

same rapturous smile which had won Fred's heart at the first meeting.

'See him laugh! Oh, the darling!' exclaimed somebody.

'What lovely, dreamy eyes!' ejaculated someone else; while Fred's heart swelled with hope and pride.

Aunt Sylvia Radbourn looked up at her husband with eyes swimming with tears. They had lost a little child of their own since last Thanksgiving Day—their only child.

'We will keep him,' said Aunt Sylvia's husband, with brimming eyes.

The scene was becoming too affecting all around. Grandmama was crying now. It made Fred feel uneasy.

'I'm as hungry as a bear!' he burst forth, 'Where's our Thanksgiving dinner?'

'Just ready. Here comes Tilda to summon us,' answered his mother.

Some whispered words were exchanged between Aunt Sylvia and her husband. One of the maids carried off Tommy, and the company proceeded to the dining-room. When dessert time came Aunt Sylvia left the room, and presently returned with Tommy on her arm, robed in white and rosy from a bath.

'Bring forth a high chair, somebody,' she said. 'Charles and I want our boy at table with us.'

Uncle Charles Radbourn went down to New York the next morning, and by closely following Lena Arabella's able advice as to the best way of dealing with Mrs. Giddens, succeeded in arranging affairs amicably with that lady, who was already rather cowed by the little girl's dark insinuations that if she did not want to get into the savage clutches of the 'invention of cruelty folks,' she had better keep very quiet about Tommy's mysterious disappearance. Lena seemed entirely satisfied when Mr. Radbourn told her of his intention to adopt Tommy.

'That's good!' she said, heartily. 'Tommy's that young, I s'pose he won't much miss the city; but if it was me—my! I'd be dreftful lonesome in the country, an' scared all the time too, 'bout the young 'uns gettin' eat up by bears an' snakes.'

Fred arrived at school a little later than usual on the morning of the Monday after Thanksgiving day. Masters and pupils were

you brought me a nice turkey for Thanksgiving?'

'Yes, ma'am,' replied the farmer, 'it aint no great year for turkeys, but mine has done first-rate, and I've saved you a good plump one. It's a hefty one, too, — weight ten pounds, if I ain't mistaken.'

Mrs. Bradley touched the plump breast and pronounced herself satisfied. Then, with the boys and Rose to assist, she brought her pocket-book and counted out two dollars and thirty-one cents into the hard brown palm outspread to receive it. The farmer produced a canvas bag from his overcoat pocket, into which the silver fell with a comfortable jingle, as if it found company there. Rob looked at the bag with much interest. It was much more business-like, he thought, than purse or pocket-book, and he decided to carry one like it when he was a man.

'Let's see! Where did I put my hat?' inquired the turkey-man, looking around helplessly.

'It's under your arm, same as 'twas last year,' said Rob, laughing outright.

The farmer laughed too, as he thrust it upon his head, and said, 'Good-by till I bring your Christmas turkey.'

'There! he's left his weighers,' cried Barby, a minute later, and Rob was sent in haste to overtake the waggon.

'He forget 'em just that way last year. Don't you remember, mother? His memory seems to be the worst part of him,' and then Barby turned to her pan of red-cheeked Baldwin again, like the sedate little housekeeper she was. She was a mite of a girl only seven years old when her father died four years before, but from that time she had taken upon her shoulders a share of the family cares. She had said then, when her teacher had enquired the cause of a week's absence from school: 'We are widows,' and the pathetic partnership had never been broken.

On Wednesday evening the turkey was brought down from the cold attic, that it might be made ready for the oven. Uncle Robert and his family were coming from Kirtory to spend the day, and everything must be in readiness for the great event.

'I mean to raise turkeys when I get my farm,' said Rob, with hands thrust deep into his pockets. 'It must be fun to feed 'em and give 'em their baths.'

'Oh, ho,' laughed Fred. 'Rob thinks that you have to take care of turkeys same as you do of a canary. They swim in the brooks themselves, don't they?'

'You are thinking of ducks, dear child,' said his mother. 'That's all you boys know about a farm. Oh, dear, if your father had lived you would have gone into the country every summer. I wish—'

But Mrs. Bradley did not finish her sentence. She had thrust her hand into the cavity which was to be filled with dressing, and had drawn out a folded paper.

'Ho, ho,' laughed Rob, 'he swallowed his spelling lesson, I guess.' Rob had to write his lessons.

Mrs. Bradley opened the paper, and with three pairs of eyes looking on, she read:

'I don't know who will buy this turkey but I do wish you would send me some story books. I'm tired to death of ours, and I am lame so I can't go to school or play—or I want a doll with hair and whole legs. If you will I will thank you 1 thousand times. My name is Rose, and I am ten years old.'

'Well, isn't that the queerest?' and Mrs. Bradley turned the paper over as if she might discover a little girl on the other side.

'It must be the turkey-man's little girl,' said Barby, thoughtfully. 'If she were in our school she would be called a very poor speller. But I don't believe her father knew about it, do you? He looks like a very honest man.'

'She's lame, Barb, that's why,' interrupted Fred. 'Must be awful hard not to go to school and jump round and do things. I'll give her my second reader, and good riddance.'

'There, now, we won't decide anything about it to-night. We'll wait until Uncle Robert and Aunt Laura come,' and then Mrs. Bradley pinned the little letter up on the calendar in the kitchen. The Thanksgiving dinner was delightful to see, to smell, and to taste, when the family, with Uncle Robert, Aunt Laura, and their children, Robert P. and Clarinda, surrounded the table on the following day.

The turkey, especially had distinguished itself by coming out of the oven with the nut-brown color and juicy plumpness which characterize New England 'natives.' Uncle

Robert complimented it in the carving, and still more in the eating; and after he had said: 'I'm sure, Laura, I never ate the equal of this,' for the third time, Barby ventured to say: 'Now, mama, tell them about the turkey-man's little girl's letter.'

'So Mrs. Bradley began, and with Barby and Fred, and Rob, and the letter itself to help her, she made the story very interesting.

'Poor little thing,' said Aunt Laura. 'I suppose they have a few old books about wars, and some church papers, perhaps. Why can't we collect some nice children's books and send them to her? Dear me, what faith she must have, to make a post-office of a turkey's stomach!'

'Quite a roundabout way, I should think, to send it by Turkey,' added Robert P. And then he grew very red, and looked steadfastly into his plate, for he had not only made a joke, but he had used several tones of voice in speaking. Robert P.'s voice was changing, and he went from treble to bass without a moment's warning.

But they all laughed, and that is always a good thing on Thanksgiving Day.

'But we don't know where she lives,' said Mrs. Bradley. 'The turkey-man said he drove ten miles; but whether he came from the Plains, or East Sagamore, or West Sagamore, we've no idea.'

'And we don't know what her name is — only just Rose,' added Barby; and little Rose put down the 'wish-bone long enough to remark: 'Her name is just like mine, only she's lame.'

'Well,' suggested Uncle Robert, as he tried to take up a drop of cranberry sauce from the clean white table-cloth without leaving a spot, 'the man will come around with Christmas turkeys, won't he?'

'Yes, oh, yes. He never fails to come,' said Mrs. Bradley.

'All right, just get your box ready, and let him take it back with him.'

'Why didn't we think of that?' cried the children.

'Then it will be a Christmas present,' continued Uncle Robert.

'Yes, there are Robert P.'s and Clarinda's books up in the attic. Every year I think I'll send them somewhere, and then I don't know where they're wanted.'

'You might put in my doll, too,' suggested Clarinda.

'Yes, you're fifteen, and won't play with dolls any more, I should hope.'

'Well, I'll send the box over by the Che-moset stage some day next week. I know the driver, and he won't charge if he knows it's for charity.' So it was decided, and, as Aunt Laura was a woman of her word, the box came in due time.

Barby and Fred and Rob and Rose examined its contents with great satisfaction. There were delightful story books and magazines and games, and a doll which seemed to fill a little hungry spot in Barby's heart at once. She had not played much with dolls since the time when she became 'a widow.' In fact, little Rose had worn out her last precious relics long ago. Her mother had noticed the lack, and offered to buy a new one, but Barby had replied, 'Haden't we better use the money for Rob's shoes?' So she had voluntarily sacrificed her 'doll days.'

But here was Clarinda's out-grown one—so large and perfect, so beautiful in its handsome clothing, Barby wanted it for her very own. But no; after one motherly hug, not hard enough to crush the satin puffs on its sleeves, she kissed it gravely and laid it back, mutely asking forgiveness of the turkey-man's little girl, for her momentary covetousness.

The Bradleys added a file of bright children's papers, Fred contributed a set of jack-straws, Rose a family of paper dolls cut from a big fashion sheet, and Barby wrote a nice letter for them all. Then the box was nailed up again.

Long before Christmas the children began to watch for the turkey-man's old white horse, and many a time Rob raised a false alarm, which sent them all flying to the front window; but, finally, one cold morning, he actually appeared.

After the usual purchase had been made Mrs. Bradley, surrounded by the children, all in a state of suppressed excitement, told him the story of the letter found inside the Thanksgiving turkey, and showed him the box of treasures.

'She hadn't ought to have done it,' said the turkey-man, huskily, as he wiped his forehead with a huge bandana. 'That ain't one bit like Rosy—she's shy of strangers; but she



'HE'S ALL RIGHT.'

all gathered in the large school-room, ready for the opening exercises, when he entered. Van Pelt had arrived early, very early, and had told his tale graphically.

'What's the matter with Fred Esten, the kidnapper?' shouted Charlie Tipton; and masters and pupils united in the answering shout 'He's all right!'

## The Turkey-Man's Little Girl.

(By Mrs. O. W. Scott.)

'There comes the turkey-man!' shouted Fred and Bob Bradley, in concert, opening the kitchen door just enough to admit their heads.

'The turkey-man is coming!' repeated Barby, looking up from her apple-paring.

'Turkey-man' echoed Rose, twisting her little head over one shoulder.

By this time Mrs. Bradley fully understood that the 'turkey-man' was at the door; and, hastily wiping the flour from her hands, she emerged from the pantry.

A turkey at Thanksgiving and one at Christmas was all she could afford; hence the buying of the birds was a business venture in which the whole family was interested. Instead of going to the village market they patronized a nice old farmer who appeared every year with the regularity of the President's proclamation, and his antiquated horse and waggon at the gate had been the signal of this announcement.

'Good morning,' said Mrs. Bradley, 'have