

master and mistress scanned the table with wide-open eyes of astonishment, so plain and meagre were its contents, so unlike any dinner that had ever before been served in that house.

'What has happened my dear?' asked gentleman, turning to his wife.

'Dat's all de col' meat dar was—sorry I didn't have no more,' she said, half apologetically.

'But I sent home a choice roast this morning,' began Mr. Allyn, wondering-ly; 'and you have no potatoes, neither—no vegetables of any kind!'

'Laws, yes! But den a body has to think about it a good while aforehand to get a roast cooked, an' just the same with 'taters; an' I thought I'd give ye what I happened to have when de time come, and I didn't happen to have much of nuffin. 'Clare! I forgot de bread!' and trotting away, she returned with a plate of cold corn cake.

'No bread!' murmured Mrs. Allyn.

'No, honey; used it all up for toast dis morning.' Alight have made biscuit or muffins, if I had planned for em long long enough; but dat kind o' makes a body feel's if dey had to do it, an' I wanted to get dinner for yer all o' my warm feelin' when de time come.'

'When a man has provided bountifully for his household, it seems as if he might expect to enjoy a small share of it himself, even if the preparation does require a little trouble,' remarked Mr. Allyn impatiently; but still too bewildered at such an unprecedented state of affairs to be thoroughly indignant.

'Cur'us how things make a body think o, Bible verses,' said Thanksgiving, musingly, 'Dar's dat one 'bout 'Who giveth us all things richly to enjoy'; an' 'What shall I render to de Lord for all his benefits to'ard me.' Dar! I didn't put on dem peaches.'

'Has Thanksgiving suddenly lost her senses?' questioned the gentleman, as the door closed after her.

'I suspect there is a 'method in her madness,' replied his wife, a faint smile crossing her lips.

The old woman returned with the basket, sadly despoiled of its morning contents; but she composedly bestowed the remainder in a fruit-dish.

'Dat's all! De children eat a good many, an' dey was used up one way' an' 'nother. I 'se sorry dar ain't no more; but I hopes y'll joy what dar is, an' I wishes 'twas five times as much.'

A look of sudden intelligence flashed into Mr. Allyn's eyes; he bit his lips for a moment, and then asked quietly:

'Couldn't you have laid aside some for us, Thanksgiving?'

'Wall, dar now! s'pose I could,' said the old servant, relenting at the tone; 'b'lieve I will, next time. Allers kind o' thought de folks things belonged to had de best right to 'em; but I'd heard givin' whatever happened to be on hand was so much freer an' lovin'er a way o' servin' dem ye love best, dat I thought I'd try it. But it does 'pear's if dey fared slim an' I spects I'll go back to de ole plan o' systematics.'

'Do you see, George?' questioned the wife when they were again alone.

'Yes, I see. An object lesson. with a vengeance!'

'And if she should be right, and our careless giving seem any thing like this?' pursued Mrs. Allyn, with a troubled face.

'She is right, Fanny; it doesn't take much argument to show that. We call Christ our King and Master; believe that every blessing we have in this world is His direct gift; and all our hopes for the world to come are in Him. We profess to be not our own, but His; to be journeying towards His royal city; and that His service is our chief business here; and yet, strangely enough, we provide lavishly for our own appareling, entertainment and ease, and apportion nothing for the interests of His kingdom, or the forwarding of His work; but leave that to any chance-pence that may happen to be left after all our wants and fancies are gratified. It doesn't seem very like faithful or loving service,' Mr. Allyn answered, gravely, 'I have been thinking in that direction occasionally, lately, but have been too indolent, careless or selfish to come to a decision and make any change.'

There was a long talk over that dinner-table—indeed, it did not furnish opportunity for much other employment; and that afternoon the husband and wife together examined into their expenses and income, and set apart a certain portion as sacred unto their Lord—doing it somewhat after Thanksgiving's plan of 'good measure.' To do this, they found, required the giving up of some needless indulgences—a few accustomed luxuries. But a cause never grows less dear on account of the sacrifice we make for it, and as these two scanned the various fields of labor, in deciding what to bestow here and what there, they awoke to a new appreciation of the magnitude and glory of the work, and a new interest in its success—the beginning of that blessing pronounced upon those who 'sow because all waters.'