

The Pumpkin Pie Tree.

Little Juan and Juanita Pettitoes stood in front of the farm house, biting half-moons out of generous pieces of such delicious, rich, spicy, hot pumpkin pie as only an old-fashioned housekeeper knows how to concoct. Now, some nineteenth century wiseacres contend that pumpkin pie making is a lost art, one that went out with the Pilgrim Mothers. But Mrs. Pettitoes' pastry was good enough for anybody, and, as the savory morsels melted upon their tongues, her offspring nodded, and gurgled, and emacked in a manner that expressed most entire and complete satisfaction.

"Dood! Ith'nt it?" lisped small Juanita.

"Primo! A regular Jim Dandy of a pie!" agreed Juan, with a beaming smile. A smile that was almost grotesquely reflected and exaggerated in the shining black countenance of poor Ananias Crow, a lank negro boy, who just then ambled up, casting green glances of envy upon the tempting brown and yellow slices fast disappearing down two narrow "red lanes." For this son of Africa, who has breakfasted very lightly that morning, was painfully conscious of an inward craving in the region of the waistband, while his "sweet tooth" seemed suddenly possessed with a jumping toothache.

But, if hunger sharpens the appetite, it sharpens the wits as well, and, instead of whining out a piteous appeal for a crumb of charity, in the manner peculiar to the professional begger, this worthy namesake of the Bib a falsifier came to an abrupt stop in the middle of the road, and held up both hands in horrified amazement, exclaiming: "Well bless my soul! Ef you chillens isn't jest the most wastefullest critters I doze come across in a month of Sundays! To be gobblin' down punkin' pie in dat ar fashion, when you might raise a tree dat would gib yer a dozen turnovers ebvery day in de week!"

"What do you mean by that?" demanded Juan, pausing in his crescent making, while little Juanita hid her last bit of crust—the part fancifully decorated by the jiggling iron—under her apron, as though she feared the newcomer had designs upon it.

"I mean what I sez," replied the wily youth, "Ain't you neber heard tell ob a pie tree?"

"Why,—so!" and now the clay pair drew near in curious wonder. "Is there really such a thing?"

"To be sho dere is! To be sho! And I low you is drefful iggerant not to kno dat!"

"I know there is a bread-fruit tree!" retorted Juan, who, being counted rather a bright scholar, was stung by this slur; "we learned about it in our geography. It is a native of hot countries, and bears a fruit resembling a loaf of bread in appearance." The lad rattled off this quotation with considerable pride.

"Yep! an' I spects de pie trees he belong to de same fambly. Whar I was raised dey wus thick as pusley; apple pie trees, mince pie trees, cramb'ry trees! Ef you is hongry, all you hab to do step out an' help yourself to a hot tart."

"Oh, dear! How nithe! I with they grow here," sighed little Juanita.

"So dey would. So dey would ef you plant-

ed um. Dat's why I sez you is wicked, wasteful chillens to be swallowin' down dose alices instead of turnin' um into seed."

Big and bright as full moons became the four blue eyes gaz'ng into mendacious Ananias' ebony features, which never flinched a muscle, while Juan asked, with an excited tremble in his shrill, boyish voice, "Do you want us to believe that these pieces of ma's pie would grow up into a tree?"

"Grow! Grow like Jack's beanstalk if you plant um right; in a nice, sunny spot, wid a little fence aroun' um, but no carf on top. Dey jest want de sun an' de air, an' dey spring up like toadstools, so in free days you hab enuff ripe pies to stock a bake-shop. 'Spose yer try it an' see."

"But we haven't a great deal left," said Juan, contemplating, somewhat ruefully, the remains of their feast.

"There are five whole pithes on the pantry shelf," suggested Juanita, in a stage whisper.

"Den jest you borrow the biggest, an' next week you kin return two for one," prompted the shrewd Ananias, who already saw prospects of a delectable meal floating before his mental vision; while a few more highly-colored statements from his rosy imagination soon sent the small Pettitoes dancing off in a perfect ferment of enthusiastic anticipation. And, in the dusk of evening two figures might have been seen emerging from the farmhouse, bearing something carefully between them; something which they hid, or planted, in the south corner of the One Acre lot.

"Now, we musn't look at it for three days," remarked Juan, as he hammered in the last piling of a protecting inclosure. "But, then, we can make a Thanksgiving and Christmas for every one in the neighborhood. Oh, woa't it be fun' and how surprised and pleased ma will be!"

But, I fancy the mother would have been more astonished than delighted if, an hour later, she could have beheld a certain naughty, black Crow supping upon her masterpiece, and chuckling gleefully at the result of his strategy.

"You is cut out for a politician, 'Nias, my boy! You is, an' no mistake!" he ejaculated several times, as he smacked his lips with captured gusto.

Strange, too, to relate, the dreams which that night visited the pillows of Juan and Juanita and those which crept under the Negro lad's kinky wool were very much of the same character. For both took the form of an extremely flourishing and wide-spreading tree, that bore an hundred pumpkin pies; but while one showered tempting tartlets upon the happy little white folks, the other appeared to spring from the chest of the wretched dreamer, crushing him to the very earth, until he awoke with a gasp and a scream, to find himself in the clutches of a wild and distressing nightmare, caused, who shall say, whether by the late, rich repast, or by the qualms of an uneasy conscience? Only, I fear, harum scarum Ananias was seldom troubled with moral dyspepsia.

But, the next morning, an east wind blew in the Pettitoes homestead, and Mrs. Pettitoes,—whose temper was almost as hot as the ginger

with which she flavored her pies,—was sadly put out by the disappearance of her largest and finest pastry. The one designed for the minister's own eating.

"Where is my pie? The parson's pie?" she demanded again and again, until, observing the red cheeks and sheepish looks of her son and daughter, she pounced upon them, and by main force, as it were, dragged from their unwilling lips an account of their attempt at pastry farming.

"But—but, it won't sprout if you look at it for three days," stammered the frightenedurchin, who was on the verge of tears.

"Three days! fiddlisticks! Lead me to the spot at once!" commanded the irate dame, and sorely against their will the children were obliged to conduct her to the south corner of the One Acre lot.

"No, it never will grow, becauth it itho't here," announced Juanita, who skipped ahead, and first stooped down to examine the seed.

"Of course it's not there!" exclaimed her mother. "That chip of the old scriptural block has seen to that, you may be sure, and if I could catch the pi-ous fraud, I'd teach him the moral of his fairy tales."

"Only dis weasel ain't gwine to be cotched," chuckled an eavesdropper behind the fence.

"While, as for you, silly children, you can carry the next best pie to the minister, and go without yourselves for a month."

This was a bitter sentence for the sweets-loving little folks, and as, with unusually sober faces, they trotted down the road in the direction of parsonage, Juan remarked to his sister, "Nita, I guess we'd better go out of the business, and give up trying to raise pumpkin pies."

AGNES CARR SAOR,
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A Promising Settler!

The following extract from a private letter received by Mr. A. J. MacMillan, Manitoba Government agent in England, from an Englishman who came to Manitoba last summer, and has been living since in Winnipeg, shows that he has the right stuff in him to make a good Canadian:—"It is very easy to make money here compared with the Old Country.

. . . We have had glorious weather so far, nothing but perpetual sunshine all day, and lovely moonlight nights. . . My longer acquaintance with the people leads me to say that, compared with the people of the Old Country, they are far ahead of them in most things. Religiously they are a long way before them: no empty churches, all crowded on Sunday evenings, and as many men as women. No very rich people, and no poor grovelling creatures at all, except a few poor Indians, and they get well treated as a rule. Everybody seems independent, and all seems to jog on comfortably. There are plenty of social parties. We were at one a fortnight ago, and have two more for this week, and everyone tries to make us feel at home."

Rev. Dr. King reports the receipt of £100 sterling from the Presbyterian church of Ireland in aid of the ordinary fund of Manitoba college, Winnipeg.