



HE that brings sunshine into the lives of others, cannot keep it from himself.

## The Strike of Hannah

Mary E. Wilkins Freeman.

(Continued from last week)

SHE made two strides into the woodshed. She returned with a great clothes-basket. Then she bundled carefully into it the MacFarlands' Thanksgiving dinner. She had a great respect for this stupendous dinner even in her rebellion. She stowed away everything carefully and daintily in the pots in which the cooking had been done. The enormous turkey crowned the whole, his brown and uncouth drumsticks protruding. Then, without stopping for her hat, merely flinging her old cape over her shoulders, out of the back door she plunged, a New England anarchist, not armed with a bomb for her oppressors' destruction, but having a spiritual might compared with which a bomb would have been a toy. She was bearing away what they were craving, she was adjusting forcibly the scales of justice away. She was ridiculous, she was homely, she was terrible.

When Hannah was about half-way home, she met an old man with his young grandson who was escorting him home to Thanksgiving at his mother's. Both stopped and eyed Hannah amazedly. Hannah knew then quite well. Finally the old man spoke in a hoarse voice. "What hev you got in that clothes-basket, Hannah Dodd?"

"None of your business," retorted Hannah, and strode on, leaving them staring after her.

She heard the old man remark, "Somebody has give her a Thanksgiving dinner, sonny," and she laughed.

Down the frozen road went Hannah Dodd, never wavering, carrying the heavy basket, until she reached her own house. Her four little girls opened the door and stood staring. Then suddenly their pinched little faces lit up with joy. They thought that this beautiful store had been given to their mother by those rich and great MacFarlands. They rushed down the steps and danced about her. She no longer turned away with a shake of her head covered with wind-blown hair. "You jest keep off," said she. "This ain't for you, not a mite of it. You needn't think it is." The children's faces fell. The two younger ones began to cry. "Stop that bawling," cried Hannah sternly, "and go and open the shed door. I want to take this truck in there."

When the shed was opened and Hannah entered there were the children huddled together, shivering with the cold, and staring at her with scared, wondering faces.

"Oh, mother," began Eliza, the oldest.

"Oh mother, what?" asked Hannah setting the basket down carefully.

"What is it all for?"

"Providence," replied Hannah, with an awful grimace. The children continued to stare with round, innocent, frightened eyes. "There ain't no one thing in this basket for you, and you needn't think there is," said Hannah. "Have you had your dinner?"

"We were waiting till you got home," replied little Eliza meekly.

"Well, go into the house," said Hannah, "and we'll have dinner, and

crowned with and throned on the right. The country woman in her shabby attire, with her background of poor home and half-starved children was pitted against the rich man, who had the might of gold which prevails in the land, and who, never in his whole life had known the want of anything which gold could buy, and who had moreover been generously dealt with by nature. George S. MacFarland was a handsome, popular man, whom everybody liked, even loved. His family had disappointed him in no fashion, everything had gone his way.

"What has become of our Thanksgiving dinner?" asked George S. MacFarland. He tried to speak sternly, but he could not to that poor tragic woman with those little frightened faces at her back.

"It is in our wood-shed in your clothes-basket," replied Hannah Dodd.

"In what?"

"In your clothes-basket."

George S. MacFarland had never known that he owned a clothes-basket. His mouth twitched a little, then he cast a glance at the dinner-table in the kitchen.

"You can look," said Hannah, "but you won't see no turkey bones. We've topped off with hasty pudding. We ain't eatin' none of your dinner."

A horrified look came over the man's face. "Are you crazy?" he asked.

"No, I ain't crazy, and I reckon I never shall be," replied Hannah Dodd. "I'm jest lookin' at things

dinner, and everything else, and Providence don't mean things to be so uneven. I'm for givin' back things to the one that gave 'em, and let 'em be divided over again. If you rich MacFarlands have grabbed, it's no reason why I should, or why my children should."

"You don't call it stealing then?" "Stealing is taking something for yourself or them we and we'll all have to do," said she.

"You have only put my Thanksgiving dinner on the scales of Justice," said George S. MacFarland. Then a most gentle and winning expression came over the rich man's face. "I can tell you what is the best thing to do," said he.

"What?" asked Hannah suspiciously.

"You take hold of one handle of the basket, and I will take hold of the other, and you and your children come home with me and we'll all have Thanksgiving dinner together."

Hannah still surveyed him with suspicious, incredulous eyes. "You don't mean a word of it."

"Yes, I do. Tell that pretty little eldest girl of yours to hustle herself and the children into the warmest they've got, and we'll start."

It was a queer work when Hannah and George S. MacFarland were bearing the clothes-basket between them, being up the street, with the children marching behind them. The windows of the houses were filled with the wondering faces. People did not know what it meant. They never knew, for Hannah Dodd kept her own counsel, and so did the MacFarlands.

When they arrived at the MacFarland house Mr. George S. MacFarland bade Hannah and the children remain in the kitchen, and take the things from the basket and heat them, and he would be back soon. Hannah and the children worked fast. They heard exclamations and loud laughs from the other rooms, but could not distinguish anything that was said. Finally Mrs. George S. MacFarland and her daughter Alice came out in the kitchen, and both were smiling.

"We are so glad you and the children are coming to dinner," Lucy said. Then they kissed the children, little Abby, who snuggled close to her back into the south room.

The fire was good, and it was not long before dinner was on the table. Hannah Dodd sat at Mr. George S. MacFarland's right hand. She felt shy, but she had the native dignity and self-respect of New England, and Maria Gore glowered at first, then she said when a plate was passed to the youngest and the next was a baby.

"Alice MacFarland, at whose side the child sat, immediately gave her some. "So she shall have jelly," she said, in her sweet, caressing young voice. Hannah Dodd looked at her. Then she spoke, with a great rigid tremor of truthfulness.

"I heard you say how much nicer that chicken pie was because it was baked in the brick oven," said she.

"Yes, it was," replied the girl, laughing.

"Well, it wasn't baked in no brick oven. The oven was out of kilter, and it was baked in the stove oven, and jest warmed up in the brick oven."

"It was delicious, anyway."

"I didn't want to tell any lies about it, that's all," said she, in a quiver of restrained mirth ran round her, but the MacFarlands were too polite and also too kind to laugh.

Hannah ate her dinner in a sort of daze. Her little mind was in a strike against the inequality of possessions of the rich and poor had ended, and she could not for the life of her tell her children eating the bit of the rich Thanksgiving food of their ancestors.



Comfortable home of Mr. T. S. Cornell, Brant Co., Ont. The house was built about 50 years ago, and remodelled about five years ago. It is an up-to-date, cozy farm home. Gas is used for lighting and cooking and coal for heating. See plan of

I can tell you one thing; it can be mighty thankful you've got as much as you have. Some children don't have anything."

It was half an hour later, and Hannah and the children were still seated at the table. They had finished the scanty mess of codfish and were eating a hasty pudding which Hannah had made from corn meal, when there came a knock at the door.

Hannah motioned the children to remain where they were, and then she unlatched the door which let directly into the open. She was very white, but unfinching. There stood Mr. George S. MacFarland, handsome and opulent in his ash-blue overcoat. He looked at Hannah and she looked at him. In his look was bewilderment and some indignation; in heavy-laden of the earth who at last arise.

Mr. George S. MacFarland was the first to speak. "You are the woman who has been working at my house, aren't you?" he asked.

"Yes, I be," replied Hannah. She looked at him with the utmost pride and defiance, as one who was fairly

square, and I see that some folks have got everything and some have got nothin' and I'm only one, but I'm going to set things right as far as I can. Here Mrs. Maria Gore wouldn't pay me my two dollars last night, because I hadn't all the work done, and here are my children 'most starved, with hardly enough codfish to go round for a Thanksgiving dinner, and here are your rich MacFarlands with all that turkey an' fixin's when you've already eat about all you ought to for one day for breakfast."

Mr. George S. MacFarland stared at Hannah Dodd in a puzzled, interested way. Now he did not look at all angry. Indeed his blue eyes twinkled pleasantly.

"But Mrs. Dodd," he said, "I don't see exactly how you are righting things if you and your children don't have any of our Thanksgiving dinner. You say you won't let them have any."

"I'd see them starve first," said Hannah.

"Then who has the dinner, anyway?"

"Providence," replied Hannah Dodd. "It's Providence that gives