

"Wal, I guess I better be goin'," Jacob remarked after a protracted interval of silence.

"Wal, good-night, Jacob," replied Locker.

"O, before I forget it," and the guest turned with his hand on the door, "Maria says jest now for me to ask ye, when I see ye, if ye won't come over an' take a bite o' Thanksgivin' with us. 'Twon't be no great of a dinner, I guess. Maria calculates to cook good, plain victuals, but that's all she doos calculate to do. Anyhow mebbe ye can make out a meal."

Locker stood where he was, his eyes widely staring at his friend above the lamp. His voice when he spoke sounded constrained.

"I don' know but I'd jest as soon," he said.

"Wal, I hope ye'll make out," replied Jacob, and hurried out of the door.

Locker continued to stand still a moment more, then he mechanically barred the door. No one had ever bidden him as an honored guest to a Thanksgiving dinner before. Maria Minns had felt a covert hostility toward herself in her husband's friend and had never hitherto been cordial to him, but her skill in cookery was famous far and wide.

When he left the door he walked to the stove, raised the lamp and looked up at the meerschau pipe. Next morning he looked at it again, and longer. When he was ready for the feast on the great day, his individuality somewhere lost in the unsympathetic grip of his new clothes, he went to