

AN ASSISTED PROVIDENCE.

(By Oskara Scholer, in "Boothery Magazine.")

It was the Christmas turkeys that should be held responsible. Every year the Lossing give each head of a family in their employ and each lad helping to support his mother, a turkey at Christmas. As the business has grown, so has the number of turkeys, until it is now well up in the hundreds, and requires a special contract. Harry, one Christmas, some five years ago, bought the turkeys at so good a bargain that he felt the natural reaction in an impulse to extravagance. In the very flood-tide of the money-spending yearnings, he chanced to pass Deacon Hurst's stable and to see two Saint Bernard puppies, of elephantine size but of the tenderest age, gambolling on the sidewalk before the office. Deacon Hurst, I should explain, is no more a deacon than I am; he is a livery-stable keeper, very honest, a keen and solemn sportsman, and withal of a staid demeanor and a habitual garb of black. Now you know as well as I any reason for his nickname.

Deacon Hurst is fond of the dog as well as of that noble animal the horse (he has three copies of Black Beauty in his stable, which would do an incalculable amount of good if they were ever read); and he usually has half a dozen dogs of his own, with pedigrees long enough for a poor gentleman in a New England village. He told Harry that the Saint Bernards were grandsons of Sir Bénédict, the "finest dog of his time in the world, sir," that they were perfectly marked and very large for their age (which Harry found it easy to believe of the young giants), and that they were "ridiculous, sir, as the figger of two hundred and fifty" (which Harry did not believe so readily); and, after Harry had admired and studied the dogs for the space of half an hour, he dropped the price, in a kind of spasm of generosity, to two hundred dollars. Harry was tempted to close the bargain on the spot, but he decided to wait and prepare his mother for such a large addition to the stable.

The more he dwelt on the subject the more he longed to buy the dogs. In fact, a time comes to every healthy man when he wants a dog, just as a time comes when he wants a wife; and Harry's dog was dead. By consequence, Harry was in a state of sensitive affection and desolation to which a promising new object makes the most moving appeal. The departed dog (Bruce by name) was a Saint Bernard; and Deacon Hurst found one of the puppies to have so much the expression of countenance of the late Bruce that he named him Bruce on the spot—a little before Harry joined the group. Harry did not at first recognize this resemblance, but he grew to see it; and, combined with the dog's affectionate disposition, it softened his heart. By the time he told his mother he was come to quoting Hurst's adjectives as his own.

"Beauties, mother," says Harry, with sparkling eyes; "the markings are perfect—couldn't be better; and their heads are shaped just right! You can't get such watch-dogs in the world! And, for their enormous strength, gentle as a lamb to women and children! And, mother, one of them looks like Bruce!" "I suppose they would want to be house-dogs," says Mrs. Lossing, a little dubiously, but looking fondly at Harry's handsome face; "you know, somehow, all our dogs, no matter how properly they start in a kennel, end by being so hurt if we keep them there that they come into the house. And they are so large, it is like having a pet lion about."

"These dogs, mother, shall never put a paw in the house."

"Well, I hope just as I get fond of them they will not have the distemper and die!" said Mrs. Lossing, which speech Harry rightly took for the white flag of surrender. That evening he went to find Hurst and clinch the bargain. As it happened, Hurst was away, driving an especially important political personage to an especially important political council. The day following was a Sunday; but by this time, Harry was so bent upon obtaining the dogs that he had it in mind to go to Hurst's house for them in the afternoon. When Harry wanted anything, from Saint Bernards to purity in politics, he wanted it with an irresistible impetus! If he did wrong, his error was linked to its own punishment. But this is anticipating, it is not presuming; I prefer to leave Harry Lossing's experience to paint its own moral without pushing. The event that happened next was Harry's pulling out his check-book and beginning to write a check, remarking, with a slight drooping of his eyelids, "Beat catch the deacon's generosity on the fly, or it may make a home run!"

Then he let the pen fall on the blotter, for he had remembered the day. After an instant's hesitation he took a couple of hundred-dollar bank-notes out of a drawer (I think they were gifts for his two sisters on Christmas-day, for he was a generous brother; and most likely there would be some small domestic joke about engraving to "go with them"); these he placed in the right-hand pocket of his waistcoat. In his left-hand waistcoat pocket were two five-dollar notes.

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dean wanted some carpentering done? I thought maybe, as I'm a fair carpenter, that was my trade once, sir—I'd ask him to let me do the job. I was aware there is nothing in our rules—I mean our canons—to prevent me, and nobody need know I was the pastor of Matt's Junction, because I would come just in my overalls, and I could feed myself for almost nothing, living is so cheap. I was praying about that, too. Now, your noble generosity will enable me to donate what they owe on my salary, and get the window fixed."

The Nation's Waits in Society. There is one element in Washington society peculiar to its being at the seat of government. I refer to the number of accomplished women who are clerks in the various departments. Many of these clerks are the widows, sisters or daughters of departed statesmen, or of patriots who have done distinguished service for their country.

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