

THE HOME CIRCLE

Nothing to Be Thankful for.

By Sarah E. Gannett.

"There, Susan, everything is under shelter now. The last squash is in the garret and the last apple in the cellar and we are ready for Jack Frost whenever he has a mind to show himself. Now you can go to cooking for Thanksgiving as fast as you please. Who are we going to have with us this year?"

"Not one single soul, Jacob Darrah! It's hard enough for me to do the work for us two, let alone having company to cook for, and I'm not going to do it."

"But, Susan, peers to me 'twill be a poor showin' for Thanksgiving for you an' me to set down alone to our dinner with so many 'round us who need livin' up a little. You shall have all the help you want in gettin' ready, but I do feel called upon to chink up somebody else on that day of all days. There's Wilder King and her five little folks. 'Tain't but six weeks or so since her husband was killed away off there at Manila, you know, and I'm afraid the poor woman hasn't anything to make a Thanksgiving dinner out of, to say nothing of having no heart to cook it."

"And what if she hasn't? What more have we? I should like to know? Didn't your potatoes all rot in the ground in July until you hadn't more'n half a dozen barrels of 'em to show for the three acres you planted? An' there's your squashes. How many of them did you get out of your acre or more of vines? Not so many as will keep you an' me in eatin' all winter, let alone havin' any to sell. An' your corn all lodged an' spoiled in the big storm in August. Nobody to help you gather it because the boys had both gone to this dreadful war. An' there they be to this day, exposed to shot an' shell, an' fever an' malaria, an' nobody knows what all else. I'll leave it to anybody what we've got to be thankful for."

"That our boys are alive and well, for one thing, Susan. We might be childless to-day, just as easily as poor old Mr. and Mrs. Torrey, up there on the hill. Not one child left out of the six they had around them three years ago."

"Well, how do we know ours are alive and well? We haven't heard from them for two weeks, and there's many things might happen in that time. Great work it would be for us to go to gettin' up a big dinner, and then find—no, I won't say it. It is too dreadful." And Mrs. Darrah walked into the millroom to skim the cream for next day's churning, wiping her eyes on the corner of her apron as she went, unheeding her husband's gentle expostulation. "But if we were trying to make someone else happy, Susan, it wouldn't make bad news any harder to hear if it should come. 'Tears like there are so many unhappy people 'round us this fall that I want to try to chirk 'em up a bit."

Susan only shook her head. "No, I need chirkin' up myself too badly to go to tryin' to lift other people's burdens, an' I ain't goin' to try." Her husband walked away with a sigh, only murmuring, half to himself, "Tears to me the right way to get our burdens lifted is to try to lift those of other folks." He walked dejectedly out to the barn and went on with his preparations for making his stock comfortable for the winter.

Two hours later, just as Mrs. Darrah was putting dinner on the table, a neighbor burst in. "Mis' Darrah, your husband has fell off the barn loft an' broke his leg. Been layin' there an hour past. I'm goin' for help to bring him in the house, an' for a doctor." And he was off before Mrs. Darrah could collect her senses to say a word in reply.

"There, Jacob, you look like yourself this mornin', but a month on the bed has bleached you out considerable. Tired? No, I don't know as I be. I'm so happy to have you on the mendin' hand that I don't sense anything else. O Jacob! Suppose you had been killed that day? You might have been, easy if you had only fell a little mile of a way to one side you'd 'a' struck your head on that iron barrow, an' then—oh, I can't be too thankful it wasn't so!"

"Dear heart, Susan! You've had a hard time of late, I know; and then

that bad news about the boys right in the midst of it all!" "Yes, that was an anxious time; for I thought, once, that I was going to lose you all three, an' I—couldn't—be—reconciled, nohow. But Jimmie is getting over the fever nicely now, they tell me; and Johnnie—well, Johnnie, poor lad, has got to get his living for the rest of his life with only one arm to do it with, but he is spared to us, an' I am grateful for it. Yes, an' there's another thing that I am thankful for—dretful thankful! an' that is that it was his left arm that was taken off, an' not his right."

"Yes, indeed, that is a thing to be deeply grateful for. But, Susan, dear, you seem to find a deal to give thanks for to-day, although things are so much worse than they were a month ago, when you declared that there was no reason whatever for us keepin' Thanksgiving. One would think you had much less reason for it now than then."

"No, no, Jacob. I've been taught a lesson, that I have! and I'll never complain again that I have no merces. When I think how much I have in keepin' you an' the boys while so many are bereft of all, I can't be thankful enough. And, Jacob, do you think you could bear the noise and excitement if I was to invite Mrs. Gray and her five little ones here to dinner Thanksgiving? I'm told she hasn't a thing to eat except what's given her, and she just sits an' cries all the time. It's only two days off now, but me an' Rachel can get ready if you can spare me while I cook, an' Thanksgiving I'll leave the doors open between the rooms, an' you can see 'em all if you can't set at the table with 'em."

"Why, wife, it'll be the makin' of me. I've been a-worryin' over those poor creeters all the time I've been layin' here. An' lo'gin' to do something for 'em. So go ahead an' do all you can, an' I'll take solid comfort thinkin' of it. Maybe I can hull the raisins or stone the pumpkins, or something or another to help out, can't I?"

"Hull the raisins! You ridiculous man!" laughed his wife. "We don't hull raisins, but maybe you can stem them for me if you won't make a mistake an' eat 'em all. But I must go to work. I'll run over first an' invite 'em an'—"

"Why not ask Mr. an' Mrs. Torrey an' Grandma Hutchinson, too? As long as I can't be at the table, there will be a big vacancy, and you might as well fill it up while you are about it."

"You conceited man, you! to think that you fill such a big place in the house! But I'll invite them all. If the table isn't big enough, the children can have a little one all to themselves." And Mrs. Darrah hurried off to carry out her plans, while her husband lay back on his pillows with a happy light in his eyes.

Thanksgiving morning came with snow on the ground and a stinging frost in the air, but big fires roared up the chimneys of the Darrah home, and Mrs. Darrah and Rachel had too much to do setting the table and trying to make room upon it for all the dainties they had prepared, to heed the cold. Mr. Darrah's bed was drawn close to the door between dining room and bedroom, and he lay there smiling at the preparations, and once in a while making such queer suggestions that his wife had to stop to laugh at him.

"There, Rachel, there come the children and their mother. I'll go haste the turkey once more before I speak to them, and you run up and change your dress. It's lucky I got mine changed an hour ago."

But the turkey never got that hastening for just as Mrs. Darrah stooped over the oven one of the little Gray children called out. "Mis' Darrah! Mis' Darrah! There's a sleigh out here at your side door wit two sefers in it, an'—an'—here they be!" and three blue-coated arms encircled her, while a dear, familiar voice cried, "Say, mother, got a wishbone for me? I'm starvin' hungry; but Jimmie, here, 'll be satisfied with slops and gravy for a while yet. I reckon." And the one arm went out in support of the food-looking brother at his side.

"Oh, you dear, blessed boys! Where did you come from? But come to see father, quick. He's calling for you. Don't keep him waiting." "Why, what's the matter with dear old dad? You didn't tell us he was sick."

"No, you had enough to bear with-out that; but he's doing well now. He broke his leg a month ago. But just hear him calling you! Run, de." and the happy mother pushed them gently

into the bedroom, while she dried her eyes and went to greet her guests and beg them to help her to stretch the table a bit to make room for two more plates. John declared that he could take a "kid" on each knee, but the children all insisted that they were not babies to sit in lap at the table, and besides it was Thanksgiving, and they were all going to eat so much that they would be entirely too heavy to hold.

So we will leave them, gathered round the big table and the turkey,—a merry, laughing crowd; while "father" watches them from his bed with a happy, peaceful smile upon his face.

THE BRONZE TURKEY.

"I don't know," said Grandma Decker, laying aside her spectacles and pushing the little iron teakettle to the front of the stove. "We may have a special cause for thanksgiving this year, but I can't think of any. There's the red cow gone dry a month earlier than usual, and the pumpkins caught by that early freeze, every one in the field. But worst of all," and the old voice quivered a little, "there'll be only us two at the table this year, and what's the use to bake anything extra just pretending to keep Thanksgiving day?"

"What's that?" said her husband, looking over the top of his paper. "Not keep Thanksgiving when we've never let the day pass these 40 year, without roast turkey and all the rest?"

"I know," was the answer, "but we used to have Ellen and James, and then after they died little Jess took their place. Dear little Jess, she always seemed our own more than Ellen's. But this year we're all alone and it takes more than turkey and pies and governors' proclamations to make a Thanksgiving. If we had not lost that \$20, Jess would be here now instead of up to Holland's working in their kitchen for money enough to pay last year's taxes on the old farm." And her eyes filled with tears.

"There, there, mother, don't cry," said the old man, half tenderly, half reprovingly. "It's no use crying for lost money or spilled milk, though where them five-dollar gold pieces went to is a mystery to me. I was counting them out on the porch, and just laid them on my paper a minute while I went to call Jess, but when I came back, that big gobbler that we kept over last year was a-tryin' his best to tear up the paper. Fore I read it, too. They must have rolled somewhere, but we all looked, and takin' down the steps didn't do no good. Well, it's a month now, and I've given up looking, though there ain't much else to think about since Jess went away. But," straightening up suddenly, "that bird's going to be eaten this year if I have to do it myself. Poor little Jess, she always gave me my second plate of stuffing, but she won't be home 'till a good while after Christmas. It takes a long while to earn \$20 at a dollar and a half a week."

The days went by, as days will, even to lonely old people, and Wednesday dawned clear and bright. At 10 o'clock Grandma Decker brought in the plucked body of the great bronze turkey, and with eyes a little dimmed by tears, his wife bent over the table preparing it for the oven. In the midst of her work a familiar step sounded on the walk and a dejected little figure came up to the door, while the old man sprang from his chair, saying, "Jess! It's Jess come home for Thanksgiving, after all!"

The pitiful little story was soon told. Mrs. Howland, rendered irritable by over-exertion, had that morning discharged her for some trifling fault, and the two dollars tied closely in one corner of her poor, damp handkerchief was such a little toward the twenty that must be paid!

"Never mind, dear," said grandma, going back to her work. "We can sell old Red. She doesn't give milk, anyhow, on account of the pumpkins being frozen. It's good to have you with us, and money is not everything." But her fingers trembled a little as the sharp knife did its work.

Suddenly it slipped. There was an unintentional cutting of membrane and out upon the table rolled bits of earthenware, stoneware, and four shining pieces of gold, with which the bronze turkey had been grinding his food since that momentous day when he picked them from Grandma Decker's paper.

How carefully each was washed and dried and admired! Even Jess, forgetting the humiliation that lies in being discharged, now that the taxes were to be paid by the very money first intended for that purpose, bustled about the kitchen, baking spicy cake and dainty cookies, until the shadows fell.

On Thanksgiving day, as she helped her grandfather to his second plate of stuffing, he said, "Remember, Jess, and always keep Thanksgiving, for in the keeping may lie the cause for it, after all." And Jess promised to do so, as she filled the dishes with quince preserves and set the first one by his plate. [Lalla Mitchell.]

THANKSGIVING.

[Written for Farm and Home.]

Thanksgiving hath her songs of praise,
Her hymns of gratitude and love.
As favored peoples gladly raise
New anthems to the One above.
King, Ruler, Father, thou whose power
Safely in danger's threatening hour
Gave not defeat, but deigned to bless:
In time of sorrow bent so near,
Velling with hope the lonely way:
In our bereavements draped each bier
Newly with immortals,—to-day
Give we our mete of thankfulness.

LALLA MITCHELL.

FILL THE BASKETS.

Tune: "Whosoever Will."

With a share of goodies all the baskets fill:
To the poorer people carry them we will:
Thus, with loving kindness, we the mur-murs still.

Make a glad Thanksgiving day.

Chorus:
Fill the baskets up! Fill the baskets up!
Bid the hungry, hungry people freely sup:
Give to them a swallow from your spill-ing cup.
Make a glad Thanksgiving day.

Blessed more are givers than the ones who get:
Leaving self-denial never brings regret;
Dainties of the feast-time near the hun-gry set.

Make a glad Thanksgiving day.

Like a ray of sunshine to the dwellings rude,
Come the laden hampers packed with sa-vory food.

Will you not be causes of the grate-fulude—
Make a glad Thanksgiving day?

Doing good to others bringeth happiness:
Giving of our bounty doth that bounty bless:

Every cheerful giver will the joy confess.
Make a glad Thanksgiving day.
(Institute.)

HEARTY GREETINGS.

Joy is in the parlor,
Fun is on the stair,
Bustle in the kitchen,
Colors in the air!
Laughter in each dimple,
Smile in every eye!
Happy little maiden,
Can you tell me why?

Uncles, aunts and cousins,
Coming gayly in—
What a glad commotion!
What a joyful din!
See the hearty greetings
Given one and all,
Listen to the echoes
Ringling through the hall!

[Selected.]

"I see a man out west rescued a widow from drowning, and she married him in three days."

"What caused the delay?"

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