



"WE should tell ourselves once for all that it is the first duty of the soul to become as happy, complete, independent, and great as lies in its power."

—Motherlark.

Sowing Seeds in Danny

By Nellie L. McClung

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(Continued from last week)

SYNOPSIS.—The Watson family live in a small town in Manitoba. The family consists of Mr. Watson, a man of few words, who works on the "section," and nine children. Pearl Watson is an imaginative, clever little girl, 12 years old, and is Mrs. Burton Francis's, a dreamy woman, who has beautiful theories. "Wee Danny" is the idol of Pearl's eye, and is a favorite of Mrs. Francis, who tries some of her theories on Danny. Camilla, who is a capable young woman who looks after her father's domestic affairs, and occasionally helps her to apply her theories. Mr. McNeill, the next door neighbor of the Watsons, has a special antipathy for Mr. Watson. Mr. Sam Motherwell and his son live on a farm near the Watsons. Mr. Motherwell is a well to do very stingy farmer. A year or two previously in a fit of generosity, he donated the caboose of his threshing outfit to the Watsons as an addition to their home. He afterwards regrets this move, and demands payment. Motherwell, and thus "wipes out the stain." Young Tom Motherwell has been brought up to regard the gathering of wealth as the chief aim in life. He is, however, invited to a party at one of the neighbors, and as his parents object to such "foolishness," he steals away unobserved.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Thanksgiving.

THE prairies lay serene and brown like a piece of faded tapestry beneath the November sun that, peering through the dust-laden forts to warm the poor old faded earth.

The grain had all been cut and gathered into stacks that had dotted the fields, two by two, like comfortable married couples, and these in turn had changed into billowy piles of yellow straw, through which herds of cattle foraged, giving a touch of life and color to the unending colorless landscape. The trees stood once the corn saved and the holly-hocks flamed their brassy beauty, waiting the thrifty farmer's torch to cage them away before the snow frosts and now rested for her labor, worn and spent, taking no thought of comeliness, but waiting in the North Wind, to bring down the whirling snow to hide her scars and heal her unloveliness with its kindly white mantle.

But although the earth lay serene and brown and dust-laden, the granaries and elevators were bursting with a rich abundance, Immense freight-trains loaded with wheat wound heavily up the long grade, carrying off slowly the produce of the plain, and in the loads of grain came pouring in from the farms. The cellars were full of the abundance of the gardens—golden turnips, rosy potatoes and rows of pale green cabbages hanging by their roots to the beams gave an air of security against the long, cold, hungry winter.

Inside of John Watson's home, in spite of November's dulness, joy and gladness reigned, for was not Pearl coming home? Pearl, her mother's

helper and adviser, Pearl, her silent, feeble wonder and delight, the second mother of all the little Watsons! Pearl was coming home. Events in the Watson family were reckoned from the time of Pearl's departure—the time of her expected home-coming. "Pa got raised from one dollar and a quarter to one dollar and a half just two days from the day Pearl left, lak' in' two days." "Stuff" Mrs. Evans gave Mary a new left on the Thursday three weeks before, and Mrs. McNeill's baby was born "on the Wednesday" as Pearl was comin' home on Domestic affairs were influenced to some degree by Pearl's expected arrival.

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rival. Don't be wearin' yer sweater now, Tommy man. I'm f'ar the red str'ip'll when it's washed; save it clean till Pearl come, there's a man."

"Patsy, avick, wobble yer tooth now, man alive. Don't be havin' that lookin' hangin' in yer jaw, and Pearl comin' home so soon."

The younger children, whose appetites were out of all proportion to the supply, were often "tided over" by a promise of the good time coming. When Danny cried because the

bottom of his porridge plate was "always stickin' through," and later in unmanly condition because he had smelled chickens cooking down at the hotel when he and Jimmy went with the milk, Mary rose to the occasion and told him in a wild flight of imagination that they would have a turkey when Pearl came home. "N cranberry sauce, 'N brown gravy. No-ow!"

The house had undergone some preparations for the joyous event. Everything was scrubbed that could be scrubbed. An elaborately scalloped newspaper drape ornamented the clock shelf; paper chains, made of blue and yellow sale-bills, were festooned from the elbow of the stove-pipes to the freshly papered with newspaper; red flannel was put in the lamps.

The children were scrubbed until they shone. Bugsey's sweater had a never know it by the way he held his hand. Tommy's stocking had a hole in the knee, but he had artfully inserted a piece of black lining that by careful watching kept up appearances.

Mrs. Watson, instigated by Danny, looked at the turkeys in the price and came away sorrowful. Even the price understood that a turkey was not to be thought of. They compromised on a pot-roast because it makes so much gravy, and with this and the prospect of potatoes and turnips and prune-pie, the family had to be content.

On the day that Pearl was expected home, Mrs. Watson and Mary were busy preparing the evening meal, although it was still quite early in the afternoon. Wee Danny stood on a syrup keg in front of the window, determined to be the first to see Pearl.

Mrs. Watson was peeling the potatoes and singing. Mrs. Watson sang because her heart was glad, for she did not Pearl coming home. She never just where she had left it, but would come back and pick it up at the exact place she had discarded it. "Sure ain't it great the way Ma never drops a stitch in her singin'!" her eldest son Teddy had said admiringly one day. "She can have a note half turned up in the air, and go off and leave it, and yerd' thing she'd fer-om, two days after she'd rache up for it and bring it down and slip off into the choon again, nate as nate."

Put a dhrop more water in the kitchen!"

They call us to deliver—plain Here a shout sounded outside, and Bugsey came tumbling in and said he thought he had seen Pearl coming away down the road across the track whereupon Danny cried so uproariously that Mrs. Bugsey, like the gentleman that he was, withdrew his statement, or at least modified it by saying it might be Pearl and it might not.

But it was Pearl, sure enough, and Danny had the pleasure of giving the alarm, beating on the window, mauling in with happiness, while Pearl said good-bye to Tom Motherwell who had brought her home. Tommy and Bugsey and Patsy waited giggling just outside the door, while Mary and Mrs. Watson went out to greet her. Pearl was in at last, kissing every little last Watson, forgetting she had done Tommy and doing him over again; with Danny holding tightly to her skirt through it all, everybody talking at once.

Then the excitement calmed down again, for Jimmy who had been down town came home and found well box which Tom Motherwell had gone on the step after Pearl had gone. They carried it in excitedly and eager little hands raised the lid, eager little voices shouted with delight.

"Didn't I tell ye we'd have a turkey when Pearl came home," Mary shouted triumphantly.

Pearlie rose at once to her old position of director-in-chief.

"The turkey'll be enough for us, and I'll be there to get it, and we'll send the chicken to Mrs. Burton, poor old lady, she wuz good to the day I left. Now ma, you sit down, me and Ma'll git along. Here, Bugsey and Tommy and Patsy and Danny, here's five cents apiece for ye to go and buy what ye like, but don't buy anything to eat, for ye'll not need it, but ye can buy hankies, any kind ye like, ye'll need them now the winter's comin' on, and ye'll be havin' the snuffles."

When the boys came back with their purchases they were put in a row upon their mother's bed to be out of the way while the supper was being prepared, all except wee Bugsey, who went, from choice, down to the tracks to see the cars getting loaded—the snuffle of the turkey in the oven made the tears come.

Two hours later the Watson family sat down to supper, not in sections, but the whole family. The table had long since been inadequate to the family's needs, but the boys, with a flour sack on them, from the corner of it to the washing machine overcame the difficulty.

Was there ever such a turkey as that one? Mrs. Watson carved it herself on the back of the supper table. "Sure yer poor father can't be bothered with it, and it's a thing he ain't handy at, no, no, no, no, no, no, myself; but the atin' is on it, praise God, and we'll git it at some way."

Ten plates were heaped full of potatoes and turnips, turkey, brown gravy, and "stuff"; and still that mammoth turkey had layers of meat on its giant sides. What did it matter if there were not enough plates to go around, and Tommy had to eat his supper out of the saucepan; and even if there were no cups for the boys, was not the pail with the dipper in it just behind them on the side table?

When the plates had all been cleaned the second time, and the turkey began to look as if something had happened to it, Mary brought in the jelly Mrs. Evans had sent them when she let Mary come home early in the afternoon, a present from Algernon she said, and the whipped cream that

On this particular day Mrs. Watson sang because she couldn't help it. Pearl was coming home—

From Greenland's icy strands, From India's coral straits, She sang as she peeled the potatoes.

Where Africa's sunny foun— "Come, Mary, please, and scour the knives, sure an' I forgot them to today."

Roll down their golden sand; From many an ancient river And many a sandy—