

Seventeen Thankful People for Forty-Nine Cents.

BY GRACE DEAN WILSON.

"Mary Golding can do such lovely things!" And Esther Flemming swept the dress breaths out of the easy chair as she spoke, and settled back against the pine pillows with a sigh that plainly was not born of content.

"What is Mary Golding going to do lovely this particular day?" asked Jean, rescuing the dress breaths, and closing the door which her younger sister had left open.

"This particular day!" echoed Esther from the easy chair. "Why, nothing, this particular day that I know of, though I would like to hear of it, when she would not do something lovely. The Lord made no mistake when he gave Mary Golding forty thousand dollars; and more of us might do good if we had a little more money."

Esther was a slight golden-haired girl; a white face, a nose that was a little sharp-tongued, and a smile that was sharper than both, but for all that, a heart that not even Mary Golding's own, weighed by all her good deeds, could hold in.

Jean looked over at her with a smile, Jean knew the reason of the discontent. Esther had it often as a Tuesday dinner. For on Tuesday she went to German class, and each an evening one of the six young ladies besides her. If she wore seal skin jackets and gold watches, while Esther wore a plain cloth jacket and no watch, and she was wont to view everything in the light of these particularly coveted articles, on Tuesday afternoons.

And the elder sister was usually ready with some word of reproof or comfort, both of which Esther disliked. But today Jean's reproof gave way to curiosity. "Well, what is Mary Golding to do?" she asked.

"What is she going to do? Why she is going to have a Thanksgiving dinner party to-morrow for seventeen old people. The most exquisite invitations, and the preparation for the dinner elegant! It will cost \$25, flowers and all, she told me. Oh, dear! if we could have one; it was my pet idea, but all I ever do is to have ideas. Why can't I ever do lovely things like that?"

"Seventeen people could sit as easily at our three-by-six table!" remarked Nancy, who had entered just as Esther was telling of the dinner party.

"And \$25 is not such a big sum!" added Esther, in an exclamation of the kindred spirit in the new comer.

"Why, our own dinner will only cost us \$2, and we would not have spent that much, only of 'lack coming," said Jean. "There will be room and food for two others, Esther," she added. "Suppose you ask two of your people."

"The charity front poor," quoted Esther. "No, thank you! Seventeen, or none at all, and seventeen could hardly be fed for fifty cents. Think of it! \$25 is her 'table' for the month! and mine is fifty cents. The riches are an equal divided, like all the good things in this world!"

"Suppose you divide your share with old Mrs. Bentley," said Jean. "I dare say she thinks just as you do!"

"Well, there," said Esther, "we are getting into our usual Tuesday rapids. I'm the cause I know, but I'm going to shoot them today. In five minutes I will come down and get our evening meal, and a good cup of broom around will send in the man smooth waters again." And picking up her books, Esther went up to her room, and was down a gasp as good as her word.

In half an hour all three were around the "three-by-six" table, which for all its smallness looked snowy and pretty as every a tea-table need look, for neatness was born in the Flemmings, and their means were not so scanty that they needed to deny themselves pretty china and fine linen. They were not poor people, but as Esther put it, "We have plenty in the local and butter line, but scrip as to the cake, you understand."

The mother and father had gone East for a year, to visit the old home, and the three girls were left to keep the house. Jack was the brother, away at college except for the holidays.

"This is delicious, no mistake, and like oil upon my troubled feelings," said Jean, as she dropped the lump of sugar into the cup of broom. Esther passed her. "You certainly have a knack of making it. I don't know but it is good enough for a Thanksgiving dinner, just of itself, without addition of press and turkey," Hannah said, "it's actuals and drink!"

"And costs so little, too," said Nancy. "Why, that package is good for three more meals, and think how we've been making it. Suppose you start a broom stand, Jean? You could charge ten cents a cup, and make your \$25 by next Thanksgiving. Seventeen people will be hungry again by that time."

Esther laughed with the others, but was very quiet through the rest of the meal, and as soon as the dishes were disposed of escaped to her room.

A little later she put on her wraps and went around the corner to a little grocery.

"Well," she said, as she came into the parlor where the girls sat, and held up two small packages. "I've decided to have my dinner party. Now wait till I tell you."

"Here is one package of broom, seven cents, cash discount; one pound loaf sugar, twelve cents, same discount. Seventeen and twelve make twenty-nine. Four quarts of milk, reasonably rich, which will cost twenty cents, will make with the cocoa and sugar fully seventeen cups of the broom 'which I certainly do have a knack of making,' Mistress Jean! Twenty and seventeen and twelve make forty-nine cents, and I have one out of my 'tench' to 'come and go on' for the little beasten."

"Now, if Jean will give me the loan of her ancestral pink China cups, and Nancy give me outright all the chrysanthemums she has blooming, why? Believe we can have our Thanksgiving party."

"Even to the flowers," put in Nancy. "And all for the surprisingly low sum of forty-nine cents."

"But I did not finish telling you," said Esther. "We are not to invite the people, but to just take the cups of broom and bunch of flowers to the 'seventeen.' I know most number already who would be only too glad of a sip of it."

About five o'clock, Thanksgiving day,

Esther began her preparations. Jack had come, the dinner had been disposed of, and now the girls were out and she had the kitchen to herself.

"A porcelain-lined sauce pan on the shining stove, the loaf sugar in a dish, and on the table the dainty lined china. In a basket were the seventeen bunches of chrysanthemums, two flowers each, and a spray of trailing ivy, and twisted in white paper."

Jack was cup-bearer. He had insisted on it, greatly to Esther's surprise, for she knew he was invited down town to a club supper.

"It makes all the difference about the way in which a thing is presented," said Jack, in arguing his case. "Four presentations has spoiled the best gift. I'll rather have some fellows give me the small box than others a hundred dollars. I'll tell you I'll do the thing up for you first class."

So Esther mixed, and made, and poured, and Jack carried away. There were four old ladies in the "home." They shared two rooms in the upper flat, and Esther often visited them. They were lonely tonight. The dinner had been served bountifully in the long dining room, the turkey and cranberry jelly had not been wanting. But neither were the memories of other Thanksgivings, and not a few tears had fallen into the well-laid plates. There had been happy homes once for the four, many partners at Thanksgiving, with husbands and children. There were none of them alive now, and for the four the two rooms were their only home.

The cups of broom came just at dusk. Jack carried it way up to the door of their rooms.

"It is with Esther Flemming's love and compliments," he said, as he put the tray on the little table, and lifted his hat from his brown head, "and the cups are older than you are yourselves."

"Ah, how glad they were! What pleasant memories it brought up! One of them could remember pounding the cocoa beans when she was a little girl; her father was a sea captain, and used to bring bags of the brown, fragrant berries from the countries where they grew. Said man, it tastes the same now. All through the twilight and far into the moonlight they sat and talked, holding the cups long after they were drained. They had been feeling lonely before, had hardly thought they had much to be thankful for, in contrast with the 'other days.' But when they washed the dainty cups, and wiped them on one of their soft white aprons, one of them said: 'God be thanked for Esther Flemming,' and 'God be thanked for Esther Flemming,'" echoed the other three.

An old man lived in the great-house around the square. Esther had often seen him from her window walking up and down, and sitting under the great oak trees, and always alone. He had more thousands than he had friends. He had the reputation of caring more for the thousands than for the friends, but such reputations are so easily and often so wrongly won.

One of the cups went to him. The servants were away for the day, and he himself opened the door to Jack's ring. "My sister Esther sent you this. See you from her window sometimes, and thought you were lonely perhaps, and it is with her love," said Jack, losing his nominative, but remembering his points.

"Some one thought and cared whether she was lonely! With trembling hands the old man carried the tinted cup into his cheerless library, and laid the flowers on the table beside his chair. He knew who "Esther" was, he had often seen her bright face at her window, and heard her and her sisters laughing and talking. He had no children of his own; his only son had died when his wife died. Accident had killed in a railway accident; Jack did not look unlike the son.

He had grown hard since then, had rarely opened his door to a visitor; and his thoughts to night had not been happy ones. "This time last year it is always more vividly present on holidays!"

"This cup of broom, though, was from some one who had no expectation of his money; who looked for no favor in return; who was human and one of God's creatures; there might be kindness and love and usefulness in the world after all."

As he drank he thought, and he slept that night with a smile on his face, the first in twenty years.

In a little shop across the square lived another old man. He was not rich. His home was a room off the little shop. Esther knew him. Esther's shoes were always coming unsewed and cutting, for Esther could not walk calmly and slowly like Jean; and the old shoemaker mended them cheaper than she could get them done at the larger establishment over the way.

He had lived there many years, but not always. He, too, was alone tonight, and lonely. "This time last year" was in his thought also. But not the last year. Oh, no! of the years so long and long ago! when he was a boy, and had looked forward to Thanksgivings! His eyes were very bright as he opened the door to the smart knocking. He hardly expected a customer on a holiday, but he never expected a visitor.

Off went Jack's hat with the same respectful air as at the great house and to the great man. "My sister Esther sent you this, with her best wishes," he said, as he put the tray into the wrinkled hands and picked up the bunch of chrysanthemums that fit to the room."

"Chrysanthemums! Why, the cobbler had been thinking of them but a moment ago. His little old mother used to grow them, and part of the Thanksgivings decorations was always a huge bunch of them in a lustre pitcher in the centre of the table, between the big turkey and the brown pumpkin pie. The last time he had seen one was when he put a bunch in the thin, still hands as she lay in her coffin."

Why, he had the same lustre pitcher now, and climbing up to the little cupboard, he brought it down and filled it with water, and placed the flowers in it. They had to be braced each side with wedges of his pegging wood, for they were small and the pitcher was big.

As he drank, he kept his eyes on the flowers, and his thoughts—they were far back and pleasant. He could almost hear the little mother say, "A good-night, Phil, my boy," as she kissed him long after he had gone to bed, and almost feel the touch of the kind old hands on his head as he fell asleep.

Around the corner, down the lane by the grocery shop, was a family of six German children. Esther had been keeping track of them in one way and another, utilizing them for German conversation lessons, putting them at mission schools, and presenting the workmen of the family with odd jobs which deprived her purse of many silver bits, but brought many loaves to the hungry mouths which otherwise might not have been fed.

"Better put it in earthen bowls," remarked Jack, as Esther placed six cups on a tray and signified their destination.

"The gift must be worthy the giver," said Esther. "Besides, I know they will be careful of the cups as grown people could; those two oldest boys are like real mothers." And supplementing the flowers with a fat cookie on the other side of each saucer, she sent Jack on his errand.

When a greeting he got from the old-fashioned little lady, who fathered and mothered the family. "Ach Gott! they exclaimed, as they received the tray; and "Ach Gott!" echoed the remaining four, as they scented the warm drink and comprehended it was their own.

"Miss Esther sent it to you, with her Thanksgiving love," said Jack, himself dispensing a cup to each of the hexagonal, "and be careful of the crockery, youngsters," he added on his own account, as he went out the door.

How they enjoyed it! "Gott be peeks an eye out for them that trust in him," said the eldest, in lieu of a grace, and the "Ach Gotts!" gurgled all the way down with the chocolate, only ceasing when the cookies were attacked.

Up over the Germans lived two girls, who sewed for a living. They had no other home, and Esther knew they were not likely to be invited away for Thanksgiving day. She half feared to send her offering, they might take it wrongly perhaps. "But if you do it from the right motive," she said, "why there can be no harm in my sending it, in if the Lord will, though the ability to do good is laid after it all right, so I'll do it."

And extra teaspoons of cream were dropped in the cups, the whitest of the remaining chrysanthemums were added; and Jack's hat went off with his very best bow as he presented the tray to the girl who opened the door of the little entryway.

"My sister wanted you to accept this cup of broom, as it is Thanksgiving evening," he said, and not stopping for a reply he hastened away, and left the cups in the hands of the astonished girl.

She sat at the table without word. On a plate were some thin slices of corn beef, and two baker's rolls. No tea, no drink of any kind; they rarely afforded that.

Their thoughts to night had not been thankful ones. They had been children in country homes once, it was years since they had left them. There had been some bitter words between them, for all they were sisters. The words were because of an invitation they had received for that evening to a company that was not good and pure. But the younger sister said she would go; they were cold and hungry, and there would be warmth there, and supper and drink.

It was the elder girl who had gone to the door. She came in and placed the cups on the table, and laid the white sprays beside them. They were so white!

"I will wear them tonight," said the younger sister. And she took them and held them against her face. How cool, and soft, and pure they were! She changed them from her face to her eyes. And by and by she took them down and went over to her sister.

"I will not go," she said simply. "Come, we will have our tea. For all the mud around them the flowers keep white, so can I, and a brighter time may come for us."

"Now let us take these cups to Uncle John and auntie," said Esther, "and tell them about who the other went; they always like to know all I do. And hurry back for the last."

"And who is to have this last?" said Jack, peering as he watched Esther shaking the package over the saucerpan.

"That is what I am trying to decide," said Esther. "Really, I am out of people, and this is the very best and thickest cup; it's too bad."

"What is it about a man's something being of his own household?" said Jack. "It doesn't just apply, come to think of it, but suppose you give it to me?"

"Why, Jack," said Esther, "I never thought about you wanting it, why of course, and she poured the chocolate in the cup, and paused a moment, then took up the package and handed it, and crossed quickly over to Jack's side.

"Jack," she said, as she held them up before him, "Jack, do you know what they mean? purity and fidelity. Jack, dear, they are yours; you must wear them: but oh, my dear, you cannot be pure and taste the liquors I smelled on your breath when you came home. Drink the broom, and promise me you will never touch them again; promise, and wear the flowers as a pledge—purity and fidelity. I can trust you not to sully their meaning."

"Yes," said Jack, "I'll promise. I knew I was doing wrong, but I did it in with a crowd, and did not stop to think. I've been thinking since, though, and that was the reason I stayed home from the supper at the club to night, though I hadn't thought of really giving a pledge of my best to you. I'll never touch them again, and I'll not shame either again."

"O Jack," said Esther, as she pinned the blossoms on his coat and laid her face down against them for a moment, "I do thank you so; this has been the very happiest Thanksgiving I ever spent."

"Seventeen thankful people," remarked Jack, as he enumerated and described his visits to the girls when they returned. "Such a time I never saw. It beats Mary Golding's all to pieces. Seventeen thankful people for forty-nine cents!"

"And one other thankful one besides," added Esther; but only she and Jack understood.

Double Possibilities.

REV. S. Z. BAYLOR.

There can be a light without its accompanying shadow. Increase the light and the shadow deepens. The electric light is the intensest light known, and it produces the deepest and blackest shadow. The brightness of heaven makes the blackness of hell.

All of God's gifts to man are judgments. All the time we are judging ourselves and entering into the rewards or losses of such judgments. We are all the time going to the right hand with the sheep, or to the left hand with the goats. Those men who followed Christ from day to day knew not that all the time they were at the bar of judgment; knew not that each day they were writing their irrevocable record about themselves.

Every truth reveals the sweet thoughts of many hearts. By the presence of Christ the thoughts of many hearts were revealed. He who was sent for the rising of many in Israel, was also sent for the falling of many in Israel. Better a man who repelled many. Every man who heard Him was either made better or worse. Thus, the same gospel which brings light and salvation to one, brings blindness and death to another. "For judgment I am come into this world; that whosoever believeth in me should not perish, but that they which see might be made blind."

Sight or blindness, salvation or condemnation, heaven or hell, these are the possibilities that are forever wrapped up in the gospel of God's dear Son. "All things come by measure, for good or them that love God." Yes; and all things are working together for ill to those who do not love Him. Growth and degradation are the double possibilities of the same life and the same law.

Life is full of these double possibilities. In the old story of Eden, they are clearly seen. Adam is created a free man, with the possibility of obedience. The possibility of disobedience. A necessary obedience could not be acceptable to God nor holiness worthy in man. Better a voluntary holiness with the awful possibility of a fall, than a necessary rectitude without exposure to a fall.

Then are there double possibilities in all the gifts of body and mind. It is a splendid thing to have strength of body. It is a splendid thing to have strength of mind. It is a splendid thing to have a giant's strength, so is it "tyrannous to use it as a giant." Force of thought is a wonderful blessing; it may become as great a curse. I know a man of strong and logical mind, who undermines faith and kills the doubt, wherever he goes. Education curses whom it does not bless. The capacity of holy love can be turned into a capacity of brutal lust. Whatever is best in man can become a source of the greatest evil.

"The greatest evil is the perversion of the best gift."

The printing-press is one of the mightiest agencies for good. It can multiply and scatter broadcast the leaves of the Book of Life. By the printing-press, goodness and truth have acquired a limited power of propagation. Goodness and falsehood have acquired an equal power. Our civilization contains the possibility of much good, has made possible a wider culture, a better virtue and a higher life. But it has made possible a deeper degradation. London is the great intellectual, moral and spiritual center of the world. But in the city of London, with all its light and culture, there is a deeper, a blacker, a more hopeless heathenism than anywhere exists in the Dark Continent. There is no heathenism worse than the heathenism of civilization. Privilege lifts men up or it sinks them down. Judas and John are simply the two possibilities of the same privilege.

To every soul, God is either a comforting light or a consuming fire; a source of joy or a source of misery. Out of the same relationship comes either a curse or a blessing. The Cross of Calvary is always a savor of life into life or death into death.

Who can measure the upward possibilities of life? Yet the upward possibilities measure the downward possibilities. So high as one may rise in virtue, holiness and likeness to God, so low may one sink in baseness, sin and unlikeness to Him. The highest heaven implies the lowest hell.

Is not this truth too often lost sight of by the Christian worker? Would not a clear recognition of this truth change our methods of work and our use of privileges? The Sunday school teacher, the pastor and preacher, the evangelist and missionary, the business man, the student, the man of thought, the man of power, would all be more watchful, lest the best gift committed to them should develop into the most evil.

"Be Ye Kind."

I found in an old paper a beautiful true story about a man who worked with a hundred other men in a pottery. He had one little child, a boy, who was sick in bed, and would never be well. The father was a grave, quiet man, never joining the others in their sports at noon, but working hard all day. By and by the boy began to notice that his father carried some trifle home with him at night. Sometimes it was a flower, sometimes a bit of crimson glass, sometimes a stray bit of bright paper. He said it was for the "wee lad," to make a little brightness for him.

Then these rough men began to help; they treasured up bits of things; they made little jars and cups, and drew quaint figures on them before they slipped them into the kiln to be burned; then they sent them home to the "wee lad." Whenever a man fell to the share of any of them, some of it was saved for the sick boy. One man made a scrap-book for him out of pictures which he had been gathering.

They hardly ever said any thing to the father about his boy, they seemed to know that he could not take of his "wee lad" much—but they used to watch their opportunity and put the pretty things in his hat for him to take home. They grew quieter and gentler in their ways as the days went by. They were ready to help in any way they could, though, but as they watched that father's face grow daddier and heard that his wee lad was steadily failing, they did not like to talk loud and laugh and be irreverent before his sorrow.

By and by they began to help him kindly in his work, so that he could get home to the boy earlier each day.

Sometimes when he came late in the morning, after having sat up with his

boy, he would find his day's task well under way. At last the time came when the poor father had to close his shop, and the tolling bell told his neighbors that the little lad was gone. On the afternoon of the funeral a hundred men from the pottery, dressed in their clean clothes, formed a procession in front of the cabin, and lifted their hats and bowed their heads when the little coffin was carried out.

Then they fell into line behind it, and walked slowly and solemnly to the grave yard, following the body of that "little lad" whom not one of them had ever seen.

Can you think how touched the father's heart must have been over all this sympathy and tenderness!

What a world it would be one of these days if all who are now boys and girls were cultivating bits of thoughtful tenderness toward those with whom they come in contact. There are so many very little ways in which we could help "bear one another's burdens" if we would.—Selected.

Count Over Your Mercies.

A Southern woman who died lately at a great age, and who carried to the last days of her life a happy heart and a singularly gay temper, thus explained the mystery of her unflinching cheerfulness:

"I was taught by my mother when a child to reckon, each morning before I rise, the blessings God had given me with which to begin the day. I was not simply to say:

"When all Thy mercies, O my God, My rising soul surveys, Transported with the view, I'm lost in wonder, love, and praise;"

but I was to count the mercies one by one, from the neat and serviceable shoes that covered my cold feet, to the sunlight shining on the hill-tops. My school friends, my play, my fun, my mother's kiss, the baby sister in her cradle—all these I learned to consider separately, and of every one to say, 'He gave it to me.'"

"This practice taught me the habit of thankfulness. It kept my heart near Him, kept it light and happy. These every-day blessings were not to me mere matters of course, but special, loving touches from His paternal hand. No pain or sorrow could outweigh them."

We all have a store of richer jewels than the heathen king; and, unlike the crown jewels, these jewels are our own, given to us by our Father.

How many of us mutter over, as the day begins, some perfunctory words of thanks which mean nothing? How many number their mercies, tasting the delight and joy of each, and out of glad hearts thanking the Giver?

And how many quite forget to thank either of them or of Him?—The Canada Presbyterian.

Thoughts for the Thoughtful.

It is our own past which has made us what we are. We are the children of our own deeds. Conduct has created character; acts have grown into habits; each year has pressed into us a deeper moral print; and the lives we have led have left such a record as we are.—Dr. D. Key.

Yet I speak these things to you, putting away of every thing that hides between the soul and God. In one case it may be wealth, in another pleasure, in another love of applause; but whatever it is must be gotten out of the way, or the soul can never, never enter the kingdom.

It is as when a pool lies far up in the dry rocks, and hears the tide, and knows that her refreshment and replenishing is coming. How patient she is! The other pools nearer the shore catch the sea first, and she hears them leaping and laughing; but she waits patiently, till the tide has reached her. And by the blessed moment comes. The last ridge of rock is overwashed. The stream pours in at first a trickling thread sent only at the supreme effort of the largest wave, but by and by the great sea in its fulness gives the winging pool itself, and she is satisfied. So it will certainly be with us if we wait for the Lord, however He delays, and refuse to let ourselves be satisfied with any supply but His.—Phillips Brooks.

—Rev. Dr. A. J. Gordon, of this city, has found, it is said, a use for church steeples. While advocating the training of lay preachers, he was asked how he would provide for the lodging of the students during the period of education. He promptly replied that there was space enough in his church steeple to furnish sleeping accommodations for twenty or thirty men, if properly utilized. His idea is a good one. Why should not every steeple in the land be swept, garnished, and converted into dormitories for Christian workers under training for neighborhood evangelization?

Silk Needlework.

The latest edition (1890) of that series of instructive and entertaining books by Home Needlework, published yearly by the Corticelli Silk Co., is now ready. It will repay any lady interested in fancy work to send to their address (St. John Quebec) six cents in postage stamps and receive one of these books. The 1889 edition had many novelties in designs and patterns which are so useful in the Home Circle, and, as in all the work done by the company, this edition is fully up to the standard. The advice given as to the selection of silks alone will save time and disappointment to many. Both editions can be had, we understand, by addressing the Company as above. The Corticelli Silk Co. are selling the well-known Wash Colors Art Silk made by the Brainerd & Armstrong Co., United States.

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—F. J. Olden, Saito, Buenos Ayres. "A few years ago I took a very bad cold, which settled on my lungs. I had night sweats, a hacking cough, and great soreness. My doctor's medicine did me no good. I tried many remedies, but received no benefit; every body despaired of my recovery. I was advised to use Ayer's Cherry Pectoral, and, as a last resort, did so. From the first dose I obtained relief, and, after using two bottles of it, it was completely restored to health."—F. Adams, New Britain, N. J.

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