

LIFE.

Between two worlds life hovers like a star,
Twist night and morn upon the horizon's verge;
How little do we know that which we are!
How less what we may be! The eternal surge
Of time and tide rolls on, and bears afar
Our bubbles; as the oil burst, new emerge,
Lashed from the foam of ages; while the graves
Of empires heave but like some passing waves.

OUR PATTERN

A weaver sat one day at his loom
Among the colors bright,
With the pattern of his copying
Hung fair and plain in sight.

But the weaver's thoughts were wandering
Away on a distant track,
As he threw the shuttle in his hand
Wearily forward and back.

And he turned his dim eyes to the ground,
And tears fell on the wool,
For his thoughts, alas! were not of his home,
Nor the wife beneath its roof.

When her voice recalled him suddenly
To himself, as she sadly said
"Oh, woe is me! for your work is spoiled,
And what shall we do for bread?"

And then the weaver looked and saw
His work must be undone:
For the threads were wrong, and the colors
dimmed
Where the bitter tears had run.

"Alack! alack!" said the weaver,
"And this had been all right
If I had not looked at my work, but kept
The pattern in my sight."

h! said it was for the weaver,
And said it for his lackless wife,
And said it will be for us if we say,
At the end of our task of life:

The colors that we had to weave
Were bright in our early years,
As we wove the tissue wrong and stained
The wool with bitter tears.

"We wove a web of doubt and fear—
Not faith, and hope, and love—
Because we looked at our work, and not
At our Pattern up above."

Our Story.

"THANKSGIVING ANN."

A STORY OF SYSTEMATIC GIVING.

BY KATE W. HAMILTON

In the kitchen doorway, underneath its arch of swaying vines and dependent purple clusters, the old woman sat, tired and warm, vigorously fanning her face with her calico apron. It was a dark face, surmounted by a turban, and wearing, just now, a look of troubled thoughtfulness not quite in accordance with her name, a name oddly acquired from an old church anthem that she used to sing somewhat on this wise—

"Thanksgivin' an'—"

"Johnny, don't play dar in the water, chile!"

"Thanksgivin' an'—"

"Run away now, Susie, dearie."

"Thanksgivin' an'—"

"Take care that bressed baby! Here's some gingerbread for him."

"Thanksgivin' an' de voice of melody."

You laugh! But looking after all these little things was her appointed work, her duty; and she spent the intervals in singing praise. Do many of us make better use of our spare moments?

So the children called her "Thanksgiving Ann"; her other name was forgotten, and Thanksgiving Ann she would be now, to the end of her days. How many these days had already been, no one knew. She had lived with Mr. and Mrs. Allyn for years, whether as mistress or servant of the establishment they could scarcely tell; they only knew that she was invaluable. She had taken a grandmotherly guardianship of all the children, and had a voice in most matters that concerned the father and mother, while in the culinary department she reigned supreme.

The early breakfast was over. She had bestowed unusual care upon it, because

an agent of the Bible Society, visiting some of the country places for contributions, was to partake of it with them. But while she was busy with a final batch of delicate waffles, the gentleman had pleaded an appointment, and, taking hasty leave of his host and hostess, had departed, unobserved from the kitchen windows; and Thanksgiving Ann's "Bible money" was still in her pocket.

"Didn't ask me, nor give me no ch'ce. Just's if, 'cause a passon's old an' colour-ed, dey didn't owe de Lord nuffin', an' wouldn't pay it if dey did," she murmured when the state of the case became known.

However, Silas, the long-limbed, untiring, and shrewd, who regarded the old woman with a curious mixture of patronage and veneration, had volunteered to run after the vanished guest, and "catch him if he was anywhere this side of Chainy." And even while Thanksgiving sat in the doorway the messenger returned, apparently unwearied by his chase.

"Well, I come up with him—told ye I would—and give him the three dollars. He seemed kind of flustered to have missed such a nugget; and he said 'twas a generous jonation—equal to your master's. Which proves," said Silas, shutting one eye, and appearing to survey the subject meditatively with the other, "that some folks can do as much good just of-hand as some other folks can do with no end of pinchin' and scrawin' beforehand."

"Think it proves dat folks dat don't have no great 'mount can do as much in a good cause by thinkin' 'bout it a little beforehand, as other folks will do dat has more, and puts der hands in Jer pockets when de time comes. I believe in systematics 'bout such things, I does; and with an energetic bob of the head, by way of emphasizing her words, old Thanksgiving walked into the house.

"Thanksgivin' an' de voice of melody."

she began in her high, weird voice. But the words died on her lips; her heart was too burdened to sing.

"Only three dollars out'n all der 'bundance!' she murmured to herself. "Well, mebbe I oughtn't to judge; but then I don't judge, I knows. Course I knows, when I see here all de time, and sees de clo's, an' de can'tages, an' de musics, an' de fine times—folks, an' hosses, an' tables all provided for, an' de Lord of glory left to take what happens when de time comes, and no preparation at all! Sure 'nough, He don't need der help. All de world is His; and He can send clo'es to His naked, an' bread to His hungry, an' Bibles to His heathen, if dey don't give a cent; but den dey're pinchin' and starvin' der own dear soul. Well—I ain't my soul! But I loves 'em—I loves 'em, an' dey're missin' a great blessin'."

These friends, so beloved, paid little attention to the old woman's opinion upon what she called "systematics in givin'."

"The idea of counting up all one's income, and setting aside a fixed portion of it for charity, and then calling only what remains one's own, makes our religion seem too arbitrary and exacting; it is like a tax," said Mrs. Allyn one day; "and I think such a view of it ought by all means to be avoided. I like to give freely and gladly of what I have when the time comes."

"If ye hain't give so freely an' so gladly for Miss Susie's new necklaces an' yer own new dresses dat ye don't have much when the time comes," interposed Thanksgiving Ann.

"I think one gives with a more free and generous feeling in that way," pursued the lady, without seeming to heed the interruption. "Money laid aside beforehand has only a sense of duty, and not much feeling about it; besides, what difference can it make, so long as one does give what they can when there is a call?"

"I wouldn't like to be provided for dat way," declared Thanksgiving. "Was,

once, when I was a slave, 'fore I was de Lord's free woman. Ye see, I was a young, no 'count girl, not worf thinkin' much 'bout; so my old marse he let me to take what happened when the time come. An' sometimes I happened to get a dress, an' sometimes a pair of ole shoes, an' sometimes I didn't happen to get nuffin, an' den I went barefoot; an' dat's jist de way—"

"Why, Thanksgiving, that's not reverent!" exclaimed Mrs. Allyn, shocked at the comparison.

"Jist what I thought; didn't treat me with no kind of rev'ence," answered Thanksgiving.

"Well, to go back to the original subject, all these things are mere matters of opinion. One person likes one way best, and another person another," said the lady smilingly, as she walked from the room.

"Pears to me it's a matter of which way de Master likes best," observed the old woman, settling her turban. But there was no one to hear her comment, and affairs followed their accustomed routine. Meanwhile, out of her own little store, she carefully laid aside one-eighth. "Cause if dem ole Israelites was tol' to one-tenth, I'd jist like to frow in a little more for good measure. Talk 'bout it's being like a tax to put away for such things! 'Clare! I get studying what each dollar mus' do, till I get 'em so loadened up wid prayin's an' thinkin's dat I most b'lieve dey weigh double when dey does go."

"Oh, de Lamb! de lovin' Lamb!
De Lamb of Calvary!
De Lamb dat was slain, an' lives again,
An' intercedes for me!"

And now another call had come. "Came, unfortunately, at a time when we were rather short," Mrs. Allyn said regretfully. "However, we gave what we could," she added. "I hope it will do good, and I wish it were five times as much."

Old Thanksgiving shook her head over this cheerful dismissal of the subject. She shook it many times that morning, and seemed intensely thoughtful, as she moved slowly about her work.

"S'pose I needn't fret 'bout other folks' duty—dat ain't none o' my business; yas 'tis, too, cause dey's good to me, an' I loves 'em. 'Taint like's if dey didn't call darselves His neither."

Mr. Allyn brought in a basket of beautiful peaches, the first of the season, and placed on them on the table by her side.

"Aren't those fine, Thanksgiving? Let the children have a few, if you think best; but give them to us for dinner."

"Sartin, I'll give you all dar is," she responded, surveying the fruit.

Presently came the pattering of several pairs of small feet; bright eyes espied the basket, and immediately arose a cry:

"Oh, how nice! Thanksgiving Ann, may I have one?"

"And I?"

"And I, too?"

"Help yourselves, dearies," answered the old woman composedly, never turning to see how often or to what extent her injunction was obeyed. She was seated in the doorway again, busily sewing on a calico apron. She still sat there when, near the dinner hour, Mrs. Allyn passed through the kitchen, and a little surprised at its coolness and quietness at that hour, asked wonderingly:

"What has happened, Thanksgiving? Haven't decided upon a fast, have you?"

"No, honey; thought I'd give ye what I happened to have when de time come," said Thanksgiving Ann coolly, holding up her apron to measure its length.

It seemed a little odd, Mrs. Allyn thought. But then Thanksgiving needed no oversight; she liked her little surprises now and then, too, and doubtless she had something all planned and in course of preparation; so the lady went her way, more than half expecting an especially tempting board because of her cook's apparent carelessness that day. But when

the dinner hour arrived both master and mistress scanned the table with wide-open eyes of astonishment, so plain and meagre were its contents, so unlike any dinner that had ever before been served in that house.

"What has happened, my dear?" asked the gentleman, turning to his wife.

"I do not know," she replied, with a questioning glance at Thanksgiving.

"Dat's all de col' meat dar was—sorry I didn't have no more," she said half apologetically.

"But I sent home a choice roast this morning," began Mr. Allyn, wonderingly; "and you have no potatoes either—nor veg'tables of any kind!"

"Laws, yes! but den a body has to think 'bout it a good while aforehand to get a roast cooked, an' jist the same wid 'taters; and I thought I give ye what I happened to have when de time come, an' I didn't happen to have much of nuffin'. 'Clare I forgot de bread!" and, trotting away, she returned with a plate of cold corn-cake.

"No bread!" murmured Mrs. Allyn.

"No, honey; used it all up for toast dis mornin'. Might have made biscuit or muffin's, if I had planned for 'em long enough, but that kind o' makes a body feel 's if dey had to do it, an' I wanted to get dinner for yer all out my warm feelin's when de time come."

"When a man has provided bountifully for his household, it seems as if he might expect to enjoy a small share of it himself, even if the preparation does require a little trouble," remarked Mr. Allyn impatiently, but still too bewildered at such an unprecedented state of affairs to be thoroughly indignant.

"Cur'us how things make a body think of Bible verses," said Thanksgiving, musingly. "Dar's dat one, 'bout 'who giveth us all things richly to enjoy,' an' 'what shall render to the Lord for all His benefits to 'ards me?' Dar! I didn't put on dem peaches!"

"Has Thanksgiving suddenly lost her senses?" questioned the gentleman, as the door closed after her.

"I suspect there is a 'method in her madness,'" replied his wife, a faint smile crossing her lips.

The old woman returned with the basket, sadly despoiled of its morning's contents, but she composedly bestowed the remainder in a fruit-dish.

"Dat's all. The children eat a good many, and dey was used up one way an' 'nother. I've sorry dar ain't more, but I hopes ye'll 'joy what dar is, an' I wishes 'twas five times as much."

A look of sudden intelligence flashed into Mr. Allyn's eyes; he bit his lip for a moment, and then asked quietly:

"Couldn't you have laid aside some for us, Thanksgiving?"

"Well, dar now! s'pose I could," said the old servant, relenting at the tone. "B'lieve I will next time. Allers kind o' thought de folks things belonged to had de best right to 'em; but I heard givin' whatever happened was so much freer an' lovin'er way o' servin' dem ye love best, dat I thought I'd try it. But it does 'pear 's if dey fared slim, an' I spects I'll go back to the old plan o' systematics."

"Do you see, George?" questioned the wife, when they were again alone.

"Yes, I see. An object-lesson with a vengeance!"

"And if she should be right, and our careless giving seem anything like this?" pursued Mrs. Allyn, with a troubled face.

"She is right, Fanny; it doesn't take much argument to show that. We call Christ our King and Master; believe that every blessing we have in this world is His direct gift, and all our hopes for the world to come are in Him. We profess to be not our own, but His; to be journeying towards His royal city; and that His service is our chief business here; and yet, strangely enough, we provide lavishly for our own apparelling, entertainment, and ease, and apportion nothing for the interests of His kingdom, or