

The Courtship of Miles Standish

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The Lover's Errand

So the strong will prevailed, and Alden went on his errand,
Out of the street of the village, and into the paths of the forest,
Into the tranquil woods, where bluebirds and robins were building towns in the populous trees, with hanging gardens of verdure,
Peaceful, aerial cities of joy and affection and freedom.
All around him was calm, but within him commotion and conflict,
Love contending with friendship, and self with each generous impulse.
To and fro in his breast his thoughts were heaving and dashing,
As in a foundering ship, with every roll of the vessel,
Washes the bitter sea, the merciless surge of the ocean!



Through the Plymouth Woods John Alden Went.

"Must I relinquish it all," he cried with a wild lamentation,
"Must I relinquish it all, the joy, the hope, the illusion?
Was it for this I have loved, and waited, and worshiped in silence?
Was it for this I have followed the flying feet and the shadow
Over the wintry sea, to the desolate shores of New England?
Truly the heart is deceitful, and out of its depths of corruption
Rise, like an exhalation, the misty phantoms of passion;
Angels of light they seem, but are only delusions of Satan.
All is clear to me now; I feel it, I see it distinctly!
This is the hand of the Lord; it is laid upon me in anger,
For I have followed too much the heart's desires and devices,
Worshipping Ashtoreth blindly, and impious idols of Baal.
This is the cross I must bear; the sin and the swift retribution."
So through the Plymouth woods John Alden went on his errand;
Crossing the brook at the ford, where it brawled over pebble and shallow,
Gathering still, as he went, the May-flowers blooming around him,
Fragrant, filling the air with a strange and wonderful sweetness,
Children lost in the woods and covered with leaves in their slumber.
"Puritan flowers," he said, "and the type of Puritan maidens,
Modest and simple and sweet, the very type of Priscilla!
So I will take them to her; to Priscilla the May-flower of Plymouth,
Modest and simple and sweet, as a parting gift will I take them;
Breathing their silent farewells, as they fade and wither and perish,
Soon to be thrown away, as is the heart of the giver."
So through the Plymouth woods John Alden went on his errand;
Came to an open space, and saw the disk of the ocean,
Ballless, somber and cold with the comfortless breath of the east wind;
Saw the new-built house, and people at work in a meadow;
Heard, as he drew near the door, the musical voice of Priscilla
Singing the hundredth Psalm, the grand old Puritan anthem,
Music that Luther sang to the sacred

words of the Psalmist,
Full of the breath of the Lord, consoling and comforting many.
Then, as he opened the door, he beheld the form of the maiden Seated beside her wheel, and the carded wool like a snow-drift Piled at her knee, her white hands feeding the ravenous spindle,
While with her foot on the treadle she guided the wheel in its motion.
Open wide on her lap lay the well-worn psalm-book of Ainsworth,
Printed in Amsterdam, the words and music together,
Rough-hewn, angular notes, like stones in the wall of a churchyard,
Darkened and overhung by the running vine of the verses.
Such was the book from whose pages she sang the old Puritan anthem,
She, the Puritan girl, in the solitude of the forest,
Making the humble house and the modest apparel of homespun
Beautiful with her beauty, and rich with the wealth of her being!
Over him rushed, like a wind that is keen and cold and relentless,
Thoughts of what might have been, and the weight and woe of his errand;
All the dreams that had faded, and all the hopes that had vanished,
All his life henceforth a dreary and tenantless mansion,
Haunted by vain regrets, and pallid, sorrowful faces.
Still he said to himself, and almost fiercely he said it:
"Let not him that putteth his hand to the plow look backward;
Though the plowshare cut through the flowers of life to its fountains,
Though it pass o'er the graves of the dead and the hearths of the living,
It is the will of the Lord; and His mercy endureth for ever!"

So he entered the house: and the hum of the wheel and the singing Suddenly ceased; for Priscilla, aroused by his step on the threshold,
Rose as he entered, and gave him her hand, in signal of welcome,
Saying, "I knew it was you, when I heard your step in the passage;
For I was thinking of you, as I sat there singing and spinning."
Awkward and dumb with delight, that a thought of him had been mingled Thus in the sacred psalm, that came from the heart of the maiden,
Silent before her he stood, and gave her the flowers for an answer,
Finding no words for his thought. He remembered that day in the winter,
After the first great snow, when he broke a path from the village,
Reeling and plunging along through



"Why Don't You Soak for Yourself, John."

the drifts that encumbered the doorway,
Stamping the snow from his feet as he entered the house, and Priscilla Laughed at his snowy locks, and gave him a seat by the fireside,
Grateful and pleased to know he had thought of her in the snow-storm.
Had he but spoken then, perhaps not in vain had he spoken;
Now it was all too late; the golden moment had vanished!
So he stood there abashed, and gave her the flowers for an answer.

Then they sat down and talked of the birds and the beautiful spring-time,
Talked of their friends at home, and the Mayflower that sailed on the morrow.

"I have been thinking all day," said gently the Puritan maiden,
"Dreaming all night, and thinking all day, of the hedge-rows of England,—

They are in blossom now, and the country is all like a garden;
Thinking of lanes and fields, and the song of the lark and the linnet,
Seeing the village street, and familiar faces of neighbors
Going about as of old, and stopping to gossip together,
And, at the end of the street, the village church, with the ivy
Climbing the old gray tower, and the quiet graves in the churchyard.
Kind are the people I live with, and dear to me my religion;
Still my heart is so sad, that I wish myself back in Old England.
You will say it is wrong, but I can not help it: I almost
Wish myself back in Old England, I feel so lonely and wretched."

Thereupon answered the youth: "Indeed I do not condemn you;
Stouter hearts than a woman's have quailed in this terrible winter.
Yours is tender and trusting, and needs a stronger to lean on;
So I have come to you now, with an offer and proffer of marriage
Made by a good man and true, Miles Standish, the Captain of Plymouth!"

Thus he delivered his message, the dexterous writer of letters—
Did not embellish the theme, nor array it in beautiful phrases,
But came straight to the point, and blurted it out like a schoolboy;
Even the Captain himself could hardly have said it more bluntly.
Mute with amazement and sorrow,
Priscilla, the Puritan maiden,
Looked into Alden's face, her eyes dilated with wonder,
Feeling his words like a blow, that stunned her and rendered her speechless;
Till at length she exclaimed, interrupting the ominous silence:
"If the great Captain of Plymouth is so very eager to wed me,
Why does he not come himself, and take the trouble to woo me?
If I am not worth the wooing, I surely am not worth the winning!"
Then John Alden began explaining and smoothing the matter,
Making it worse as he went, by saying the Captain was busy—
Had no time for such things;—such things! the words grating harshly
Fell on the ear of Priscilla; and swift as a flash she made answer:
"Has he no time for such things, as you call it, before he is married,

Would he be likely to find it, or make it, after the wedding?
That is the way with you men; you don't understand us, you can not. When you have made up your minds, after thinking of this one and that one,
Choosing, selecting, rejecting, comparing one with another,
Then you make known your desire, with abrupt and sudden avowal,
And are offended and hurt, and indignant perhaps, that a woman
Does not respond at once to a love that she never suspected,
Does not attain at a bound the height to which you have been climbing.
This is not right nor just: for surely a woman's affection
Is not a thing to be asked for, and had for only the asking.
When one is truly in love, one not only says it, but shows it.
Had he but waited a while, had he only showed that he loved me,
Even this Captain of yours—who knows?—at last might have won me,
Old and rough as he is; but now it never can happen."

Still John Alden went on, unheeding the words of Priscilla,
Urging the suit of his friend, explaining, persuading, expanding;



And Gave Him a Seat by the Fireside.

Spoke of his courage and skill, and of all his battles in Flanders,
How with the people of God he had chosen to suffer affliction,
How, in return for his zeal, they had made him Captain of Plymouth;
He was a gentleman born, could trace his pedigree plainly
Back to Hugh Standish of Duxbury Hall, in Lancashire, England,
Who was the son of Ralph, and the grandson of Thurston de Standish;
Heir unto vast estates, of which he was basely defrauded,
Still bore the family arms, and had for his crest a cock argent
Combed and wattled gules, and all the rest of the blazon.
He was a man of honor, of noble and generous nature;
Though he was rough, he was kindly; she knew how during the winter
He had attended the sick, with a hand as gentle as woman's;
Somewhat hasty and hot, he could not deny it, and headstrong,
Stern as a soldier might be, but hearty, and placable always,
Not to be laughed at and scorned, because he was little of stature;
For he was great of heart, magnanimous, courtly, courageous;
Any woman in Plymouth, nay, any woman in England,
Might be happy and proud to be called the wife of Miles Standish!

But as he warmed and glowed, in his simple and eloquent language,
Quite forgetful of self, and full of the praise of his rival,
Archly the maiden smiled, and, with eyes overrunning with laughter,
Said in a tremulous voice, "Why don't you speak for yourself, John?"
(TO BE CONTINUED.)

First Calculating Machine.
The first calculating machine was invented and constructed by Blaise Pascal, a Frenchman, in 1642, in which year he was but nineteen years of age. It was made by him with the aid of one workman and was presented to the chancellor of France. During the revolution it was found in a junk shop at Bordeaux and at present is the property of M. Bougouin of that city. All of the four simple mathematical operations can be made with it.

An Indication.
"Is Bliggins the superior influence in his own house?" "I'm afraid not. He's one of those men who understand exactly what their wives are talking about when they describe what other women wear."

OLD MAN SHOTS TWO

PARALYZED BY FEUDISTS, HE TOOK DOUBLE TOLL.

Leck Whitt, a Daring Fighter, Though Past Seventy Years of Age, Adds Another to Kentucky's Feud Tragedies.

Louisville, Ky.—The killing by Leck Whitt of his nephew and son-in-law, Buddy Whitt and James Harper, and the subsequent shooting of Leck Whitt by friends of the dead men at Salyersville, in the mountains, bids fair to become a classic in feud history.

Two or three years ago Leck Whitt was shot by one of the men and his right arm paralyzed by the bullet. Leck Whitt went to Salyersville from his farmhouse and saw his two enemies in front of the courthouse there. In the years since his right arm was paralyzed Whitt, who was about seventy years old, had learned to use his pistol with his left hand. He walked quietly up to them and, drawing his revolver with his left hand, shot Harper through the throat and fired five bullets into his nephew.

Before the smoke had blown away from the empty revolver of Leck Whitt pistols began to bark at him from every side. The old man stood still and straight in the middle of the street until he fell dead with his empty revolver still in his hand.

Not a groan or a moan had escaped him, although it was found that seven bullets had struck him in the breast and were so aimed that they made almost a straight line of holes across his chest. Several other bullets struck him, and it is believed that at least twenty bullets were fired at him.

This was one of the most dramatic affrays that has ever occurred in the mountain country. It recalls the case of "Uncle Curt" Jett, about twenty years ago, the story of which was told by Judge James Hargis while the latter was on trial at Beattyville for complicity in the killing of James B. Marcum.

"Uncle Curt" had incurred the enmity of various residents in that section, having killed several men, and was therefore wary when in the enemy's territory. But one day, when he was less careful than usual, he rode along the Kentucky river near Jackson. At the ford he neglected to look about before his horse stepped into the water. An enemy was concealed behind a log, and as "Uncle Curt's" horse entered a bullet struck him in the back.

"Uncle Curt," seriously hurt, managed to get his own revolver into play, but could not reach the concealed marksman. The horse kept going toward the opposite bank, the enemy continued to fire. "Uncle Curt" continued to shoot back, but with no apparent effect. Finally, when he reached a half-submerged stump near the Jackson side, and had been struck by six bullets, he slipped off his horse behind the stump. There, though weak from loss of blood, he waited for the enemy to show himself, and when he did Curt shot him dead.

SLAYS LION WITH A KNIFE

Farmer Kills Beast That Devoured Son but Loses Right Arm in the Fight.

Brownsville, Tex.—Maddened at the sight of a huge mountain lion standing over the dead body of his three-year-old son, Juan Morales, a farmer living seven miles from here, killed the beast with a knife thrust in the heart after a 15-minute struggle, in which he sustained injuries which will cost him the loss of his right arm at the shoulder. After killing the lion he walked to the city to be treated by a physician.

Morales had left home to visit a neighbor. When he returned he heard the screams of his children and then caught a glimpse of a huge mountain lion, weighing probably 400 pounds, standing over the almost headless body of his son. The beast sprang at Morales and the desperate fight began.

"CEMETERY CURE" EFFECTIVE

Drunks of Illinois Town Are Now Crowded into Straight and Narrow Paths.

Springfield, Ill.—Illinois has a brand-new and original plan to cure the liquor habit. It was devised by citizens of New Douglas. It is called the cemetery cure, but that does not mean for the patients the usual trimmings of drapery and florists' emblems, nor is the trip to the graveyard accompanied by a string of cabs at four dollars per.

The situation handled otherwise, in the early evening the patients are carted to the city cemetery and while the late moon looks down on the strange task they are bound with ropes to upright monuments, while others are laid in graves which have sunk in through years of stormy stress.