

## \* \* \* The Story Page \* \* \*

### Thanksgiving.

BY AMELIA R. BARR.

"Have you cut the wheat in the blowing fields,  
The barley, the oats, and the rye,  
The golden corn and the pearly rice?  
For the winter days are nigh."  
"We have reaped them all from shore to shore,  
And the grain is safe on the threshing floor."  
"Have you gathered the berries from the vine,  
And the fruit from the orchard trees?  
The dew and the scent from the roses and thyme,  
In the hive of the honeybees?"  
"The peach and the plum and the apple are ours,  
And the honeycomb from the scented flowers."  
"The wealth of the snowy cotton field  
And the gift of the sugar cane,  
The savory herb and the nourishing root—  
There has nothing been given in vain."  
"We have gathered the harvest from shore to shore,  
And the measure is full and brimming o'er."  
Then lift up the head with a song!  
And lift up the hand with a gift!  
To the ancient Giver of all!  
The spirit in gratitude lift!  
For the joy and the promise of spring,  
For the hay and the clover sweet,  
The barley, the rye, and the oats,  
The rice and the corn and the wheat,  
The cotton and sugar and fruit,  
The flowers and the fine honeycomb,  
The country, so fair and so free,  
The blessings and glory of home.

—Selected.

### His Friend's Plan.

BY HILDA RICHMOND.

"To tell you the truth, Arthur," said Rev. Mr. Maxwell to his old friend, "I would rather not have you go to church with me. I never had much patience with people who display the family skeleton before visitors; but really the young people come to my church on Sunday evening for the sole purpose of flirting. I have tried every means in my power to prevent it, but with no success. I have persuaded, argued, scolded, preached and prayed about it, but if you should go to-night, you would be shocked at the irreverence and inattention of the boys and girls."

"But I really want to go," said Arthur Banks. "It has been years since I heard you preach, and this is my only chance, for I shall not be back again till fall. I won't flirt with the girls nor be shocked too much. I have a flock of nephews and nieces of my own, and know just how giddy some young people can be. If my son and daughter had lived, I hope they would never have wanted to flirt in church; but who knows? Do the parents help you in your struggle?"

"Not a bit. They say young people will be young people, and smile indulgently when a troop of school girls rush to every train that stops in town to see who gets off and talk to the train crew. I suppose there were half a dozen to meet you last night."

"I noticed some girls talking and laughing with the brakeman. I supposed they were related to him."

Just then the first bell rang and the two friends hurried to the church. Mr. Banks took a seat near the door, and during the opening service wondered if all the young folks were out of town or gone to meet a late train. The minister had scarcely announced his text when they commenced coming. By twos and threes they rustled and fluttered into the back seats, and every few minutes the minister was forced to pause until the noise subsided. Mr. Banks looked sternly at the rude young people, but the older folks in front apparently paid no attention to the subdued giggling and whispering behind them.

The two friends walked home in silence; but, once inside the tiny study at the parsonage, Mr. Banks said: "I don't wonder you wanted me to stay at home. Those rude, noisy young people would set me distracted in a month. Are they always as bad as to-night?"

"Not always. They made an extra effort this evening because they saw it annoyed you."

"Is there no way to reach them?"

"It seems not. I am starting a little reading-room with a few books and magazines in the hope of keeping them off the streets part of the time, but it is too new to show what it will accomplish. If you have any reading matter to spare, send it to us by all means."

"I'll send a box of books as soon as I get home. Maybe I can think of some plan to help you. I wish I could, for your hair is turning gray too fast to suit me," and he laid his hand affectionately on the minister's shoulders. "Thank you, Arthur. You were always such a comfort to me in school and college, and even now your letters do me more good than medicine."

"I am glad to hear it," said Mr. Banks. "Don't give up yet, for something will help you out of your perplexity. But I might as well not caution you on that subject, for I know as long as you are here you will never give up."

Three weeks later the usual crowd of young girls flock-

ed to the morning train, and this time were devoting all their attention to the clerk in the mail car. They were nice-looking, bright girls, whose mothers foolishly thought it did no harm for their children to spend their vacation in this way.

"I beg your pardon," said a musical voice behind them, "but will you be so kind as to carry this letter into Cincinnati with you and put a special delivery stamp on it? The postman here is out of them, and it is important that the letter be delivered to-day."

In an instant the clerk's cap was in his hand, and, as he took the letter and money, he said: "I shall be glad to do your errand."

The village girls looked from the dainty girl, in her trim shirtwaist and dark skirt, with an air of exquisite neatness from her shining brown hair to her faultless shoes, to the young man who was regarding her with respectful attention.

"Thank you," she said, simply, and moved swiftly away.

"You need not be so polite to her," said Bell Graves, who was the acknowledged leader of the girls; "she is only the new book-keeper in the creamery over there."

"A lady, nevertheless," said the clerk. "Then I suppose we are not ladies, for you never take off your cap when you talk to us," said Bell.

The young man was tired of seeing the girls at his car every time the train stopped in the village, and thought a little wholesome truth would do no harm, so he said: "Well, to tell you the truth, ladies do not go to trains to flirt with men, nor anywhere else, for that matter. Since you have started the subject, I'll tell you that the very nicest girls are the ones who never try to attract attention. It really is not your fault, though, for you are only used to country ways, and do not know what good manners are. Loud laughing and talking are never commented on except unfavorably by strangers, no matter what any one may tell you."

The bell was ringing for the train to start before he had finished his little lecture, and as it moved out he looked back from the open door at the little group of girls speechless with indignation. "It will do them good, maybe," he murmured, turning to his work, forgetting that he had encouraged them in the very thing he had just finished reproving them for.

It did do them good, for they walked quietly home at once, without even glancing in the direction of several strangers who stood on the little platform.

"I wish you could run down to Mrs. Floods' and tell Nellie to come home right away," said Mrs. Graves, a few hours later, to Bell, who was lounging discontentedly in the parlor, wishing for something pleasant to do. "I forgot it is the day for her music lesson, and told her she might spend the afternoon."

"I don't see why she should want to spend the afternoon with Mrs. Flood. There are no children there," said Bell, in astonishment.

"No, but that young lady who is book-keeper at the creamery boards there, and Nellie is very much interested in her. She takes fresh pansies to Miss Burke every day to send to the city for the flower mission. I am glad she does it, too, for if I pay her in flowers she willingly does many little tasks, and it helps me a great deal."

"Bell," said Mr. Graves, putting down his paper, "run along and send your sister home, but stay yourself and call on Miss Burke. I intended to mention it last week, but forgot. I met her at the creamery when I drew my check for last month's milk account from the farm, and she pleased me very much. She said she only worked in the morning and had the afternoon to herself, so she must be lonesome in a strange town. Maybe you have called, though?"

"No, I haven't," said Bell. "I don't like the stuck-up look she has, and I don't care to meet her. Must I go?"

"Indeed you must," said her father, sternly. "She is not a bit stuck-up, as you call it, but a refined, intelligent face and good, old-fashioned manners."

So presently Bell, arrayed in her best black skirt and most elaborate silk waist, was on her way to do her father's bidding, for though she did as she pleased most of the time, she obeyed her father's few commands instantly. A gay child laugh guided her to the shaded east porch of the house where Nina Burke boarded, and a pretty sight met her eyes. Her little sister Nellie was deftly making tiny bouquets of pansies and mignonette and Nina was placing them carefully in a moss-lined basket. Bell took in Nina's simple white frock and white canvas shoes at a glance, and suddenly felt very much overdressed, but she rejoiced to see that Nellie, in her little white frock, was not out of place in the picture. As Nellie looked around for flowers she saw Bell watching them, and cried out:

"Why, Bell, are you here? Come and help us. We are afraid the expressman will come for the basket before it is ready."

"I am sorry, Nellie, but mamma wants you to come home right away. She forgot that this is the day for your music lesson."

Tears filled the blue eyes as their owner said, sadly: "Then the poor, sick people won't have any flowers to-day."

"Yes they will," said Bell, heartily, drawing off her hot gloves. "If Miss Burke will let me, I'll help her."

"Certainly you may," said Nina, drawing a low chair forward. "Good-bye, dear," kissing the sweet face and settling the little white sunbonnet on the curly head. "Come again to-morrow, if mamma will let you. Thank you very much for helping me to-day."

So Nellie trudged home, pleased and proud, and the two girls quickly finished their task and then Nina led the way into the big, old parlor and settled her guest on the pillow-heaped couch.

While Nina delivered her basket, with numerous injunctions, to the expressman, Bell studied the dainty, cool parlor with critical eyes. The heavy carpet that had covered the floor was replaced by light matting, and delicate, ruffled muslin curtains floated in the breeze instead of the expensive lace ones of which Mrs. Floods was so proud. There were books and flowers and magazines in profusion, gay pillows and comfortable chairs. The furniture in almost any other parlor in the village would have paid for everything except the piano three times over, but Bell did not know that. To her it was elegance itself, simply because she had never seen a really well furnished room.

When Nina gracefully poured tea in the tiny cups and served it with crisp wafers, Bell enthusiastically fell in love with the pretty hostess and her pretty room, after the fashion of all schoolgirls, and henceforth made Nina her model in all things.

Happy the girls who, in the impressionable, joyous days of young womanhood, have before them some older friend who wisely and imperceptibly fashions their young lives and teaches them the meaning of good breeding as no book on etiquette ever can.

One beautiful autumn morning as the minister was preparing his sermon for the following Sunday, four members of his congregation walked into the study and, after a few minutes' conversation, one of them said: "While you were away last week at Bro. Reed's funeral the congregation had a meeting, and it was unanimously decided that your salary should be increased. Your work is entirely satisfactory, and our church is doing better work than ever before. In token of our love and appreciation we beg you to accept our gift, with the earnest hope that your labor may be crowned with still greater success," and he laid ten twenty-dollar gold pieces before the astonished minister.

"My dear friends," he said, with tears in his eyes, "the credit for the successful work in our church belongs in a great measure to the young people. In the last few months they have come nobly to my support and enabled me to give more time and thought to the preparations of my sermons. They have taken charge of the music, and it seems to me there is nothing more delightful than their fresh, tuneful voices singing the grand old hymns; they work faithfully in the Sunday-school, and, more than all, by their reverent attention inspire me with the hope that my labor is not in vain. I thank you all for your generous gift, and hope that in the coming year I may do better than ever before. May God bless you!"

"I always said our boys and girls would come out all right in time," said Mr. Blake, proudly. "I know they were a little noisy and sometimes disturbed the meeting, but now they are all right."

"That pretty little girl at the creamery is responsible for a great deal of the reform," said Mr. Graves. "I never saw any one who could influence boys and girls as she can, and always in the right direction, too. I have watched since last spring, when she first came, and her gentle ways and perfect manners are being rapidly copied by our young people. I thank God every day that she ever came among us."

"Amen," responded the minister, fervently. "She is a devout Christian and a beautiful type of the self-supporting American girl."

That evening's mail brought a letter to Mr. Maxwell that called to his mind his friend's promise to "think, if possible, of some plan to help him."

"I might have known that Arthur had something to do with my success. He is the best friend a man ever had," and he read once more:

"MY DEAR ARTHUR:—From the hopeful tone of your letters and the calm, serene look of the picture of yourself that Mrs. Maxwell sent me a week ago, I judge that my plan to help you is not a failure. Do you remember that I promised to do a little thinking along that line when I visited you last spring? My favorite niece was planning to take up settlement work in the city slums this summer, but I persuaded her to go down and help you out. She made me promise to find some employment for her that the young people might not suspect