

explained: "Somebody has broken into the lean-to! I heard 'em knock some of the dishes off the shelf. It woke me up!"

Tom was wide awake now. He lighted his lantern, slipped on his moccasins, and examined the priming of his rifle as coolly as if he had been expecting this summons for a week.

"Now," he whispered, "I'll go ahead with the rifle, and you keep close to my heels with the lantern. And the minute I open the door you pull up the slide, and turn the light right into the shanty."

Fiffin nodded, and the two crept softly along the passage toward the building, from which now came sounds, tumblings and a strange series of thumpings, with the more or less heavy thud of falling boxes and buckets, accompanied by a low surlly growling that Tom was perfectly familiar with.

"It's sartainly a b'ar!" he whispered cautiously "and if he don't git scairt, an' clear out too quick for me, I'll put a bullet through his thiev' carcass before he's two minutes older."

The door swung outward and with little noise, so that Fiffin had time to throw her light upon the scene, and her father to take careful aim before Bruin, who had his shaggy head deep in the molasses tank, awoke to a sense of his danger.

Encumbered as he was, the bear, with a clinging mixture of molasses, milk and Indian meal, tried desperately to make his escape through the window by which he had entered.

Tom fired.

Stung by the pain of the bullet, the clumsy brute paused an instant with open mouth and angry eyes, glaring upon his enemies as if uncertain whether to fight or run. "But his natural cowardice prevailed.

With one desperate leap the intruder gained the window-sill and drew himself up with a growl, just as the hunter's second bullet struck a vital spot. Then with a groan, a groan that sounded frightfully human, he tumbled heavily upon the ground outside.

Tom caught the lantern from Fiffin's trembling hand and ran to the window. There lay the bear in a great heap, motionless except for a few spasmodic twitches of the huge limbs. The second bullet had done its work, and the four-footed burglar had met the just reward of his crime.

There was the exultation of the hunter in Tom's voice, as he exclaimed, "He's done for, the raskil!"

But poor Fiffin was gazing sadly at the wreck that the animal had left behind him, and as she looked, the big tears gathered in her eyes and rolled silently down her cheeks.

There lay portions of the turkey, the pies, the paper of raisins, sugar, butter, eggs and milk, all trampled and ground into the rough plank floor. The Thanksgiving dinner on which Fiffin had been counting so much had been completely ruined. Nothing could be rescued from the wreck.

Fiffin sobbed as if her heart would break.

"It's too bad! it's too bad!" was all that she could say; and finding himself unable to console her, Tom took her up in his strong, tender arms, just as he had done when she was a baby, and carried her upstairs, where he tucked her into bed as tenderly as any mother could have done. There he left her, with an unwelcome kiss upon her wet cheek.

"Mebbe 'taint so bad as it looks at first sight," he said. "Things aint ginrally, I've noticed, and—why, Fiffin, I'll bet there's a bar'l of ile in that critter's body, if there's a drop."

It was with a very sober face that Fiffin went about getting her breakfast the next morning, but there were no tears in her black eyes; she had had her cry out; and French Joe, who happened in on his way over from the village and was promptly engaged by Tom to help dress the slaughtered bear, rather wondered at her calmness after such an exciting night.

"But it ees a pitee—a great pitee!" he declared, sympathetically, as he sat down to the wholesome breakfast with Tom and watched Fiffin pour out the steaming coffee.

"Ze Thanksgiving dinnavare, too! It is all spoiled—gone up, Tom tell me."

"Yes," Fiffin smiled faintly at Joe's well-meant expressions of sympathy. "I haven't had the heart even to look in there this morning, it was such a mess last night."

"It ees too bad!" echoed Joe; but her father interrupted cheerily:

"That b'ar is as fat as a pig, and we'll have a roast off of him for our Thanksgiving dinner. that'll make your mouth water. Then there's the squash an' turnips that the b'ar didn't teech; and you must make an Injin puddin'. For my part, I don't want nothin' better'n a good, sweet, wheyey Injin puddin', baked till it's as red at the heart as a cherry. Land sakes! we sha'n't go hungry, I guess, if the b'ar did eat up the turkey an' step on the pies; and if I don't git enough out of his hide ter pay for all the mischief he's done, I'll miss my guess."

Both men laughed, and Fiffin brightened up hopefully. A new idea had suggested itself to her—a feature of the Thanksgiving feast that she had not thought of before.

"Joe," she said, kindly, "won't you eat your Thanksgiving dinner with us—you and your wife and little Joe?"

She was not prepared for the sudden brightness that overspread the poor fellow's swarthy face, as he accepted her invitation with a delight that betrayed how lonely and uncompanionable the little French-Canadian family had found themselves, in a foreign land.

"My wife—ah! she be too deelighted, happee, so glad, you call it. She haf no mate, no neighbor here, all strangers; and leetle Joe! Why, he laugh his head off, *parure garcon!* ho so glad."

Fiffin proudly welcomed the shy little French-woman and her black-eyed baby to the hospitalities of her neat cabin that afternoon. But there was something deeper than merriment or pride in her smile as Joe, with an air of delighted importance, presented her with a big basket from the kindly landlady of the hotel at the village, who sent it with her compliments and the hope that it would do something towards making up for the loss of her Thanksgiving dinner.

There was a noble turkey, all cooked and needing only to be warmed; pies, cakes, cranberry-sauce, nuts and raisins, and a box of grapes in sweet, purple clusters, with the summer's lost sunshine shut up in their glowing hearts.

It was a merry, never-to-be-forgotten dinner; and when it was all over, and the pleased and happy guests had taken their leave, Tom drew his little daughter to his knee.

"Look here, sis," said he. "This Thanksgiving has been something like. An' now do you know what I'm a-goin' to do? There's enough ile in that b'ar to pay your tuition at the school this winter, and buy that 'ar ten-dollar cloak, arter all!"—*Mrs. H. G. Rowe, in Youdt's Companion.*

#### TWO PROLIFIC PLANTS.

The *Strathearn Herald* tells an interesting tale of the introduction of the coffee plant into East Central Africa. Four slips were taken out by Mr. Duncan, of the Church of Scotland mission. Three died, and, says the *Herald*, "only one little tiny struggling slip was left, and it looked as if it were to die too; but it didn't—it lived; and that one little slip has grown into the Coffee plantations, not only of the mission at Blantyre, but of Buchanan Brothers at Zomba, of the African Lakes Company at Mandala, and of Messrs. Sharer, Duncan, and others; till this year (1891) we learn that the Messrs. Buchanan have in their plantations alone 1,000,000 coffee plants, and that the highest price quoted in the London market for the season has been for this very Shire highland coffee. That little tiny slip, so feeble-looking, and once so nearly dead, yet so marvellously fruitful, is a fit emblem of the mission itself.

A parallel case to this is the introduction of what is now the banana of commerce into Samoa. Three plants were sent out in the mission ship "John Williams" from the Duke of Devonshire's splendid conservatories at Chatsworth. On their arrival at Samoa they were thrown out as dead. The Rev. H. Mills, one of the London Missionaries there, thought that one of them seemed to have a possibility of life in it, and he planted it. It grew and thrived, and from that one plant have sprung all the bananas which now come to us from Samoa, Fiji, and other groups. The islands had bananas of their

own before, but all of this particular sort come from that single plant.—*Australian Paper.*

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