

stands out clear and delicious in the mind of every one present. Thankful heaped up the plates and filled them again and again, and when, from sheer exhaustion, the boys had to stop, the turkey seemed hardly worsted by the encounter, so gigantic he was!

At last it was over. Thankful watched the happy company going homeward, Billy bringing up the rear with a basket containing the remains of the feast. Long after they were out of sight she sat with folded hands, gazing after them. Her house was in a state of wild disorder. There were three sharp dents in the carved legs of her dining-room table, where little Joe Peters had pounded with his boots, to express his delight at the sight of the steaming plum-pudding. Joshua, her pet cat, had taken to the woods, and she knew it would require a great deal of diplomacy to bring him back again. It had been a busy, anxious day, and she was tired from head to foot. But there was a strange warmth in Thankful's heart, and looking back upon the day, she felt that it was the pleasantest one she had known for years. She had utterly forgotten her own troubles in looking after the comfort of her own guests, and she was conscious of having given them an unusual pleasure.

Thankful did not hear the whistle of the incoming train nor the light step on the garden walk. Some one opened the door softly, hesitatingly, but she did not hear. Then Millie knelt down beside her, and Millie's voice said, tremulously:

"Oh, Aunt Thankful, I've been so homesick. Won't you take me back again?"

And, with Millie's arms around her neck, Thankful felt that the day had indeed been a blessed one.

THE HOME CIRCLE.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

FROM THE FRENCH OF ALEXANDER DUMAS, SENT BY THE REV. ALEXANDER KING, SCOTSTOWN P.O.

The death of the famous dog Sutherland—thus named after the Englishman who had made a gift of it to the Empress Catherine II. of Russia—nearly caused a tragic mistake, in so far as it almost cost the donor, a celebrated banker, his life. The occurrence took place at St. Petersburg.

One morning at day-break, Mr. Sutherland the gentleman who had presented the dog to the Empress, and who was consequently a favorite with that august personage—was suddenly awoke by his man-servant.

"Sir," said the footman, "your house is surrounded with guards, and the master of the police demands to speak to you."

"What does he wish with me?" exclaimed the banker, as he leaped from his bed, somewhat startled by this announcement.

"I know not sir," answered the footman; "but it appears that it is a matter of the highest importance, and which, from what he says, can only be communicated to you personally."

"Show him in," said Mr. Sutherland, as he donned his dressing gown.

The footman departed, and returned some minutes afterwards with His Excellency, Mr. Relu, upon whose face the banker read at the first glance some formidable intelligence. The worthy banker, however, maintained his calmness, and welcoming the master of the police with his usual urbanity, presented him with a seat. His Excellency, however, remained standing, and in a tone the most dolorous which it was possible to assume, said:—

"Mr. Sutherland, believe me when I assure you that I am truly grieved to have been chosen by Her Majesty, my very gracious sovereign, to accomplish an order, the severity of which afflicts me, but which has without doubt been provoked by some great crime."

"By some great crime, Your Excellency!" exclaimed the banker. "And who then has committed this crime?"

"You, doubtless, sir, since it is upon you that the punishment is to fall."

"Sir, I swear to you that I know not of any reproach with which to charge myself as a subject of our sovereign: for I am a naturalized Russian, as you must know."

"And it is precisely, sir, because you are a naturalized Russian that your position is terrible." If you had remained a subject of His Britanic Majesty, you would have been able to call in the aid of the English consul, and escaped thus perhaps the rigor of the order which I am, to my very great regret, charged to execute."

"Tell me then, Your Excellency, what is this order?"

"Oh, sir, never will I have the strength to make it known to you."

"Have I lost the good graces of Her Majesty?"

"Oh, if it were only that!"

"Is it a question to make one depart for England?"

"Oh! no; even that must not be."

"You terrify me. Is it an order to send me to Siberia?"

"Siberia, sir, is a fine country, and which people have calumniated. Besides people return from it."

"Am I condemned to prison?"

"The prison is nothing. Prisoners come out of prison."

"Sir, sir!" cried the banker, more and more affrighted. "Am I destined to the knout?"

"The knout is a punishment very grievous; but the knout does not kill."

"Miserable fate!" said Sutherland, terrified.

"I see indeed that it is a matter of death."

"And what a death!" exclaimed the master of the police, whilst he solemnly raised his eyes with an expression of the most profound pity.

"How! what a death! Is it not enough to kill me without trial, to assassinate me without cause? Catherine orders, yet"—

"Alas! yes, she orders!"

"Well, speak, sir! What does she order? I am a man; I have courage. Speak!"

"Alas! my dear sir, she orders—if it had not been by herself that the command had been given, I declare to you, my dear Mr. Sutherland, that I would not have believed it."

"But you make me die a thousand times. Let me see, sir, what has she ordered you to do?"

"She has ordered me to have you stuffed!"

The poor banker uttered a cry of distress; then looking the master of the police in the face, said: "But, Your Excellency, it is monstrous what you say to me; you must have lost your reason."

"No, sir; I have not lost my reason; but I will certainly lose it during the operation."

"But how have you—you who have said that you are my friend a hundred times—you, in short, to whom I have had the honor to render certain services—how have you, I say, received such an order without endeavoring to represent the barbarity of it to Her Majesty?"

"Alas! sir, I have done what I could, and certainly what no one would have dared to do in my place. I besought her majesty to renounce her design, or at least to charge another than myself with the execution of it; and that with tears in my eyes. But Her Majesty said to me with that voice which you know well, and which does not admit of a reply, 'Go, sir, and do not forget that it is your duty to acquit yourself without a murmur of the commissions with which I charge you.'"

"And then?"

"Then," said the master of the police, "I lost no time in repairing to a very clever naturalist who stuffs animals for the Academy of Sciences; for in short, since there was not any alternative, I deemed it only proper, and out of respect for your feelings, my dear Mr. Sutherland, that you should be stuffed in the best manner possible."

"And the wretch has consented?"

"He referred me to his colleague, who stuffs apes, having studied the analogy between the human species and the monkey tribe."

"Well?"

"Well, sir, he awaits you."

"How! he awaits me! But is the order so peremptory?"

"Not an instant must be lost, my dear, sir; the order of Her Majesty does not admit of delay."

"Without granting me time to put my affairs in order? But it is impossible."

"Alas! it is but too true, sir."