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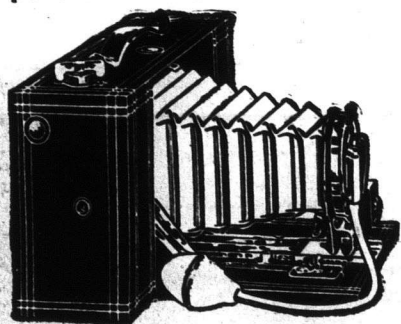
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were hurt in his store; "far as getting the days of the week mixed, I reckon there's others that does that, I know of one man, not a thousand miles from here, that seems to think every day's Sunday—leastwise he ain't done a stroke of work for six months." This thrust turned the laughter against Lem, who was notoriously lazy; and he subsided, being unable to enjoy a joke at his own expense.

The following Sunday was the greatest trial of all. The thought of remaining away from church never occurred to either Daniel or Martha. They would have felt that it was adding another fault to one already committed. Both of them hoped for a powerful sermon, one that would help to straighten their tangle and give them strength to bear the ridicule of the thoughtless or unkind. They had a real affection for the minister and were even prepared to bear his censure with what equanimity they could, if he should feel it his duty to regard their unconscious backsliding seriously; therefore it was a shock to see a stranger in the pulpit.

so when the old man was at church, scarcely knew how to act. He looked at Daniel, who sat, apparently unconscious of the crisis at hand. Jim Thornberry rose, looked from Daniel to Joel, and back to Daniel, then walked slowly forward. "Daniel, the collection!" whispered Martha, and Daniel rose, his head higher and his shoulders straighter than they had been for many a day, and helped to collect the offering as usual.

Daniel and Martha left immediately after the close of the service, instead of waiting as was the custom in Mapleton, to chat a while at the door; and seeing the look on Daniel's face, no one ventured to address them.

They did not discuss the matter much in the days that followed. Once Martha asked if it was worth while for her to make preparations for Thanksgiving. "It's the first time in my life, Daniel, that I've felt as though I'd nothing to be thankful for. The neighbors and the church have turned against us because we're old and forgetful, and the children have failed us when we need them most." Daniel agreed that it was not worth



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The Reverend James Ballard was a good man, and a zealous worker, and when Mr. Vinton was suddenly called away by the illness of his mother and asked this friend of his college days to fill the pulpit during his absence, it was with the best intentions on both sides. Mr. Ballard, however, was a somewhat impulsive man, and when he learned, by the merest accident, that a member of his friend's congregation had done unnecessary work on Sunday, he concluded that there had been some flagrant violation of the Sabbath, and putting aside his carefully prepared Thanksgiving sermon, he delivered an impassioned extemporaneous address, taking as his text, "Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the Lord."

After a simultaneous gasp and looks of consternation, which in his ardor the minister failed to observe, the congregation settled down to listen as though fascinated. There was a little stir when it was time to take up the collection. Joel Smith, who performed this office on the rare occasions when Daniel was absent, but had never presumed to do

while, so Thanksgiving eve found nothing on their pantry shelves but one lonely pie and a jar of cookies. The sight of this meager showing instead of the bounteous stores of other years was almost more than Martha could endure, and more than once that day she had fought down the impulse to set to work and load the shelves as usual. But she resisted the impulse and after a cheerless supper the old people sat down to a lonely evening before the fire in their old-fashioned living room.

"What was that, Marthy?" asked Daniel, suddenly, putting down the Chronicle, as the peculiar, grating sound, as of a vehicle being turned too short, reached their ears. "I was sure I heard a buggy at the gate."

Martha went to the window and looked out. Daniel followed and when her eyes became accustomed to the difference between moonlight and lamplight she clutched her husband's arm in excitement, for there were a dozen buggies between the house and the barn and as many more were coming up the lane.

"What can it mean?" said Daniel. To Martha it could mean but one thing and she voiced the fear that had been in

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