

STORIES
POETRY

The Inglenook

SKETCHES
TRAVEL

THE BLUE AND WHITE THANKS-GIVING.

By F. E. Hart.

Nelly Blue came into the kitchen, and sat down wearily, and said:

"I've bad news, mother. What do you think Mr. Ryan said? He don't want the turkeys—just think of it! After telling us long ago that he would take half a dozen—after all our trouble! We told the carpenter he might depend on us for that money in November, because we had a sale for the turkeys. It is too bad!"

"I don't see how he came to change his mind," said Mrs. Blue. "He was so positive about wanting them."

"He got them very cheap from somebody else," said Nelly. "It just seems as if everything goes against us. Just as soon as we think we are going to be all square, something turns up and stops it. Once something happened to the pump. Then when we were starting all right again a cow died, then we had hardly got over that when the roof began to leak, and before this bill is paid something else will be sure to come along to worry us. In fact, it has come now; for here's the great disappointment about the turkeys."

"We mustn't get too despondent," said her mother. "When things look so dull, I try to think of the folks over at the White Farm. They take things in such a cheerful way that it does me good to think about them."

"It's very easy for the folks over there to be cheerful," Nelly said; "there's such a lot of them, and they've got such a comfortable house, and Maria and Clara are so pretty, and they have such nice-looking clothes, and then the boys help, too. You see they have everything to make them cheerful."

"Indeed they haven't," said Mrs. Blue quickly. "Not long ago Hannah White told me she didn't want us to feel hard about their not buying that quilt we made. She said then, 'We don't talk about our affairs, but you and I are old neighbors, and I don't want you to feel that we wouldn't help you if we could, so I will just tell you that things have been very discouraging this year. We've seemed to see trouble on every side. I was afraid we were all falling into discouragement, so I stopped then and said we couldn't afford to get dull; that we must look on the bright side, and remember our blessings, and hope and work every day for better times. I tell them when things are the dullest we must try to be the brightest. Cheerfulness is a great help.' That's the way Hannah always talks, and I am going to try to be like her. So, Nelly, as long as we are so disappointed about the Thanksgiving turkeys, we'll just begin to look forward to Christmas, and hope we can do better then."

At the time Mrs. Blue was saying this, things were not looking so cheerful at the White Farm. That dreary November morning the family were all assembled in the kitchen. A letter had come from Sarah, their only married child, saying that she and her husband and children would like to spend Thanksgiving Day at the farm, and she was looking forward to a good old-fashioned turkey dinner at home, with mother's good pumpkin pies.

"The letter might have come at a better time," said Hiram White. "Things are very close with us just now. We don't keep turkeys, and we hadn't thought of getting one, and we hadn't thought of making a fuss on Thanksgiving Day; but if they want to come, of course they must. We can have the

pumpkin pies, but as for turkey, we'll have to go without that."

"You see, father," said Maria, "Sarah don't know we have stopped keeping turkeys. We never told her."

"Oh, she don't care to hear about such things now," her father said. "She's so taken up with her husband and her home and her children, she don't think much about the farm."

"Oh, yes indeed she does, father," said his wife. "Dear Sarah thinks of the old farm often, I'm sure, and I've no doubt she thinks we've plenty of turkeys. I'm glad they want to come, and I'm sure we'll be glad to see them."

"Nobody will be gladder to see her than I will," said Hiram; "but times are so very hard, and my mind's been so taken up with one thing and another that I felt as if I'd just like to be by ourselves. But they're coming, so we'll make the best of it."

"Poor, dear Sarah! She would feel hurt to hear that," said the little mother. "No one will be more pleased to see her than you, father, and nobody will play with the children more than you will. We'll give her pies, and get up as good a dinner as we can without a turkey."

"I don't see why we don't keep turkeys," said Tom; "everybody else does. Ben and I would take care of them."

"Another year," said their father, "we'll begin again. It don't seem natural not to have them on the farm. We'll see." And he put on his hat and went to the barn. When there, he seemed restless, walking up and down, up and down, and at last seated himself on an old keg. "I wish you were a turkey," he said to a chicken that came near him.

"But I must get one. I see it troubles mother, and we really mustn't disappoint dear Sarah. She has a right to expect a fuss, and she shall have it, and I can't disappoint the others either; it will take money, but I'll go without something myself. I was only thinking of getting one thing anyhow, and that was one of those big woollen caps for the coldest weather; but I won't get it. I'll just go over to Blue's and tell them to save us a good turkey."

Hannah White went to her room and sat down by the bureau.

"Father's not well," she said, "and he is troubled over the dull times, but we must have a turkey. I can't let dear Sarah come home and not have what she expects. I was thinking of getting a little shawl, but I can do without it. I will begin to save a little again, and I've no doubt I'll get it some time."

She took a little bag out of a corner of a drawer, and counted the money that was in it.

"This will get it," she said. "And I know Nancy Blue will be glad to sell a turkey. I will just run over there now, and I won't say anything to the girls about it."

Maria ran upstairs to her room, and took a little box from a drawer.

"I have no need to count this money," she said; "I know it's not quite enough yet to get that black lace thing for my neck, but it's enough to get a turkey, and that's what I'll do. Mother looked so worried, and I know father would be sorry when the time came and he had no turkey for Sarah. I do hope the Blues haven't sold all of theirs."

Clara saw Maria go across the field.

"She's going to the Blues for something, I suppose; but I can't imagine what we need. I hope she'll come back soon, for I have my little plan." She held a purse in her hand. "No new gloves for me this winter," she said. "But I have old ones. It is queer the way my glove money melts away. The

last time I saved for them the money went toward the parlor stove, and now my pretty gloves go for a turkey."

Tom and Ben were standing by the pump talking.

"Ben," said Tom, "let's put our money together, and get the turkey for Thanksgiving. You know you were going to get a knife, and I was going to get a cravat. We can go without the things, and mother would be so glad. What do you say?"

"It's just the very thing," said Ben. "And I'll run over to the Blues, and tell them to keep one for us. But won't the folks be surprised and won't it be fun!"

"Mother," exclaimed Nelly Blue that evening, "did you ever know anything so strange. It seems as if the whole White Farm people had been here today. And to think that five of the turkeys are sold! Why, I feel rich!"

"So do I," said her mother. "And I've already decided that we'll keep that other turkey for ourselves, and have a treat on Thanksgiving. It will cheer your poor father, I know. And don't you see, Nelly, it's better not to be too cast down when things look dull."

"I never intend to be dull and gloomy again," Nelly said, brightly, "or, if I do, you can just say 'turkey' to me, and I know I'll brighten. And now the carpenter can come and get his money. We'll be glad to see him."

The next morning, when the people at the White Farm were at the breakfast table, a man came to the door. It was their neighbor, Samuel Blue.

"I've just put all the whole lot of turkeys up to the barn, and if the boys will come along with me, I'll show 'em what to do. It was a mighty big lift to get them turkeys all sold, and we thank every one of you. Come along, boys; I'm hurrying down to the carpenter's to pay a bill. I won't keep you a minute."

"I don't understand about these turkeys," said their father, anxiously, when the boys were again at the table; "I'm afraid we have got ourselves in trouble. I ordered a turkey at the Blue's."

"So did I," said his wife.

"So did I," said Maria.

"So did I," said Clara.

"So did we," said the boys.

"But I paid for mine," said their father, gravely.

"So did I," said his wife.

"So did I," said Maria.

"So did I," said Clara.

"So did we," said the boys.

And then the White Farm family all explained in full.

"Well," said their father, "I'm proud of you—mother and all, every one of you."

"And as for the turkeys," said their mother, "we can have the very finest for Thanksgiving Day, and the rest can start our turkey flock."

Sweet Sarah, her husband, and their little family, came on Thanksgiving Day.

"Isn't it nice, Frank?" she would say to her husband again and again. "Don't the dear people all look lovely, and isn't it just the nicest farm in the world! And oh, Frank, where is the bag? I've just brought a little something for each one of you—not much, but something. Here, dear father—I'll begin with you. I got you this soft woollen cap; let me put it on you. See it unfolds and comes down, and covers your forehead and ears. There, isn't that warm for your dear head? And, mother dear, here is a shawl for you, just to wear in the house, you know. And, Maria, I thought you'd look fine in one of those black lace things for the neck. And, dear Clara, I hardly knew whether to get you a silver pin