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It is the unhappy man who commonly sits down and thinks; the happy man gets up and does something.—G. S. Street.

Aunt Huldah's Thanksgiving

By MATTIE DYER BRITT

MISS Huldah Mount stood in her clean pantry weighing out sugar and flour for a white cake. Thanksgiving was but two days off, and of course, she must have a good dinner, "even though there's nobody to eat it but myself," she said, and dashed from her eyes something which would have greatly astonished her neighbors, who hadn't an idea that anything could make Miss Huldah shed a tear.

She carried her sugar into the kitchen, set it down on the white table, and looked about the cosy, empty little house with an air almost helpless. "Just to think," she half-sobbed, "the poor, dear child; the ungrateful little baggage! She might have been here a comfort for a change to me, as I get old and feeble. But no, she must chafe off to the city, and perk herself up behind a counter for a pitiful little pay, only because she wanted to be independent. Good Lord! as if I wasn't dependent on her for all the pleasure I get out of this life. Not a soul left that belongs to me, except Betty, and she had to leave me. I've a notion to send for her to come home. No, I won't. She went of her own accord, and I reckon some day, when she gets sick, or loses her job, she'll come back to her old maid aunts, and then, perhaps, I won't have her. Now, who's to eat dinner with me Thanksgiving? I might ask Will Fellows—he'd come, just because she, silly little flirt, used to be here. She might have had him, and done well, if she had showed one bit of sense. No, I won't ask Will—he'd make me more homesick for her than I am. I may as well be a dunce and own right up. Oh, my good Lord! What are lonely old maids allowed to live for, anyhow?"

Miss Huldah sat down in a chair, put her head down on her hands, and cried like a baby for five minutes. Then she dried her eyes and went to work. When her household tasks for the day were done, she put on her sunbonnet and ran out the back way over to Parson May's to invite him and his wife to come over and eat Thanksgiving dinner with her. She felt sure they would be lonely, too, for they had only a daughter, and she was married and did not live near home.

Mrs. May said they would be very glad to come. They would be sure to get other invitations at church, but Miss Huldah's had come first, and so they would promise to help her eat the fat turkey she had been feeding for a month or more, in anticipation of the great day.

It chanced that just before Thanksgiving, good Mrs. May went up to the city for some shopping, and was in the store where Betty Mount stood

at the counter in the domestic department. Betty was always glad to see anybody from home, and especially Mrs. May. When she asked after her aunt, the dear woman bent closer over the counter and said, in her own sweet, gentle way:

"I don't think Aunt Huldah is very well, Betty. She seems to be worrying and grieving over something that is pulling her down badly."

"Oh, I hope not!" said Betty, her soft voice trembling a little; "Aunt surely has plenty of money—"

"I'm sure it isn't money, my dear,"



A Farm Entrance One Would Not Soon Forget. These massive columns are simply constructed of ordinary boulders capped with cement. Entrance to the garden home of Albert Jull, Brant Co., Ont.

—Photo by an editor of Farm and Dairy.

said Mrs. May: "money is good to have, if we don't love it too well; but there is something worth more to women like your aunt. She is not young now, and she is very lonely without you. Are you quite sure you have acted for the best in leaving her, Betty?"

"Oh, I thought so. I wanted to earn my living myself. I didn't want to be dependent, even on Aunt Huldah."

"Didn't you think that your help and your bright company in her dull life made you worth more than your keep, Betty? Don't you know she always thought so?"

"Well, perhaps she did. She was always so good to me, you know."

"Yes; she seemed to be happy with you, dear. I feel sure she is not very happy now. You must be the judge, child; but it seems to me that some times we reach out after some great duty, and leave the dear little one close to us undone. Are you going out for Thanksgiving, Betty?"

"Aunt has not asked me to come. She doesn't even write to me," said Betty, a little sadly, perhaps a bit proudly.

"She wouldn't, you know, Betty. She is proud and rather stiff, and when she feels that she has been sin-

ned against, it's hard for her to forgive."

"Oh, Mrs. May! You don't quite mean 'sinned against,' do you?"

"Think it out for yourself, dear," was the gentle answer, and then Mrs. May moved back to a counter farther down the great aisle, and left Betty with her eyes so swimming in tears that she could hardly see the gaily-robed lady to whom she had to turn with the old, endless question, which had grown so tiresome, "Is there something, please?"

On Thanksgiving morning Miss Huldah fixed everything so that it would only be a few minutes' work to get dinner on the table when she came home from church. It was part of her religion not to miss the Thanksgiving service, so she "did up" a good part of her work before she closed the dampers of the kitchen stove, and of the bright base-burner in her tidy sitting-room, and dressed herself for meeting. As Miss Huldah reached the steps of the little church, Mrs. May stood waiting for her.

"Good morning!" was her cheery greeting. "I stopped to tell you, dear Miss Huldah, that I hope you won't be very much disappointed if Mr. May and I won't take dinner with you today. You see, Nettie has sent for us to come over to Fairfield and spend Thanksgiving with them. The letter was here waiting, but I was up at the city, and did not get it until I got home, 'most too late to send you word. You won't mind, will you? We do so long to be with Nettie to-day."

"Oh, no, I won't mind. Of course,

she went into the pretty room which had been hers, and took off her hat. The room was just as she had left it, except that the little girlish trifles she had scattered about had all disappeared.

She opened the closet door and looked within. Several garments she had left there still hung on the hooks, undisturbed. She hung her hat and coat up beside them, then went to the dressing-table and smoothed her brown hair, which the brisk autumn wind had somewhat ruffled.

Next she went into the kitchen, where a savory smell from the shut-up stove told her that something good was slowly cooking in the oven.

"A fat turkey, I'll bet!" said she, as she stooped and opened the oven door. Sure enough, a splendid fellow lay in the pan, just beginning to assume the golden-brown hue which was so desirable.

"Needs a bit of basting, right now," said Betty; "where's the spoon?" She found the big iron spoon, and dipped the rich gravy up, pouring it over the sides of the plump turkey until they glistened with richness.

"H-m-m! Now, what next?" she said, softly, and went to the table and the pantry. On the pantry shelves stood the fragrant mince pie for which Aunt Huldah was famous, a big dish of scarlet cranberries, almost jellied, the white cake and tell turkey, and close by, covered up, she found the wooden bowl of fresh cabbage, all ready to be cooked in slaw, and a tall glass of crisp celery standing in the pantry window, near a crock of ready peeled potatoes.

"Wonder if Auntie is going to have the cranberries, with all this stuff fixed ready," said Betty. "Why, yes, she is going to have one guest anyhow—I wonder if she will be glad to dinner with me, and have it all ready when she comes. I don't care to bring the governor or the preacher, if she only cares to have me come home. Oh, I hope, I hope Mrs. May was right. But I'm half afraid. I wonder if Will

came for a day with loved ones around the festal board.

Certainly there was at least one, a slim, brown-eyed girl who stopped at the small station long enough to give some directions about the trunk for which she carried the check, and then, declining the offers of the driver of the village carriage which always waited at the train hours, she took her way with a quick, firm step down the street towards the east-end of the town. At the church door she half hesitated, as if of a mind to go inside, then kept on, swiftly, carrying her light handbag, until she reached the gate to Miss Huldah Mount's tidy little home.

Stepping up on the front porch, the girl said, softly:

"I wonder if she has gone to church? I am almost sure she has. Perhaps she would not let me come in if she was at home, but if she isn't, I'm going in anyway."

She opened the door. No one visible. She softly called, "Aunt Huldah!" No answer came, so she went into the house. The sitting-room was bright and warm, the big fat Maltese cat curled up on the cushion in his favorite chair, fast asleep. Betty spoke to him, dropping down by the chair to give him a hearty hug, to which he responded with a loud, contented purr, and as she rose to her feet he jumped down and followed her, rubbing against her skirts and whining more loudly as he recognized her.

"Oh, Tom, you are glad to see me, anyhow, aren't you?" said the girl. "I wonder if anybody else will be."

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