

already resolved and decided what was to be done. Some people used to say that if Deacon Adams only had his wife's snap—but this is a story about the deacon's overcoat, not about the deacon.

Mrs. Adams reached over, took the scissors from her work-basket and began ripping a seam. When she had ripped five or six inches, she turned back the cloth. 'Yes,' she said to herself, 'I wonder why I didn't think of it before. The wrong side is like the right and is just as good as new. Tomorrow, I'll rip it up. I'll send the boys to borrow the tailor's goose and the deacon can help me press the seams.'

When the deacon entered the sitting-room the next morning, a sight met his eyes that made him stare. There sat his wife, with scissors in hand, so eager in her task of ripping the old coat, that her scissors seemed more like a weapon of attack than the tool of her gentle art.

'Why, Martha,' he exclaimed, 'what does this mean?'

A few words of explanation sufficed, for the deacon had so often heard that Mrs. Adams could do anything, that he fully believed it.

Every moment that Mrs. Adams could spare from her household tasks that day was spent in ripping and carefully studying the parts of the coat and the way they were put together. By the time the children returned from school, it was ready for the reconstruction process. After John and Little Jim had finished their bread and butter, she said, 'Boys, are you ready to go on an errand for mother? Go to Mr. Stevens, the tailor, and ask him if he will please lend me his goose for a few days. I will send it back as promptly as possible.'

Visions of a waddling fowl in white feathers rose before little Jim's mind, for nothing is so delightful to a boy as something really alive that makes a noise. Not the most costly painted toy that winds with a key and 'goes' has half the fascination.

'Is Mr. Stevens' goose white, with yellow legs?' he asked eagerly.

'Why, a tailor's goose isn't a real live goose, it's made of iron, little goosie,' said John, quite ready to show his superior knowledge.

'Can't it run at you and hiss?' the child persisted, drawing up his feet as if he felt the creature at his heels.

His mother explained that this kind of a goose hissed only when pressed heavily over a dampened seam, but even this explanation did not subdue Jamie's enthusiasm, as he walked along beside his big brother. Something he had never seen, with such an interesting name, was very pleasant to go after, for the world was very new to little Jim.

Mr. Stevens obligingly lent Mrs. Adams his goose and for the rest of the week there were busy scenes at the Adams' home. Even little Nell put on her tiny thimble and helped mother. A hitherto dormant and unsuspected love of clothes seemed to awaken in the deacon's breast, as he pressed seams and cracked jokes about being a tailor's apprentice, and he paid the tailoress so many compliments as to make the roses come and go in her cheeks.

The coat was a great success. You knew it would be. The deacon wore it to the conference, and he wore it for many winters afterwards. At the station, every one who saw the deacon, noticed his smart appearance and before the day closed, nearly everybody in the village had heard about Deacon Adams' new overcoat. The question was, where did Deacon Adams get the money.

Did the deacon's wife tell? The pride of this good woman far exceeded her love of approbation, and she was always more anxious to conceal than to display the clever things she did for her family.

Did the tailor tell? Perhaps he was afraid other good wives might be stimulated to follow Mrs. Adams' example and trespass upon what he rightfully considered his preserves. The story never got out. Many years afterwards, the deacon's daughter told it to me, and that is how I came to know all about it.

## Their Missionary Barrel.

(Gertrude Lee Crouch, in the 'Interior.')

'Oh, here you are, Mrs. Knight,' exclaimed Elsie Freeland in a tone of relief. 'I began to fear that you could not have the luncheon and I should have to pack the barrel alone.'

'Oh, no, dear, I would not desert you; but if anything was a bother, it is this missionary barrel. I have given up two mornings to collecting garments, hurried through a luncheon at Shales, and now have to be back at five to dress for a dinner party. Really, Elsie, while I don't wish to criticize our president, I do think she should have used better judgement and appointed some one else as chairman of this affair. Everyone knows what a busy woman I am,' and Mrs. Knight threw aside her beautiful fur-lined coat and fell to work at the pile of clothing before her with a sigh of resignation.

'There!' she exclaimed, tucking in the last garment after two hours of work, 'I hope they will appreciate it. Did you say there was a large family, Elsie? Five children? Dear me! Well, no doubt the mother will find plenty of material here to make over. I brought some things that are really good enough for Marjorie to wear, but she is becoming so notional since she started in at Miss Hyde's school that she will not wear anything two seasons. But good-bye, Elsie; I thank you very much for your help,' and Mrs. Reginald Knight, wealthiest woman of the Park church, stepped into her carriage and leaned back with a pleasant feeling of complacency as she reviewed the work that she had done for the Lord.

Elsie Freeland walked toward home in a thoughtful mood. 'Dear me,' she mused, 'I wish I had been more generous toward those missionaries. I know what a struggle mother has to keep us going on an income of three thousand a year, and they say that the missionary gets less than five hundred; but then I suppose they get used to economizing, and of course they can't need as much as we do here; still, there is that ten dollars of my very own, I suppose I might spare at least part of it—but just then Elsie was overtaken by a jolly crowd of school friends and her good intention died at its birth; next morning Mrs. Knight's coachman headed the barrel and carted it to the freight house.

It was the day before Christmas. In a little town up in Minnesota the streets were nearly deserted; for all day a blast which seemed straight from the North Pole had swept down the streets and around the corners, piercing with its icy breath the few brave ones who ventured out. But it would have taken more than forty-five degrees below zero to keep little Dwight Colton indoors when the only chance for a Christmas celebration lay in the arrival of a box expected from the East; so, pulling his cap over his ears and tying on his red muffler, he ran down to the freight office for the seventh time that day.

Anticipating his eager question, the agent drawled out, 'Tell your pa to borrow Seth Risley's team, sonny, for it's a hefty one this time.'

'O, Mr. Poole, do you mean it?' shouted the delighted boy, and catching sight of a barrel addressed to the Rev. Arthur Colton, he took to his heels and was half way down the street before the slow-speaking agent had prepared to reply.

'Father, mother, it's come, it's come!' he cried, bursting into the sitting room where the family was gathered. 'Borrow Seth Risley's team, 'cause it's heavy this year. Quick, father, or I shall go alone.'

With that Mr. Colton rose to the occasion and buttoned on his threadbare coat, while all the other Coltons, great, middle-sized, and small, laughed, shouted, or danced, according to his notion of expressing overflowing joy.

By this time it was dark, and the storm had increased its fury; but undaunted, father and son started out on their half-mile walk. When they finally returned with the precious barrel, Mr. Colton was too stiff to lift it into the house and plucky Dwight had his cheeks frozen.

Lucile ran for a pan of snow with which to thaw them out; mother chafed father's hands; Esther hastened next door for some one to help with the barrel, while Nan, Baby and Bounce, the dog, danced wildly about, getting under people's feet and hindering generally.

Mr. Foster came over, glad to be of assistance to his pastor; by this time Mr. Colton was ready to do his share, so they brought it in and set it down tenderly, that barrel which meant Christmas comfort and Christian sympathy to them. Not a nail was to be removed, however (to this they all agreed), till father had returned the team and come back to share it with them; so while he was absent,—and it seemed a long time,—Mrs. Colton and Lucile prepared the supper, the younger children guessing meantime as to the probable contents of the barrel.

'If there is only one doll, it is mine,' announced Nan.

'Well, I think not, Miss Nan; here I am eleven years old and never had a real doll in my life. If there is only one, it is mine,' Esther replied in a tone of finality which admitted no argument.

Nan began to cry, but was soothed by her mother's wise advice to wait and see the doll before they claimed it.

At last Mr. Colton returned. There was no searching for mislaid hammer or screw-driver this time,—no, indeed, Dwight had taken care that there should be no more delay, and in a short time Mr. Colton had used both to such good purpose that the barrel stood beheaded and its contents displayed.

With fingers that trembled Mrs. Colton began to lift out the articles, for this was their first remembrance from the East in five years.

'Here is a coat for you, father, dear,' said she. 'It is rather small, I am afraid, but perhaps you can squeeze into it. Here are some pretty muslin dresses which will do nicely for the girls next summer. What are these? Oh, baby clothes,—dear me! Baby, darling, they might have fitted you last year, but will hardly do for such a big boy as you are now. No, Nan, don't crowd; I haven't caught sight of a dolly yet. This is for you, laddie,' handing over a partly worn suit to patient Dwight; 'and here are magazines—lots of the—nineteen three, nineteen-four; they seem to be a little ancient, Arthur; but it is something to read, isn't it?' said his wife, with a brave smile. 'Here is a nice hat; now, don't quarrel over it, girls, I know you both need it; we shall see about it later. Well, well, a beautiful blue silk gown. I suppose some dear woman thought that was what a minister's wife should wear.'

'So she should, dear,' interposed Mr. Colton, with a loving look at the beautiful woman kneeling before him.

'Maybe so, in the East, Arthur, but not out here among these poor people. O, Esther, Nan, perhaps these are your dolls,' she cried eagerly, catching up an interesting looking parcel. The children trembled with excitement while she removed numerous wrappings, and when the last one was taken off, the imaginary dolls proved to be two bottles of catsup. Nan burst into tears.

'Never mind, little daughter; Esther dear, don't look so heartbroken,' comforted their father, his eyes becoming moist. Perhaps father can get you dolls this year if the crops are better; be brave!'

'We are getting down to the bottom,' said Mrs. Colton, her head thrust suspiciously far into the barrel. 'What have we here? Ah, Lucile, this must be for you.'

Lucile put out her hand with girlish eagerness and shook it out; then she held it up and burst into hysterical laughter.

'A party waist!' she cried; 'chiffon, ribbons, lace; low neck and elbow sleeves. It will do nicely for prayer meeting, father.'

'Lucile!' reproved her mother gently, a lump in her own throat as she noticed her daughter's flushed cheeks and eyes brimming over with tears.

'O, mother, you know how I need a decent dress!'

'Yes, I know, dear; perhaps if mother is very wise and careful she can make over your serge once more. O Lucile,' as she