can she spare me? and, oh! how could I spare her?"

"Girl, there are perils in a time of anarchy and war of which you know naught—perils for a young and comely woman of which I may not speak.—Your mother will be cared for, since it will be the one duty of my life to care for her, and it will remove a weight from my mind to know that you are safe and shielded from the possibilities of evil.—Say no more; it is decided."

Dolly, stout-hearted as she was, dared say no more, for the girl of a century ago was trained to obedience as the first duty of her sex, and to silence and respect for the authority of man as the next; nor was Dolly's father a man to soften the stern and unquestioned rule every head of a household felt bound to exercise in every particular. So the preparations for the young girl's departure went quietly and silently forward, and the schooner *Dolphin*, a small coasting craft owned by Major Cathcart, received a cargo so various in its character that neither master, mate, nor the attentive loungers who inspected the process of loading could possibly determine her destination.

Not until the very last days before the *Dolphin's* sailing did any one outside the major's own family surmise that his daughter was to be a passenger, and so rapidly, even secretly, was her luggage carried aboard that very few persons saw it at all. Among the rest was one article singular enough as part of a young lady's outfit, especially so healthy, active, and blithe a girl as Dorothea Cathcart; it was one of those large square, stuffed easy-chairs still to be found in old country houses, sometimes dishonored in the lumber-loft, sometimes carefully preserved in cover of white dimity or gay old-fashioned chintz in the chamber of the grandmammas. This one was covered in green moreen, and had stood in Mrs. Cathcart's own bedroom, although that dear old lady had not been able to occupy it for many a day. A short time after the decision with regard to his daughter, Major Cathcart had removed this chair to his own study, and both he and Dolly had occupied themselves over it for many hours, until at last the girl deftly sewed a wrapper of tow-cloth over all, and said to her father, who stood watching the operation:

"There, father, it will stand in the cabin, and I shall say that is covered lest any but my dear mother should use it, and I am taking it to her invalid sister in Halifax, whom I am about to visit."

"I doubt not your shrewd wit will suggest many a quip and turn," replied the major, with a grim smile; "but take care that you do not pass the bounds of truth and discretion."

"I will take heed, father. The barrels are all ready, are they not?"

"Yes, and shipped. Here is the bill of lading;" and Major Cathcart took from his pocket-book and handed to his daughter a slip of paper worded thus:

"Shipped by the Grace of GOD, in good order and well conditioned, by Reginald Cathcart, in and upon the good Schooner called the *Dolphin*, whereof is Master under GOD for this present voyage William Peters, and now riding at anchor in the Harbour of Pilgrim Vale, and by GOD'S Grace bound for Halifax, to say, Twenty barrels and boxes of sundries on A/cct. and Risque of the Shipper, and consigned to Cathcart and Kingsbury, Halifax. Being marked and numbered as in the

Margent, and are to be delivered in the good Order and well Conditioned at the aforesaid Port of Halifax (the Dangers of the Sea only excepted) until said Cathcart and Kingsbury or their Assigns, he or they paying Freight for the said Goods, Sixpence per cw., English Currency, with Primage and Average accustomed. It witness whereof the Master or Purser of the said Schooner hath affirmed to two Bills of Lading, all of this Tenor and Date, one of which two bills being accomplished, the other to stand void.

"And so GOD send the good Schooner to her destined Port in safety. AMEN.
"Dated in Pilgrim Vale, October the 15th, 1774.

"WILLIAM PETERS."

(The above is an exact copy of an old bill of lading.)

Dolly rapidly ran her eyes over the familiar form, for part of her busy life had been to play the occasional part of confidential clerk in her father's business, and she smiled as she returned it to him, saying:

"Barrels and boxes of sundries? Well, and so they are. China and books and household gear are sundries, no doubt, although I dare say your partners think it is mackerel or—"

"It does not concern the other owners of the schooners, since I ship my freight at my own charge and purely as a private venture," interrupted Major Cathcart, hastily. "But be careful, Dolly, that you say not a word either here or upon your voyage as to the nature of these same sundries, for William Peters is a fanatic as bitter as the worst, and if he got wind of the matter here, nothing would be more likely than that he should persuade Merivale and the rest to throw off the mask at once, and confiscate my goods to the republic they talk of founding. Even at sea you must be careful, for this man is quite capable even in the harbor of Halifax of giving the order to 'bout ship, and bring you and the easy-chair and the barrels of sundries all back to Pilgrim Vale. It is a large errand for so young a woman as you, Dolly, and you will need to be wily as the serpent, though innocent as the dove."

"I think I can do it, father," said Dolly, quietly; and as the major looked in his daughter's face, he thought she could.

The morning that the *Dolphin* was to sail, Captain Peters found that Thomas Wilson, his first mate, had fallen down the steep ladder leading from his house to the shore, sprained an ankle and broken a wrist, and was obviously unfit for a voyage. As he grimly meditated over this reverse, he encountered a flushed and breathless young man, who thus accosted him:

"Splendid weather, captain. I've a mind to make the cruise with you up to Halifax."

"Cabin's all engaged and paid for, John Belknap," replied the skipper, gruffly. "That old Tory Cathcart is sending his daughter up there to bring down troops upon us, or something of that color, I'll warrant. I wonder the owners don't see through it and refuse; but he's paid for the cabin and both state-rooms, so that madam should not be spied upon, I suppose."

"Oh, never mind; I'll go as clerk, or purser, or steward, or even as a foremast hand. I can hand-reef and steer with any man, you know, and hard work, or hard fare either, don't frighten me." Concluded next week.

An infidel passing through the shadows that hang around the close of life, and finding himself adrift amid the surges of doubt and uncertainty without anchor or harbor in view, was urged by his friends to "hold on." He answered:

"I have no objections to holding on, but will you tell me what to hold on by?"

Here is a question which men do well to consider before they reach the closing scene. If they are to hold on what are they to hold on by? Where is their trust? Where is their confidence?—What certainty have they in going down into the shadows? Surely a man who comes to his dying hour needs something better than infidelity can give him; he needs the guiding hand of Him who is the resurrection and the life, who has conquered death and triumphed over the grave, and who is able to bring us safely off at last. He needs that hope which is "as an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."