

A SAILOR'S VOW, A HERO'S TRIAL.

WITHIN THE CAPE



HOWARD PYLE

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Within the Capes

by

HOWARD PYLE



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PART I

CHAPTER I.

CERTAIN members of Captain Tom Granger's family have asked him, time and time again, why he did not sit down and write an account of those things which happened to him during a certain period of his life.

These happenings, all agree, are of a nature such as rarely fall to the lot of any man, crowding, as they did, one upon the heels of another, so that in two years' time more happened to Tom Granger than happens to most men in a lifetime.

But Captain Granger has always shaken his head, and has answered that he was no writer and that a pen never did fit nicely betwixt his stiff fingers, as Mrs. Granger can tell them if they will ask her.

Beside this, he has hitherto had his affairs to look after, so that he may be able to leave behind him enough of the world's goods to help his children and his children's children easily along the road that he himself found not over smooth.

Now, however, he has given up much of his business to the care of his sons, who are mostly men well on in years, with families of their own, and who are discreet in the management of things. Therefore, having much more leisure time upon his hands than he has ever had in his life before, he will undertake to do as he has been asked, and to write a plain, straightforward story of his adventures. This he does with much diffidence, for, as I have said, he is no very good hand with the pen and the ink-horn. The story may be told in a rough way; nevertheless, I believe that many of those that

read it will think well of it, having a certain tenderness for the writer thereof.

I am furthermore inclined to thus take upon myself the transcribing of the history of these things, because that Captain Tom Granger is coming fast to the ending of his life; and, though his latter days may be warm and sunny, like a late Indian summer, there are those yet to come in a few years who will not have the chance to hear of these things from his own lips. Therefore, as there has been much gossip about certain adventures that befell him, I would rather that they should learn of them under mine own hand than from hearsay. Truly, things get monstrously twisted in passing from mouth to mouth, and by the time that the story of these doings has passed down through three or four generations, the old gentleman might be turned into a pirate and a murderer, for all that I know, which would be a pretty state of affairs.

I do not know how it was that Tom Granger got the title of captain, for the highest grade that he ever reached was that of second mate of the Privateersman *Nancy Hazlewood*. However, as no one in Eastcaster ever had held so high a grade of the like nature up to that time, I suppose that the wonder really is that he was not called commodore, or even admiral.

Any one in Eastcaster can tell you where he lives; it is the large white house, with the porch in front, that stands well back from the road under the shadow of three broad maple trees. It is just across the way from the Hicksite Meeting-house. You can easily tell it as you go along the street, because there is a ship in full sail chiseled in relief on the stone gate-post, which is very well done indeed, and was carved by William Johnson, the stone-cutter, under mine own direction and supervision.

I will say here, that Captain Granger will be always glad to see you if, at any time, you should chance to come to Eastcaster. If he is not at home, you will be likely to find him

playing chequers or backgammon at the Black Horse Tavern, just around the corner of Market street, and nearly opposite to the court-house.

However, that is neither here nor there, and I find that I am wandering from the point. But you must excuse and overlook that, bearing in mind that it is the way of an old man, who has done a great deal of talking in his day. I thank goodness that I am old enough now to know better than to gossip and talk as much as I used to do, and am rather silent than otherwise.

Nevertheless, I promise now that I will heave ahead with my yarn, though it may be that I will leave some things untold that you would like to hear, being, as I said, no great talker, in which case you must come to Eastcaster, and then I will tell you anything that you may want to know.

I will not enter into a long yarn concerning what happened in Tom Granger's life before the year 1812, for though such a yarn would hold within it many concerns of interest, it is not for the sake of relating them that I have thus taken my pen betwixt my fingers. It was late in the spring of that year (1812) when he returned home after a three years' cruise to the East Indies.

I think that there is no joy in all the world like that of getting home again after a long voyage, such as this had been. I do not know but that it repays one for all the sorrow and pain of leave-taking, and for the home-sickness that follows thereon. Even such changes as have happened betwixt the going and returning do not seem amiss, provided that they have not brought grief and trouble with them.

The changes that had occurred since Tom's departure in the summer of 1809 had brought no sadness with them. When he had gone away, he had left his sisters, Susan and Mary, as young girls; the former sixteen and the latter fifteen years old. They had now grown into a pair of fine young women and

were chits no longer. This was the first and greatest change that struck Tom, so you may see how little had happened. The folks were already beginning to tease Susan about Will Gaines, who had just returned from Philadelphia, where he had been studying law, and had set up an office for himself in Eastcaster.

The next day was Sunday, or First-day, as we call it in Quaker neighborhoods, and as all of the family were going to meeting, Tom put on his best toggery to go with them.

It was a beautiful, bright clear day, and as Tom stood on the porch waiting for Henry, who was to go with him, his heart swelled within him with the love of home. It seemed sweet to him to look on the young leaves of the trees, the green meadowlands and the richness of growing wheat, after seeing nothing for months but a wide stretch of troubled waters; it was good to feel the balmy blowing of a breeze that was not salt; to hear the singing of the robin and the chattering of the wren; the crowing of the cocks and the lowing of the cattle, and not to have in his ears the everlasting washing and gurgling of the water alongside.

The folks use to ride to meeting on horseback in the old times, the women behind the men on pillion saddles. But Tom was a sailor, and consequently no good figure on horseback, so he and Henry, the youngest, set off ahead of the rest to foot it, for the homestead farm was only a mile and a half from Eastcaster meeting.

The meeting-house looked very pleasant where it stood, back from the street under the shadow of the two great elms in front of it. The old meeting-house was standing then, for they did not tear it down to make room for the new building until '32. The present building is larger than the old one was, and is, no doubt, lighter and better, and more comfortable in many ways; but for all that, I have never liked it as well as

the old black and red brick meeting-house, with its high roof running up to a point from all four corners and topped with something that looked like a belfry, though it had no bell in it, of course.

In the old days, as now, when the weather was warm and bright and pleasant, the men used to stand for a while around the door of their side of the meeting, talking and chatting together before they went into the building. Such a group was standing on the grass under the shadow of the elm trees as Tom and his brother Henry came up the steps that led into the meeting-house yard.

Tom knew all of them, and they came forward and shook hands with him and welcomed him heartily. Will Gaines was amongst them, for, though he was not a member of the Society of Friends, he went to meeting as often as he went anywhere else. It might have been that he came on Susan's account, though I do not say that he did.

He was the first to recognize Tom, and he came forward and shook hands with him and seemed very glad to see him. A young man usually is glad to see the brother of the young woman that he wants to marry, but I think that Will really was pleased to see Tom, for he and Tom had been dear friends from the time that they were children together. There were other young men of Tom's age amongst the group: John Black, Joseph Sparks, Henry Jackson and others. They too came forward and shook hands with him and seemed glad to see him, though not so glad as Will Gaines had been.

Two men were standing by the open door of the meeting-house, talking earnestly together. One of them was Isaac Naylor, and the other was Mr. Edmund Moor, the real estate agent. As these two men had very much to do with Tom's life at a later time, it may be well that I should give you a notion of them now.

Isaac Naylor was a young man—not over thirty at that time, I should think. He dressed very plainly, and was so serious of deportment that I do not know that any one ever saw him smile. He never jested himself, and never enjoyed a jest, for he was too practical for such trivial things. It was as though the man of him had been dried into parchment by his continued self-repression. He was well off in the world, for his father had died the year before, and, as Isaac was the only son, he had inherited all the property, which was very large. Although such a young man, he was high in the meeting, sitting in the gallery with men old enough, in some cases, to be his grandfather.

Mr. Moor was not a member of meeting, though he attended pretty regularly. He was a large, fleshy man, not exactly fat, but full looking. He had a smooth, goodly face and straight iron-grey hair, brushed straight back from his forehead and behind his ears. I never heard him say an unkind word or saw him in anything but a cordial mood. He was always full of jests and quaint turns of speech, and never failed to shake Tom heartily by the hand whenever he met him; yet for all that Tom did not like him. He had an oily, unctuous way, that was not pleasing to him; he was always so goodly that he did not seem sincere, and always so cordial that it did not seem as though he meant his cordiality.

Such were the two men that were talking together by the meeting-house door, and each welcomed him in his own manner.

“How is thee, Thomas?” said Isaac, dryly.

“Why! It’s Thomas Granger! Bless my soul! Back again like a bad penny, eh?” said Mr. Moor, and he shook Tom by the hand with great warmth.

In the meantime, Tom’s father and his two brothers, John and William, came over from the horse shed, where they had

been hitching their horses, and joined the group, and then they all went into the meeting-house together, taking their seats on the hard wooden benches within.

That morning they held a silent meeting, no one speaking for all the hour between ten and eleven o'clock. Now and then the wind would rush in little puffs through the open window and across the gloom of the building. A fly buzzed against a window pane, and once a robin outside burst into a sudden gush of song.

No other sound broke the silence, saving for the rustling of a dress, as one of the women Friends would move in her seat, or the restless sighing of some poor boy in the back part of the building. The overseers sat ranged along on the raised bench facing the meeting, and amongst them was Isaac Naylor. All of them sat with their hats on, motionless, with downcast eyes, buried in serious thought: but no one spoke.

At such a time every one is supposed to address a sermon to his own heart, but I am very much afraid that Tom Granger addressed none to himself, for his thoughts flew here and there and everywhere, and his mind was never still a moment in the chase of them. Now and then he shifted himself uneasily on the hard wooden bench, trying to find a more comfortable position than the one in which he was sitting, but the seats in Friends' meeting were not made with a thought to comfort in those days. There was a long partition that ran down the length of the meeting, separating the men's from the women's side.

After a while Tom's eyes wandered over this partition in a way that they had no business to do. It was toward the place where his mother and his sisters sat that his eyes rested the most, but it was not at them that he was looking, for Patty Penrose sat between his mother and him.

After a man has reached the age of four and twenty, it becomes a continued source of wonder to him how the little

girls about him grow up into young women. You leave a poor lean little chit of a thing; a few years pass, you meet her and, lo! she is transmogrified into a young woman, going her sedate way with very different thoughts in her head than when you saw her last. It seems as though it were only a week or two since you patted her upon the head and said kind things to encourage her; now your heart shrinks at the thought of such boldness, and you feel that she needs encouragement no longer.

When Tom had last seen Patty Penrose, three years before, he left her just such a little chit as I have spoken to you of,—lean and not graceful. She used to come over now and then to play with his sister Mary, but he had not noticed her excepting when she stayed to dinner or to supper. Even then he had not observed her very closely, and had not had much to say to her, for she was too shy to make it a pleasure to him to talk to her, and too young for it to be worth while for him to put himself out to amuse her. He would give her a nod with a “How is thee, Patty?” and then would turn his mind to other things.

Now, when he first looked at her sitting across the meeting beside his mother, he did not know her; then he saw first one little thing and then another, until it slowly dawned upon him that it was Patty Penrose, though not the Patty Penrose that he had known in times past. At first he looked with wonder and interest at the change that had come in three years; but, after a while, his interest took a very different shape with no wonder about it, and he thought that his sister Mary’s friend was a great deal better worth looking at than when he had last seen her, for Patty had grown into a very pretty girl,—a very pretty girl, indeed.

She sat looking calmly before her; but, though she seemed sedately unaware of his presence, as is becoming in a modest girl, I have not a grain of doubt that she knew that Tom

Granger was at meeting that day, and, maybe, she even knew that he was looking at her at that moment.

Her head was uncovered, for she had worn a broad beaver hat, such as they used in those days, and she held the hat in her lap. She sat with her side turned to Tom, and it made his heart feel very warm as he looked at her pale, delicate face, the long lashes of her eyes, the smooth roundness of her chin and throat, and the soft curling of the brown hair at her forehead and temples. So, as I said, he was preaching no sermon to himself as he sat in silent meeting that day.

At length, the court-house clock around the corner of Market street struck eleven. They all sat in silence for a minute or two longer, and then old Thomas Winterapple shook John Stidham by the hand, and meeting was broken. After that they all went out into the sunlight and the open air again.

Will Gaines went over to where the young women were standing talking together, and said a few words to Susan, and Tom followed after him.

Patty was standing beside his mother.

“Thomas, this is Patty Penrose,” said she, turning to him; “don’t thee remember Patty?”

Tom knew that the color was rising in his face; knowing it, he felt very uncomfortable, and that made his cheeks burn all the hotter. It was a different matter talking to Patty now from what it had been three years ago. Oh, yes, he remembered Patty; “How is thee, Patty?” said he, holding out his hand to her. Her little fingers rested in his only for a moment, and then were quickly withdrawn.

“I’m pretty well, thank thee, Thomas,” said she.

Then there was a space of silence, during which Tom was thinking of something to say. This was no easy thing for him to do on the spur of the moment, considering how little he knew of Patty and her ways. He stood with his hands clasped

behind him, looking at her and waiting for a thought, and she stood looking down at the toe of her shoe. Presently she raised her eyes to his face for a moment.

“Has thee just come back, Thomas?” said she.

“Yes; I came back yesterday afternoon.”

“Thee’s been gone a long while this time, hasn’t thee?”

“About three years.”

And then they were silent again.

Just then Isaac Naylor came up and spoke to Patty, and she turned partly away from Tom to answer him. It seemed to Tom that it was a relief to her to talk to some one else beside him, and no doubt it was, for she must have felt easier with Isaac than she did with Tom, knowing him so much better. After this, several of the young men came up, and in a little while Patty and his sister were quite surrounded by them, and were presently talking and laughing at a great rate, about people and things of which Tom knew little or nothing. Isaac Naylor stood amongst the other young men; he did not talk to Patty and Mary as they did, but he seemed contented to remain where he was.

At last Tom’s brother Henry plucked him by the sleeve of his coat, “Is thee ready to go now, Thomas?” said he. “Father and mother have gone and I’m ready to go if thee is.” Henry was too young yet to talk to the girls with any ease, and so the waiting was no pleasure to him.

“Yes; I guess I’m about ready,” said Tom. He felt that he had been awkward and ungainly before Patty, and he would have liked to say a word or two more to her before he left her to set himself straight in her opinion. But he saw no chance for this in all the talk and laughter that was going on around Mary and her, so there was nothing left for him to do but to go.

As Henry and he walked along the turn-pike road, numbers of Friends passed them on their way homeward from meeting.

There was a clatter of hoofs behind them, and old Elihu Penrose came riding by with Patty back of him on the pillion saddle.

“Woah!” cried he, reigning in his horse when he had come up to Tom and Henry. “How is thee, Thomas? I’m glad to see thee back again.”

“I’m glad to get back again,” said Tom.

“That’s right! I like to hear a young man say he’s glad to get back home again,—it sounds well. Come over and see us some time.”

“I will,” said Tom; “I’d like to come over very much.”

“Very well; do. Come over soon. Farewell.”

Then he clicked to the horse and rode on, turning down the road that led through the shady woods to the old mill.

“Patty Penrose’s a mighty pretty girl; ain’t she, Thomas?” said Henry.

Tom made no answer, and they walked on in silence.

At dinner time, Patty was brought up as a subject of talk.

“Don’t thee think she’s very pretty, Thomas?” said Susan.

“Well—I don’t know,” said Tom, hesitatingly; “n—not so very.” I do not know why he should have answered as he did, but, somehow, he did not feel like saying that he thought Patty was pretty.

“Well, I can’t help thinking as thee does about it, Thomas,” said Mary; “I love Patty Penrose very dearly, but, I must say, I never could see her beauty.”

“She’s the prettiest girl in the neighborhood,” said William.

“I know some people think she’s pretty,” said Mary, “but, I must say, I don’t see where her beauty lies. Her nose isn’t good, and she has hardly a bit of color in her face. She’s a dear good girl, but I don’t think she’s what one would call handsome.”

“Thee isn’t of the same way of thinking as the young men,” said John. “There isn’t one within ten miles of Eastcaster who

doesn't think that she's the prettiest girl in the township. There isn't a girl in the neighborhood who has as much company as she."

"Nonsense," said Susan; "what does thee know about it, John? Leave out Isaac Naylor and John Black and the two Sharpleys and she doesn't have any more company than other people."

"All right," said John, who had an ill way of holding to an opinion and never arguing about it, "all right, have thy own way; it doesn't make any difference to me; I only know what I hear the young men say about her."

Then Tom's father broke into the talk and nothing more was said about Patty. "I bought a new short-horn bull last fall, Thomas," said he. "We'll go over to the cattle-yard after dinner and take a look at it, if thee likes."

So presently they all got up from their chairs, and the men-folks went over to the barn-yard to take a look at the short-horn bull.

But the talk at the dinner table had not pleased Tom, though I do not know why he should have disliked to have heard that Patty had a great deal of attention paid her; for how could it make any difference to him?

CHAPTER II.

AS time wore along, Tom got into the habit of dropping in at Penrose's and of spending an evening now and then. At first he would find himself there once in every ten days or two weeks; in time his visits became more and more frequent. Elihu was always very glad to see him and Patty herself seemed pleased at his coming. I think that some of the happiest evenings of his life were those spent in sitting on the porch of the old mill-house in the long summer twilights—Elihu and he smoking their pipes, he telling his adventures at sea and Patty sitting listening to him. Often some one of the young men of the neighborhood would be at the house, and then it was not so pleasant for Tom; his talk would cease, and after a little while, perhaps, he would arise and bid them farewell. Patty and her visitor would usually sit apart talking and laughing together, and it would strike Tom how much more easy she seemed in the company of others than she did with him. More than once when he called he found that she had gone out riding with one of these young men, and then he and Elihu would spend the evening together, and the old man would seem quite contented, for neither Patty nor he seemed to think that Tom's visits were meant for any one else than him.

One First-day evening Tom mustered up courage to ask Patty to take a walk with him. That evening is impressed upon his mind even yet, for he was very happy. There was a dim glow in the sky to the westward, and the road stretched away grey

and glimmering between the blackness of the banks and bushes alongside of it. So, walking slowly and talking but little, they came to the bridge just below Whiteley's barn, and there they stood leaning on the parapet, looking up the stream into the black woods beyond, from which came the many murmuring whispers of the summer's night. All the air was laden with the spicy odor of the night woods, and through the silence the sound of the rushing and gurgling of the water of the brook came to them clearly and distinctly. There was a bit of marshy land beyond, over which flew fireflies in thousands, here gleaming a brilliant spark and there leaving a long trail of light against the black woodlands behind. For some time they both leaned upon the bridge without saying a word; it was Patty that broke the silence at last.

"Does thee know, Thomas," said she, "that when thee first came home I was dreadfully afraid of thee? Thee seemed to me to be so much older than I was, and then thee'd seen so much on thy travels."

"Thee ain't afraid of me now, is thee, Patty?"

"No, indeed; it seems as though thee might almost be a cousin of mine, I know thee so well. It does father so much good to see thee; he's never been the same since mother died till now."

There was a moment or two before Tom spoke.

"Perhaps it isn't thy father I come to see, Patty," said he, in a low voice. He leaned over the edge of the bridge as he spoke and looked fixedly into the dark rushing water beneath.

Patty made no answer, and Tom was not sure that she heard him. Neither of them said another word until Patty said, in a low voice, "I guess we'd better go home now, Thomas."

Then they turned and walked back again to the old mill. Tom opened the gate for Patty. "Farewell, Patty," said he.

"Won't thee come up and see father, Thomas?" said she.

“Not to-night.”

“Farewell, then.”

Tom watched her until she had gone up the porch steps and was hidden by the vines that were clustered about it. He heard Elihu say, “Where’s Thomas?” but he did not hear Patty’s answer; then he turned and walked slowly homeward.

The summer passed, the fall passed, the winter passed, and the spring time had come again.

Tom’s walk with Patty seemed to have broken through the smoothness of the acquaintance betwixt the three.

Elihu had never been the same to him since that night; he had never been as cordial or as friendly as he had been before.

Sometimes it seemed to Tom as though Patty herself was growing tired of seeing so much of him. At such times he would vow within himself as he walked homeward that he would never call there again, and yet he always went back after a while.

So things moved along without that pleasant friendliness in their acquaintanceship until that occurred which altered the face of everything.

One First-day afternoon, Tom found himself standing on the porch of the mill-house. It was in the early part of April, but the day was very mild and soft, and Elihu and Patty were sitting on the porch.

“How is thee, Thomas?” said Elihu. He did not take the pipe from his lips as he spoke, neither did he ask the other to be seated. Tom stood leaning against the post and no one spoke for a while.

“Isn’t it a lovely day?” said Patty.

“Yes, it is,” said Tom; “would thee like to take a walk up the road as far as Whiteley’s?”

“Yes, I would,” said Patty; “I haven’t been away from the house all day.”

“It’s very damp; it’s too damp to walk,” said Elihu; “besides, thee’s got thy thin shoes on.”

“But we’ll walk in the road, father; I’ll promise not to go off of the road. I’ll put on heavier shoes if thee thinks that these are too thin.”

“Very well, do as thee pleases,” said Elihu, sharply; “I think it’s too damp, but I suppose thee’ll do as thee chooses.” Then he knocked the ashes out of his pipe and went into the house without another word, shutting the door carefully behind him.

“I don’t know why he doesn’t want me to go,” said Patty; “it’s a lovely day for a walk. Wait till I go in and speak to him, maybe he’ll change his mind;” and she followed her father into the house.

“I can’t bear this any longer;” said Tom to himself. “I’ll have it over this afternoon, or I’ll never come here again. I’ll ask her to be my wife, and if the worst comes to the worst I’ll ship for another cruise.”

Presently Patty came out of the house again. She had thrown a scarf over her shoulders. “Is thee ready to go, Thomas?” said she.

“Yes; I’m ready.”

There was very little talk between them as they walked on side by side, for Tom’s heart was too full of that which was upon his mind to say much with his lips; so they went down the road into the hollow, past the old mill, over the bridge that crossed Stony Brook just beyond, up the hill on the other side, past Whiteley’s farm-house, and so to the further crest of the hill that overlooked Rocky Creek Valley beyond. There they stopped and stood beside the fence at the roadside, looking down into the valley beneath them. It was a fair sight that lay spread out before their eyes—field beyond field, farm-house, barn and orchard, all bathed in the soft yellow sunshine, sav-

ing here and there where a cloud cast a purple shadow that moved slowly across the hills and down into the valleys.

“Isn’t it beautiful?” said Patty, as she leaned against the rough fence, looking out across the valley, while the wind stirred the hair at her cheeks and temples.

“Yes; it is;” said Tom, “it’s a goodly world to live in, Patty.”

Then silence fell between them.

“There’s the old Naylor homestead,” said Patty at last.

“Yes; I see it,” said Tom, shortly, glancing as he spoke in the direction which she pointed. Then, after a while, he continued, “What a queer man Isaac Naylor is!”

“I don’t see anything queer about him,” said Patty, looking down at the toe of her shoe.

“Well, I never saw a man like him.”

“He is a very good worthy man, and everybody respects him,” said Patty, warmly.

“Oh! I don’t deny that,” said Tom, with a pang at his heart.

“Thee couldn’t truthfully deny it if thee would, Thomas,” said Patty.

“I’m only a rough sea-faring man,” said Tom. “I don’t know that any one respects me very much.” He waited a moment, but Patty said nothing; then he went on again:

“For all that, I’d rather be a man of thirty at thirty, and not as dead to all things as though I was a man of eighty. Isaac Naylor is more like a man of eighty than he is like one of thirty. No one would take him to be only five years older than I am.”

“I don’t know any man that I respect as much as I do Isaac Naylor,” said Patty. “I don’t like to hear thee talk against him as thee does. He has never spoken ill of thee.”

“Thee need never be afraid of my saying anything more against him,” said Tom, bitterly; “I see that thee likes him more than I thought thee did. I might have known it too,