

Quincy Adams Sawyer

BY CHAS. F. PIDGIN.

A New England Story Dedicated to the Memory of James Russell Lowell.

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The play dramatized from this story will appear at the Grand Opera House during December. All can become acquainted with the story before the play is given here.

SYNOPSIS.

Story opens December 31, 188— at Mason's Corner near Boston, Mass., introducing the reader to the queer country people of that place and to Eastborough Center and West Eastborough, both nearby. Quincy Adams Sawyer, a young lawyer, from Boston, is staying at Deacon Abraham Mason's for an indefinite time, and by his courtesy to the deacon's daughter, Fum, and the other young women, he incurs the hatred of Obadiah Strout, the singing master, and Ezekiel Pettinelli, a young farmer who loves Huldah. Strout's enmity grows from day to day, but Quincy has a firm friend in Hiram, the man of all work at Deacon Mason's. Quincy visits Uncle Ike Pettinelli, a retired farmer, a business man and an eccentric half hermit, who is also the uncle of Ezekiel Pettinelli. To him Quincy bears a letter from his father, the Hon. Nathaniel Sawyer of Boston, who is an old friend, Uncle Ike. Quincy grows to like the old man despite his eccentricities. Strout falls in an effort to enlist Ezekiel on his side in his war against Quincy. He gets Bob Wood, the village bully, to insult Quincy, who promptly thrashes Wood and offers to whip Strout. Quincy calls at the Putnam home, finds Linda absent and receives from the simple old folks a story of the family, together with the information that he has caused a misunderstanding between Huldah and Ezekiel. Quincy decides to go and live with Uncle Ike and leave the Putnams alone. Quincy then takes Huldah for a little ride and tells her he is going to leave. They are thrown from the buggy and Huldah's arm is broken.

CHAPTER IX—Continued.

In half an hour after Quincy's departure, Linda Putnam entered the sitting-room and facing her mother said with a voice full of passion, "Samanthy, says Mr. Sawyer called to see me."

Mrs. Putnam answered, "Well, if you wanted to see him so much why didn't you stay to him?"

Linda continued, "Well, I have told you a dozen times that when people come to see me that you are not to invite them in."

"Well, I didn't," said Mrs. Putnam. "When he found you wuz out he said he wanted to see pa and me, and he stayed here more'n an hour."

"Yes," said Linda, "no doubt you told him all about pa's turning Second Advent and how much money I had, and you have killed all my chances."

"Well, I guess not," said Mrs. Putnam. "I told him about your brother leavin' for all his money, and I guess that won't drive him away."

Linda continued, "Money don't count with him; they say his father is worth more than a million dollars."

Mrs. Putnam answered, "Well, I s'pose there's a dozen or so to divide it among."

Linda said, "Did you tell him who you were going to leave your money to?"

"No, I didn't," replied Mrs. Putnam. "But I did tell him that you wouldn't get a cent of it."

Linda sobbed, "I think it is a shame, mother. I like him better than any young man I have ever met, and now after what you have told me I shan't see him again. I have a good mind to leave you for good and all and go to Boston to live."

"Well, you're your own mistress," replied Mrs. Putnam, "and I'm my own mistress and pa's. Come to think of it, there was one thing I said to him that might not hit against yer."

"What was that?" demanded Linda fiercely.

"Well," said Mrs. Putnam, "he said he was 23, and I sort a told him incidentally you was 23. You know yer 30, and I s'pose he might object to ye on account of yer age."

This was too much for Linda. She rushed out of the room and up to her chamber, where she threw herself on her bed in a passion of tears.

"It's too bad," she cried. "I will see him again, I will find some way, and I'll win him yet, even if I am 23."

Two days afterwards Hiram told Mandy that he heard down to Hill's grocery that that city chap had two strings to his bow now. He was courting the deacon's daughter, but had been up to see Mr. and Mrs. Putnam and find out how much money Linda had in her own right, and to see if there was any prospect of getting anything out of the old folks.

CHAPTER X.

Village Gossip.

After supper on the day he had been visiting Mr. and Mrs. Putnam, Quincy

but it never entered my mind until late yesterday afternoon, and then it was called to my attention by a stranger. I am glad I have this chance to speak to you, Mr. Mason, for while I have had a very enjoyable time here, I have decided to find another boarding place, and I shall leave just as soon as I make the necessary arrangements."

The Deacon was a little crossfallen at having the business taken out of his hands so quickly, and saying he was very sorry to have the young man go, he sought his wife and told her everything was fixed up and that Mr. Sawyer was going away.

Quincy started to leave the house by the front door; in the hallway he met Huldah, who had just come down stairs. He had asked her to go to ride with him that day, and as he looked at her pretty face he vowed to himself that he would not be deprived of that pleasure. It could do no harm, for it would be their last ride together and probably their last meeting.

"He said, 'Good morning, Miss Mason,' and then added with that tone which the society belle considers a matter of course, but which is so pleasing to the village maiden, 'You look charming this morning, Miss Mason. I don't think our ride today could make your cheeks any redder than they are now.' Huldah blushed, making her cheeks a still deeper crimson. 'I will be here at one o'clock with the team,' said Quincy. Will you be ready?"

"Yes," answered Huldah softly.

Quincy raised his hat, and a moment later he was on his way to Eastborough Centre.

He walked briskly and thought he would stop at Uncle Ike's and carry out the resolution he had made the night before, but as he turned up the path that led to the house he saw a man standing on the steps talking to Uncle Ike, who stood in the doorway. The young man was Ezekiel Pettinelli. Shakespear says,

"'Tis conscience that makes cowards of us all," and although Quincy at heart was a gentleman, he also knew that it was not quite right for him to take Miss Mason out riding again under the circumstances; but young men are often stubborn and Quincy felt a little stiff-necked and rebellious that morning.

He reached Eastborough Centre, mailed the letter relating to Jim Sawyer, and returned to the stable, picked out the best rig it could supply. He always had the same horse. It was somewhat small in size, but a very plump, white mare; she was a good roadster and it was never necessary to touch her with the whip. Shake it in the stock and she would not forget it for the next two weeks. The stable keeper told with muchunction how two fellows hired her to go from Eastborough Centre to Montrose. On their way home they had drunk quite freely at the latter place, and thought they would touch the mare up with the whip; they were in an open team and the result was that she left them at different points along the road, and reached home with no further impediment to her career than the shafts and the front wheels.

Instead of coming back by the main road which led by Uncle Ike's, Quincy went through by what was called The Willows, which increased the distance a couple of miles. Nevertheless, it lacked five miles of one o'clock when he drove up to Deacon Mason's front door.

Huldah was all dressed for the occasion, and with a "Goodby, mother," to Mrs. Mason, who was in the kitchen, was out the front door, helped into the team, and they were off just as the stable matron reached the parlor window. Mrs. Mason returned to the kitchen and at that moment the Deacon came in from the barn.

"What's the matter, mother?" asked the Deacon, noticing her excited and somewhat troubled look.

"Huldah is gone out riding again with Mr. Sawyer," said she.

The Deacon was a good Christian man and didn't take it very much, but he was evidently thinking deeply. Finally he said, "Well, mother, we must make the best of it. I'll help find him a boarding place if he don't get one by tomorrow."

They had a splendid drive. The air was cool, but not biting, the sun was warm, the roads had dried up since the recent thaw, which had removed the snow, with the exception of some patches in the fields, and the high-topped buggy rolled smoothly over the ground.

They passed through the little square in front of Hill's grocery, and as luck would have it, Professor Strout was standing on the platform smoking a cigar. Huldah smiled and nodded to him, and Quincy, with true politeness, followed a city custom and raised his hat, but the Professor did not return the bow, nor the salute, but turning on his heel walked into the grocery store.

"Professor Strout is not very polite, is he, Mr. Sawyer?" asked Huldah laughingly.

Quincy replied, looking straight ahead, "He has never learned the first letter in the alphabet of the art."

Quincy had a disagreeable duty to perform. He enjoyed Miss Huldah's company, but she was not the sort of girl he could love enough to make his wife. Then the thought came to him, supposing she should fall in love with him; that was not impossible, and it must be prevented.

When they were about half a mile from Mason's Corner, on their way home, Quincy realized that he could not put the matter off any longer.

Just as he was going to speak to her she turned to him and said, "Let me drive the rest of the way home, Mr. Sawyer."

"Oh, no," replied Quincy. "I think I had better keep the reins. You know I am responsible for you until you are safe at home."

Huldah pointed. "You think I can't drive," said she, "I have driven horses all my life. Please let me, Mr. Sawyer," she added pleadingly. And she took the reins from his hands.

"Well," said Quincy. "You are now responsible for me and I shall expect you to be very careful."

They drove a short distance in silence, then Quincy turned to her and said abruptly, "This is our last ride together, Miss Mason."

"Why?" inquired she with an astonished look in her face.

"I am going to leave your very pleasant home tomorrow," said Quincy.

The girl's cheeks paled perceptibly. "Are you going back to Boston?" she asked.

"No, not for some time," Quincy replied, "but I have had some advice

given me and I think it best to follow it."

"You have been advised to leave my father's house," said she, holding the reins listlessly in her hand.

Quincy said, "You won't be offended if I tell you the whole truth?"

"No; why should I?" asked Huldah.

As she said this she gathered up the reins and gave them a sharp pull. The white mare understood this to be a signal to do some good travelling and she started off at a brisk trot.

"Quincy said, 'I was told yesterday by a friend that if I was not a marrying man they would advise me to leave Deacon Mason's house at once.'"

The blood shot into Huldah's face at once. He was not a marrying man and consequently he was going to leave. He did not care for her or he would stay. Then another thought struck her. Perhaps he was going away because he was afraid she would fall in love with him.

As the Deacon had said, she was highly spirited, and for an instant she was filled with indignation. She shut her eyes, and her heart seemed to stop its beating. She heard Quincy's voice, "Look out for the curve, Miss Mason." She dropped the left rein and mechanically gave the right one a strong, sharp pull with both hands. Quincy grasped the reins, but it was too late.

Huldah's pull on the right rein had thrown the horse almost at right angles to the buggy. The steep hill and sharp curve in the road did the rest. The buggy stood for an instant on two wheels, then fell on its side with a crash, taking the horse off her feet at the same time.

Huldah pitched forward as the buggy was falling, striking her left arm upon the wheel, and then fell into the road. Quincy gave a quick leap over the dasher, falling on the prostrate horse, and grasping her by the head, pressed it to the ground. The mare lay motionless. Quincy rushed to Miss Mason and lifted her to her feet, but found her a dead weight in his arms. He looked at her face. She had evidently fainted. Her left arm hung by her side in a helpless sort of way; he touched it lightly between the elbow and shoulder. It was broken. Grasping her in his arms he ran to the back door and burst into the kitchen where Mrs. Mason was at work.

Quincy said in quick, excited tones, "There has been an accident, Mrs. Mason, and your daughter's arm is broken; she has also fainted. I will take her right to her room and put her on her bed. You can bring her out of that." Suiting the action to the word, he took Huldah upstairs, saying, "I will go for a doctor at once."

As he dashed down the stairs and out of the front door as he reached the team he found Hiram standing beside it, his eyes wide open with astonishment.

"The next afternoon Hiram told Mandy that he heard Professor Strout say to Robert Wood that he guessed that 'accident would never have occurred if that city chap hadn't been trying to drive boss with one hand.'"

Mandy said, "That Strout is a mean old thing, anyway, and if you tell me another thing that he says, I'll fill your mouth full of soft soap, or my name isn't Mandy Skinner."

CHAPTER XI.

Some Sad Tidings.

The morning of the accident, when Quincy saw Ezekiel Pettinelli standing on the steps of Uncle Ike's house, Ezekiel was the bearer of some sad tidings.

He recognized Quincy as the latter started to come up the path and naturally retraced his steps and naturally thought, as most men would, that the reason Quincy did not come in was because he did not wish to meet him.

"Who was you looking after?" asked Uncle Ike, as Ezekiel entered the room and closed the door.

"I think it was Mr. Sawyer," replied Ezekiel, "on his way to Eastborough Centre."

"That Mr. Sawyer?" said Uncle Ike, "is a very level-headed young man. He called on me once and I liked him very much. Do you know him, Zeke?"

"Yes, I know who he is," Ezekiel answered, "but I have never been introduced to him. He nods and I nod, I nod and he nods, and he says, 'good mornin'!"

"Don't you go up to Deacon Mason's as much as you used to, Zeke?" asked Uncle Ike. "I thought you were going to make a match of it."

Ezekiel replied, "Well, to be honest, Uncle Ike, Huldah and me had a little tiff, and I haven't seen her for more than three weeks, but I guess it will all come out all right some day."

"Well, you're on the right track," said Uncle Ike. "Do all you can, fighting before you get married. But what brings you down here so early in the morning?"

"I've got some bad news," replied Ezekiel. "Have you heard from Alice lately?"

"No," said Uncle Ike, "and I can't understand it. She has always written to me once or fortnight and it's the longest since I heard from her, and she has sent me a book every Christmas until this last one."

"She has been very sick, Uncle Ike," said Ezekiel, "and she was taken down about the middle of December and was under the doctor's care for three weeks."

"Is she better?" asked Uncle Ike eagerly.

"Yes, she's up again," said Ezekiel, "but she is very weak; but that ain't the worst of it, he added.

"Why, what's the matter?" said Uncle Ike. "Why didn't her friends let us know?"

"She wouldn't let them," said Ezekiel. "If it hadn't been for what the doctor told her she wouldn't have telegraphed to me what she did."

"Well, what's the matter with her?" cried Uncle Ike, almost fiercely.

"Well, Uncle Ike," said Ezekiel, and the tears stood in his eyes as he said it, "our Alice is almost blind, but the eye doctor says she will get better, but it will take a very long time. She has had to give up her job, and I am going to Boston again tomorrow to bring her home to the old house."

"What's the matter with her eyes?" said Uncle Ike.

"He called them cataracts," said Ezekiel, "or something like that."

"Uncle Ike sat down in his armchair and thought for a minute or two.

"I've read all about them, and I know people who have had them. One was a schoolmate of mine. He was a mighty smart fellow, and I felt sorry for him and used to help him out in his studies. I heard he had his eyes operated on and recovered his sight."

"Well, the doctor she has," said Ezekiel, "is Uncle Ike's doctor. He says they can be cured without them. He drops something in her eyes and blows something in them, and then the tears come, and then she sits quietly with her hands folded, thinking, I suppose, till the time comes to use the medicine again."

"What can I do to help you?" asked Uncle Ike. "You know I always loved Alice, even better than I did my own children, because she is more lovable, I suppose. Now, Zeke, if you want any money for doctor's bills or anything else, I am ready to do everything in the world I can for Alice. Did she ask after me, Zeke?"

"Almost the first thing she said was, 'I'm dear old Uncle Ike, and I don't know how glad she would be to get back to Eastborough, where she could have you to talk to. I am lonesome now,' she said. I cannot write her

tem minutes before that hour the team returned with the doctor.

"She is all right," he said. "Everything has been done for her, and the doctor will write me when my services are needed again. Good night."

The train dashed in and the doctor sped back to Boston.

Quincy had engaged a room at the hotel, and he at once retired to it, but not to sleep. He passed the most uncomfortable night that had ever come to him.

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- MRS. W. H. HARRIS
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- MR. S. D. THOMPSON
of Albia, cured of a bad rupture in a few weeks. He is well pleased and sent two more patients to take the treatment.
- MR. G. W. BREEDING
of South Ottumwa, was cured of rupture on the left side six years ago and last summer was ruptured on the right side. He was cured.

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