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## Select Story.

[For the Star.]

### THE STORY OF PERDITA.

ROMANCE OF COLONIAL TIMES IN TALBOT COUNTY.

MODERN CHIVALRY.

The enterprising talent of Stuart ensured its appropriate reward. In one year from the [illegible] he had distinguished himself [illegible] breaking out of the revolutionary war, he devoted himself to his country's cause, without [illegible] and consecrated that cause which made [illegible] common interest a matter of feeling—a family affair to each individual.

Stuart commanded an armed merchantman, and disputes with the noted Paul Jones the honor of having first shown the British flag. However this may be, he was distinguished for his skill and intrepidity [illegible] distinction enduring when the more brilliant achievements have become insignificant) for humanity to [illegible] in his [illegible]

Stuart intercepted an enemy's ship bound to Antigua. His adversary was far superior to him in men and guns, but as it did not comport with Stuart's bold spirit to make any [illegible] advantages of his enemy's superiority, he prepared unhesitatingly for action. The contest was a sanguinary one, and the victory long doubtful, but at last the British captain struck his colours. Though we certainly are displeased to consider an honor to the child of our hero, yet we (dare not) claim for him the whole merit of his success, but rather solve the mystery of victory at such odds, by quoting the expression of a patriotic English lady, who [illegible] on a similar occasion. "Ah, but the Americans would not have beaten, if the Lord had not been on their side."

After the fight, the English commander requested an interview with captain Stuart; informed him that the wife and mother of the governor of Antigua were on board his vessel, and that they were almost distressed with terror, he entreated, therefore, that Captain Stuart would receive them with the humanity which their sex demanded, and the deference always due to high station; he held that all God's creatures, who feared their Creator and did their duty, were on a dead level, and as to the duties of humanity, the trusted no American captain need go further than his own breast, for instructions how to perform them. The British captain was ignorant of the spirit of the times, and arguing nothing favorable from Stuart's republican reply, he returned with a heavy heart to the ladies to conduct them on board the captor's ship. The elder lady, the mother, was a woman of rank, with all the bride and prejudice of high birth. The American [illegible] of that then much despised order—the common people, rebels and robbers were the terms under the contempt in them and in the honesty of her ignorance she sincerely believed that she had fallen into the hands of pirates. The younger lady, though deeply affected by their disastrous situation, endeavored to calm her mother's apprehensions, and assured her that she had heard there were men of distinguished humanity among the American [illegible]. The old lady shook her head incredulously "Oh heaven help us," she groaned, "what can we hope from a band of horrid fellows, when they know they have lady Strangford and the right honourable Mrs. Liston in their power, and your beauty, Selina! your beauty child! is a fatal treasure to fall among thieves with, depend on't, arrange your veil so that it will hang in thick folds over your face, I will draw my hood close." The precaution on her part seemed quite superfluous, but the young lady obscured some of heaven's cunningest workmanship with her imperious veil.

The servants were ordered to deliver the ladies baggage to the American captain, with the request that some accommodation might be reserved. Stuart answered that he interfered with no private property, and that all the baggage of the ladies remained at their disposal.

Lady Strangford was somewhat reassured by this generosity, and attended by her captain and followed by her daughter and servants, she proceeded to Stuart's ship. Stuart advanced to meet them and offered her his hand, she proudly declined it and passed [illegible] blind blew back her hood—"Faith!" exclaimed one of the sailors who observed the scrupulosity with which she replaced it. "the old lady had best show her face, for I'm sure we'll all give a good berth to such an iron bound coast as that." But as the same breeze blew aside the young lady's veil, there was a general murmur of admiration. She had at the moment graciously accepted the tender of Stuart's hand in the hope of counteracting the impression of her mother's rudeness, and when her veil was removed he had a full view of her face; conscious that many were gazing on her, she blushed deeply, and hastily readjusted it without raising her eyes. Stuart dropped her hand, smothered an exclamation [illegible] paces, leaving her to follow her mother alone.

One of the officers observing his emotion, said, 'How is this captain, you look pale as a broadside, and yet you start at one flash from a lady's bright face."

"I got a scratch on my right cheek in the engagement," returned Stuart, evading his raillery, "and the lady's touch gave me a pang."

He then retired to his state room, and wrote the following note, which he directed to be delivered to the young ladies:—Capt. Stuart's compliments to the ladies under his protection—he incloses a ring once bestowed on him in acknowledgement of honorable conduct, as a pledge to them that the hand that was worn upon a lady's shall never be stained by a base deed. Captain Stuart will proceed immediately to Antigua, conveying the ladies with the least possible delay to their destined place. Such a communication to persons of rank might naturally excite curiosity in a gentleman less honorable than Stuart, yet he, on account of the secrecy enjoined by the young lady. [illegible] and hint, and when her mother alarmed at such a demonstration of feeling, took up the note, she caught it from her and then afterwards spared herself the pain of giving it to her.

[illegible] Stuart, [illegible] the young lady, [illegible] of getting home to your kindred she [illegible] to see a man rather past his prime, [illegible] into the sole of [illegible] allowance for the effect of a tropical climate, he might not have been more than forty-five. He spoke regularly and [illegible] Stuart, with far more courtesy than was [illegible] from an officer of the [illegible] to one who fought under the rebel banner, and remarking that he looked pale and sick, he tendered him to be seated. Stuart declined the civility, and continued resting on a crutch, which a severe wound in his leg rendered necessary.

"You are the commander of the schooner Betsy" said the governor.

"What's left of her," returned Stuart.

"You appear to be severely wounded," continued the governor.

"Hacked to pieces" rejoined Stuart, in a flutter called to the levity of his [illegible]

"Your name, I believe, is Frank Stuart?"

"I have no reason to deny the name, thank God."

"And, thank God, I have reason to bless and honour it," exclaimed the governor, advancing and grasping Frank's hand heartily. "What metal did you deem me of, my noble friend, that I should forget such favours as you have conferred on me in the persons of my wife and mother."

"I have known greater favours than those forgotten," said Frank, and the sudden illumination of his pale face showed how deeply he felt what he uttered.

"Say you so!" exclaimed the governor, with good humoured warmth, "well, but I am too poor to pay my own debts to you. I should count it a pleasure to assume those of all my species—but heaven grant, my friend, that you do not allude to my wife and mother. I blamed them much for not bringing you on shore with them—but my mother is somewhat over punctilious, and my wife, poor soul! her nerves were so shattered by the sea fight, that she is but now herself again. On my word, so far from wanting gratitude to you, she never bears an allusion to you without tears, the language she uses deal in when words are too cold for them. 'But come,' " concluded the governor, for he found that all his efforts did but add to Stuart's evident distress, "come, follow me to the drawing-room, the ladies will themselves convince you how impatient they have been to welcome you."

"Are they apprised," asked Stuart, still hesitating and holding back, "whom they are to see?"

"That they are—my mother is as much delighted as if his majesty were in waiting, and my wife is weeping with joy."

"Perhaps," said Stuart, still hesitating, "she would rather not see me now."

"Nonsense, my good friend, come along. It is not for a brave fellow like you to shrink from a few friendly tears from a woman's eye."

Nothing more could be urged, and Stuart followed Governor Liston to the presence of the ladies. Lady Strangford rose and clasped him her hand with the most condescending kindness. Mrs. Liston rose too, but did not advance till her husband said; "come, Selina, speak your welcome to our benefactor—he may misinterpret this expression of your feelings."

"Oh no," she said, now advancing eagerly, and fixing her eye on Stuart, while her cheeks, neck and brow were suffused with crimson, "Oh no, Captain Stuart knows how deeply I [illegible] cite, which none but he that bestowed them could judge of undervalue."

"It was a rule my mother taught me," replied Frank, with bluntness, softened however by a sudden gleam of pleasure, "that givers should not have better memories than receivers." There was a meaning in his honest phrase hidden from two of his auditors, but quite intelligible to her for whom it was designed, and to our readers, who have doubtless already anticipated that the honourable Mrs. Liston was none other than the fugitive Perdita. A sudden change of color showed that she felt acutely Stuart's keen though veiled reproach.

"A benefit," she replied, still speaking in a double sense, "such as I have received from you, Captain Stuart, may be too deeply felt to be acknowledged by words, now heaven has given us the opportunity of deeds, and you shall find that my gratitude is only inferior to your merit." Stuart was more accustomed to embody his feelings in action than in speech, and he remained silent. He felt as if he were the sport of a dream, when he looked on the transformed Perdita. He knew not why, but invested as she now was, with all the power of wealth and the elegance of fashion, he felt not half the awe of her, as when in her helplessness and dependence, she had fanned her round with many a spell, wrought by youthful and chivalric feeling.

He perceived, in spite of Mrs. Liston's efforts, that his presence was embarrassing to her, and he would have taken leave, but the governor insisted peremptorily to his remaining to dine with him. Then saying, that he had indispensable business to attend to, and promising to absent for a half hour, he would, he said, leave the [illegible] feeling.

When [illegible] to her mother, 'I do not think your little favourite, Frank, is quite well to day, will you have the goodness to look to him, poor lad and give him some advice." This old lady went without reluctance, as most people do to give advice, and Mrs. Liston turned to Stuart and said, "I gave my boy your name, with a prayer that God would give him your spirit. Do not, oh do not think me," she continued, her lip quivering with emotion, "the ungrateful wretch I have appeared. I am condemned to silence by the pride of another My heart rebels, but I am bound to keep that a secret which my feelings prompt me to publish to the world." Stuart would have spoken, but she anticipated him: 'Listen to me without interruption,' she said, 'my story is my only apology, and I have but brief space to tell it in. It was love, as you once guessed, that led me to that mad voyage to America. I had a silly passion for a young Virginian, who had been sent to England for his education—he was a gallant, I admit, [illegible] to meet on board the ship which [illegible] all in America. He [illegible] with me was [illegible] detained in England. You know all the events of my enterprise. [illegible] letter for my father, informing him that [illegible] I gave him not the slightest clue to my retreat, I was so vain, and so sure we will readily believe, a spoiled child. My mother was not living, and my father hoping that I should soon return, and saying, that he had indispensable business to attend to, [illegible] half hour, he would, he said, leave the [illegible] feeling.

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[illegible] wishing to sell my lolly, gave out that he had sent me to a boarding-school on the continent, and finally retired to Scotland. When I arrived in London, I changed my address, and followed the advice of my father, and [illegible] the immediately received me as its legitimate patroness, but never [illegible] me to his residence. His heart was hardened by my childish folly, and though I succeeded for the all my sufferings, I never drew a tear from your mother when I spoke of you, and dwelt on the particulars of your condition to me, his eye would [illegible] and he would exclaim, 'Hold Nan, the girl is [illegible] brief, the continuance of my allowance [illegible] professedly on the [illegible] came when he [illegible] we resided; he addressed me—my father favoured his suit, and though he [illegible] perceive which other than myself [illegible] to marry him, but [illegible] my hand to him, and [illegible] my victory to him. My father was [illegible] to which he called my duty—he [illegible] my heart—I was subdued; and our contract ended in my solemnly swearing never to divulge the secret, on the preservation of which he pledged the honour of his proud name to depend.

"Thank God," then exclaimed Frank, with a burst of honest feeling, "it was not your pride, cursed pride, and I may still think of Perdita as a true tender hearted girl; it was a pleasant sport to my mother," he continued, dashing away a tear, "and I hated to have it crossed with a blank time."

Mrs. Liston improved all that remained of her mother's absence in detailing some particulars, not necessary to relate, by which it appeared that not withstanding she had dispensed with the article of love in her marriage, (we trace mercy of our fair young readers,) her husband's virtue and indulgence had matured a sentiment of affection, if not as romantic, yet quite as safe and enduring as a youthful passion. She assured Stuart that she regarded him as the means of all her happiness. 'Not a day passes,' she said, raising her beautiful eyes to heaven, 'that I do not remember my generous deliverer, where alone I am permitted to speak of him.' The old lady now rejoined them, bringing her grand-child in her arms. Frank threw down his crutch, forgot his wounds, and permitted his full heart to flow out in the caresses he lavished on his little namesake.

The governor released Stuart's schooner, and made such representations before the admiralty court of Stuart's merits, and the ill treatment he had received from the commander of the frigate, that the court ordered the schooner to be refitted and equipped and permitted to proceed to sea at the pleasure of Captain Stuart. He remained for several days domesticated in the governor's family, and treated by every member of it with a frank cordiality suited to his temper and merits. Every look, word and action of Mrs. Liston expressed to him that his singular service was engraven on her heart. He forbore even to allude to it, and with his characteristic magnanimity, never inquired directly or indirectly her family name.—He observed a timidity and apprehensiveness in her manner, that resulted from a consciousness that she had, however repentantly, practiced a fraud on her husband, and he said that having felt how burdensome it was to keep a secret from his commander for a short voyage, he thought it was quite too heavy a lading for the voyage of life.

The demonstrations of gratitude which Stuart received from governor Liston and his family, he deemed out of all proportion to his services, and being more accustomed to bestow than to receive, he became restless, and as soon as his schooner was ready for sea he announced his departure, and bade his friends farewell. He said he then [illegible] (he always called her Perdita) shed at parting, a tear more precious to him than all the rich gifts she had bestowed on him.

At the moment Stuart set his foot on the deck of his vessel, the American colours, at the governor's command, were hoisted. The generous sympathies of the multitude were moved, and hurrahs from a thousand voices rent the air. Governor Liston, and his aide and most of the merchant vessels then in port, escorted the schooner out of the harbour. [illegible] the stern [illegible] of war cannot explain, [illegible] sentiment in the breast of man, implanted by God, which leads him to do homage to a brave and generous foe.

Captain Stuart continued to the end of the war, to serve his country with unabated zeal, and when peace was restored, the same hardy spirit that had distinguished him in perilous times made him foremost in bold adventure.

He commanded the second American trading vessel that arrived at Canton after the peace, and the profit with which he circumnavigated half the globe, was a drop of eighty tons, little more than half the size of the largest now used for the river trade. This adventure will be highly estimated by those who have been so fortunate as to read the merry tale of Dolph Heyliger, and who remember the prudence manifested, at that period, by the wary Dutchman of the ancient metropolis in navigating those small vessels; how they were safe to shelter themselves at night in the friendly harbours with which the rivers abounds, and, he believe, to avoid adventuring through Havarstraw bay or the Tappan sea, in a high wind.

When Stuart's little sloop rode into the bay of Canton, it was mistaken for a tender from a large ship, and the bold mariner was afterwards familiarly called by the great Hong merchants, "the one-mast Captain."

Such is the story of Perdita, as elaborated by the novelist, from incidents collected by her brother while at Pimlimmon. Since the publication of the story, such is its [illegible] Stance,—such the skill with which fact and fiction are intermingled,—many of the denizens of the neighborhood of the young woman's destination, she sustaining while in Talbot, assume the whole as truth, without intimations of error. A very estimable gentleman, a descendant of one of the actors in the little drama, has been heard to relate with particularity all the incidents of Miss Bedgrick's novelette, as the same time giving every evidence of his belief of the entire story, from the beginning to the end, thus affording another instance of the inventions of the romancist being accepted as the chronicles of the historian. The following appears, to be the unembellished story of the young woman, whom, for want of her true name, must still be called Perdita, as it has been gathered from those who bring who have heard it related by persons who were old enough to have received the account from those remembering the chamberer that figured conspicuously in the affair.

Something about the year [illegible] in the story, 1765, a ship lay off the harbour in the Thames, waiting for her clearance papers, and ready to sail. There came on board a young lady, who was accompanied and seen off by a young man, a sailor on board the ship "Integrity," and knowing or believing that he was about to sail for America, she determined to accompany him. To accomplish her purpose she assumed the disguise in which she had been discovered, and made use of the name by which she had been detected; to be received on board the same ship with her lover.

Tradition rather confirms the statement in the romance that the girl's appearance and demeanor evinced that she had been well born and bred, and that she was unaccustomed to the hardships and privations of humble life. The more charitable were disposed to attribute her escapade to her youth and the impetuosity of a passion that is so often indiscreet, the more no when none thought but her own sex, and particularly the ladies of Oxford, Dorset family, were not so indulgent, and relative to her, as one of these feelings from [illegible] of the like of which there was [illegible] landed upon our shores. Accordingly, instead of receiving her upon terms of equality, they placed her in their kitchen, and assigned to her the drudgery of a servant.

The girl soon discovered how terrible a mistake she had made, and repented sorely of her indiscretion. She had not even the consolation of the company of her lover, for she was not on board the "Integrity" in the character of, he, with the sailor's usual inconsistency, disasted her. Tradition is here at fault. The hardships and degradation she was enduring, added to the poignancy of her regret for having forsaken her home, and caused her to long for an opportunity to return to her parents in England. The near proximity of Pimlimmon to Oxford, brought her often into communication with the sailors of the ships trading between London and this region of the country. Her strange adventure, which was the common talk of the neighborhood that town, did not fail to reach the ears of the officers and men, who landing from the ships after long voyages, listened with avidity to all the gossip of the little port, and became eager to see the object of so much story, or so much scandal. It is not surprising that very soon she excited the sympathy of them engaged the affections, and finally, called the services of some susceptible, adventurous and courageous young sailor. Such a one she found in Stewart, who, in allusion to his name, was called in Miss Bedgrick's novelette, "Prince Charlie." Stewart, or Prince Charlie, was the first officer of the Gazette, Captain Allen Gower, then sailing between the Thames and Chesapeake ports from the year 1763 to 1768. Her companion, Jamie Anderson, of London, was her commander, Captain Gower, the Gazette's commander, a resident of Talbot. The Gazette, or the "Gazette," of whom mention is made there, was of him. The [illegible] who remember the broad shoulders, the long [illegible] the [illegible] of the "Gazette" and "Gazette" [illegible] Captain Gower, by the [illegible] of the story is to the [illegible]

The young sailor had frequent occasions for intercourse with Perdita, at Pimlimmon, and there probably took place, under an apple tree in the orchard, or in the left of the mansion, or in the [illegible] as it is represented, up to a very recent time, said to be painted, and to the young and the romantic. Love soon arranged the plan for the escape of the young woman from those who regarded as her social superiors, and for her conveyance on board of the ship, where she was ready to sail. How they [illegible] their purpose, tradition fails to inform us. It certainly more is that she was conveyed on board the "Gazette," and there she made the voyage, safely and without discovery, to her own and her lover's native country.

After the arrival of the "Gazette" at London, Perdita, still pursuing in her retreat to prevent her name and [illegible] Dean, which doubtless was more familiar to her ear than any other, [illegible] to protect her, [illegible] Gower, [illegible] of Maryland. Captain Gower owned the estate of Pimlimmon, which was also his home, when not on the seas, [illegible] Gower, who was [illegible] Gazette, [illegible] Gower, [illegible] Gower, [illegible] Gower