

* * The Story Page. * *

Whose Was the Elm?

BY ANNA M. TOOHEY.

"The elm is on our lawn," exclaimed Lucia.
 "Indeed it is not," replied Bernard, in a decided tone. "It is our tree, and no one shall say it is not."
 "It don't make any difference what people say," said Lucia. "That tree is on my father's land, and it always has been there, and always will be; and that's all that there is about it."
 "What is the trouble, children?"
 The two cousins looked up from the steps leading into Lucia's home, where they were sitting. It was Grandpa Lake whom they saw.
 "Oh, it is the same old fuss about the tree," said Lucia. "I am tired and sick of quarreling about it; still I won't give in. That tree is mine as sure as my eyes are; so there, now."
 "No, grandpa, it is mine," put in Bernard.
 "My father has always said that it was on our land, and he cut my name on it when I was a little teeny, weeny boy, and he'd not have done that if the tree was on Uncle George's land."
 "Oh, well, I'm sick of having to be disputing all the time about that old tree," said Lucia. Bernard and I will be having a good time, then we'll come near the elm, and that will make us both hateful."
 "That is surely a pity," observed grandpa. "That is one of the most beautiful elms I ever saw. It has always given me such pleasure to look at it, and I am sorry that it has caused so much trouble to two little cousins."
 "Well, I just guess it is a beautiful tree," exclaimed Lucia, looking up at the graceful elm with a fond expression in her blue eyes. "It is the loveliest elm in the whole city, yes, it is the loveliest tree of any kind in the whole city."
 "Of course it is, since it is my tree," remarked Bernard. Then he leaned back and laughed heartily at his own remark.
 "But it don't happen to be yours," retorted Lucia, with a toss of her head.
 "Well, well, now, this thing is getting serious," remarked grandpa, as he stood looking at his petted grandchild, his two wrinkled hands resting upon his cane. "When I gave a part of my farm to my two boys for them to build their homes upon, I did not think that matters would come to this; indeed I didn't."
 "Why, grandpa, I didn't think you'd feel so bad about our quarrel," said Lucia, in surprise.
 But Bernard just said: "Do you mean, grandpa, that this land here used to be a part of your farm? Why it is all city around here now."
 "Yes, it is city around here now," replied grandpa; "but it was country not many years ago, and there were so many trees around here then that no one would ever think of having words over one, as you have."
 "But now, don't you think that the tree is mine, grandpa?" asked Lucia.
 "And don't you think that it is mine?" asked Bernard.
 "It won't do for me to say," returned grandpa. "But I'll tell you how we will decide it. I was quite a fellow for chopping down trees when I was a young chap, and I'd like to try my hand at it again. I don't have the strength I had once, but I think I can bring that elm down all right. Then, when I get it down, I will divide it in two. Then each of you can have a half, and there will be no more quarreling over the tree."
 "Hurrah!" exclaimed Bernard, waving his cap.
 "Won't that be fun to see the old thing fall! My! won't it make a noise, though!"
 "Oh, no, grandpa; please don't," said Lucia, with tears in her eyes. Then she went up to her grandfather, and, putting her two little hands on his arm, she added: "Please don't! The tree isn't to blame for our quarrel, and I should miss it so if it were down."
 "But we'd better have peace in the family than an elm standing," said grandpa. With an amused expression in the face, he turned toward the little girl.
 "Then let Bernard call the tree his," said Lucia.
 "Let him call it his."
 "But if I do, you will say the first thing, that it is your own," put in Bernard. "And I want the fun of helping cut it down."
 "Oh, please don't!" pleaded Lucia, plaintively.
 "If you will just let that dear old elm stand, I will never dispute about it again—never, never, as long as I live."
 "That is easier said than done," returned Bernard, in rather an unpleasant manner.
 "But I am in earnest, Bernard."
 "Yes, yes I am." So saying, the little girl ran to the elm and threw her arms about it in an affectionate way.
 "Then the tree must stand," said grandpa. "I haven't the heart to cut it down, and now I know whose the old elm is. By the way, it is a tree that came up of its own accord, even if you do think that some one set it out. I have watched its growth for years, and used to rest under it when I went for my cows. Things that grow of their own accord belong

to the folks that love them most, and as Lucia loves this tree best, it is her's, no matter on whose land it is. It couldn't live if it didn't have roots, and its roots grow on both sides of the line; so it is really in both of your yards; but it is Lucia's tree now all right, as long as she wanted it to live, even if it wasn't hers, and Bernard wanted it to be cut down and killed."

Bernard said nothing, but, with a gloomy look upon his face, he started to go towards his own home.

Lucia ran after him. "Don't feel bad, Bernard," she said. "If the tree is mine, it is mine to give away, and I will give you the half that shades your lawn, and I will keep mine for the side that shades mine. Do you like that?"

Bernard nodded his head, but he still did not feel much like talking; so he kept on going towards home.

Lucia ran back to grandpa, and as she took him by the hand, to help him up the steps into her home, she remarked: "Do you know, grandpa, you make me think a lot of Solomon? Yes, you make me think a great lot of him."

"Do I?" exclaimed grandpa. Then he laughed. "Yes, you do; and there's something I wish you'd do, so Bernard won't feel quite so bad because you said that the elm is mine. I wish that you'd take Bernard into the woods, and help him cut down a tree. I love the trees so that I wouldn't want to see you cut down the one that is the least pretty of them all; but Bernard is a boy, and boys are different, you know. They like chopping and chips better than to see the branches waving in the wind."

All right, girly, I will do as you say," promised grandpa.

And he did.—Western Advocate.

A Thanksgiving All Together.

BY FRANCES J. DELANO.

On the morning of the day before Thanksgiving a young girl sat weeping on the back doorstep of a dilapidated farmhouse. She had just returned from an errand to a neighboring farm and, while knocking at the kitchen door, had overheard a conversation which opened her eyes to some very hard facts about her own family.

"O, dear, dear!" sobbed Musette Seaver. "It's true, every word, I s'pose—poor; shiftless; no account; live like boardin' house folks; no two of 'em ever pull together; never sit down to a meal together. O, dear, dear—I never dreamed we were such kind of folks, but we are. I can see it now that Miss Smith has said it right out. O, to think folks talk like that about us! Poor; shiftless; no account—the words seemed to beat themselves into Musette's brain. "I wish,"—here the girl hid her face in her apron and sobbed, then she sat up and began to wipe her eyes, energetically. "No I don't, either," she said, fiercely. "I don't wish I didn't belong to my own family. There's father and mother and Jim and little Tommy—and—I love them every one."

"Hello!"
 Musette looked up; her brother Mark was coming up the path.

"What's the matter with you?" inquired the boy. Musette pulled herself together, but made no answer.

"Where's Jim?" he asked, not being interested in Musette's tears.

"Practicing for a shooting match," replied Musette.

"Where's Lem?"

"O! he's off on his own business, so's all the rest—Mary Anne is trimming her hat, Georgianna is reading, Tommie's screaming top of his lungs, don't you hear him? You're standing there doing nothing, I'm—"

Mark began to laugh. "Any more of us?" he asked jokingly.

Musette swallowed some tears. "No," she said, "but if there were I s'pose we'd all be in different places and no two of us pulling together."

Mark gazed at Musette a moment—evidently something had gone wrong with Musette—but then, something was always going wrong with somebody.

"What are we going to have for dinner to-morrow?"

"Nothing."

Mark kicked the steps contemptuously—dinner was a subject dear to heart. "It's always nothing in this house," he said, angrily. "they are going to have roast goose at Jim Flint's, turkey at Winstons', roast sparerib at Smiths' and—"

"Roast potatoes at the Seavers'," remarked Musette, recklessly.

Mark was puzzled, for Musette was the one member of the family who was always ready to sympathize with all the others. "What's the matter with you, anyway?" he asked.

"Nothing," was Musette's brief reply.

"Well, now, I tell you I'm going to have a

Thanksgiving dinner to-morrow and he gave the steps another vigorous kick.

"All alone?" said Musette, scornfully.

"Yes, I am; I'm going to shoot a partridge if I stay out all night, and I'm going to cook it in the old stone fireplace in the corner of the lower lot. If the boys ask me what I had for Thanksgiving I can tell them partridge. I guess that'll sound all right. If you brace up you can help and we'll eat it together."

Musette eyed her brother a moment. Hadn't you better split it in two and you cook yours in one corner of the lot and I'll cook mine in the other corner."

"O, come off!" exclaimed Mark, contemptuously. "will you go with me or not?"

"Yes, I will; go and get your partridge. Might get two while you're about it." Here Musette got up and disappeared in the kitchen.

On Thanksgiving Day, Musette was up and out by the lake at five o'clock. At breakfast time she handed Mark a half-dozen pickerel. "There," she cried, "clean those and we'll have a chowder along with your two partridges."

All the morning Mark and Musette were busy down in the corner of the lot making chowder, broiling partridges and stewing cranberries. Mark was ecstatically happy. "Don't believe any of the fellows will have as good a dinner as we'll have. Umm, don't it smell good! Lucky it's a warm spell. We couldn't keep things hot long enough to get them into the plates if the weather was like it is some Thanksgiving."

Musette seemed not to hear her brother's remarks—she stirred and stirred and salted and peppered and tasted.

"Those partridges will be done first thing we know," said Mark.

Musette took no notice of the partridges. "Do you remember that night last spring," she said, quietly, "when it was so awful cold and we didn't get home from school until five o'clock and there was a parsnip stew and how hungry we both were?"

"Rather guess I do," said Mark; "didn't it taste more than good? Wasn't half enough of it though."

"Do you know," continued Musette, in a voice that trembled a little, "mother saved that stew for father—he hadn't had any dinner, been out fishing all day. She said he just tasted it when he happened to hear mother say we hadn't been home to supper and there wasn't much for us, and then he saved it all for us."

"How did you know?" asked Mark, most incredulously.

"After we had eaten the stew I saw father in the pantry eating cold Johnnycake, and when I asked mother she told me."

"By Jimminy!" exclaimed Mark.

"There goes father now, 'cross fields going home to dinner. Poor old father!" Musette's eyes were following her father and the tenderness in her voice as she uttered the last words made Mark choke. He eyed the precious contents of the frying pan a moment, then he turned to Musette. "Would there be enough, do you think, for three of us?"

"Three!" exclaimed Musette, hopefully, "why, there's plenty for four, a half one apiece, and mother hasn't tasted partridges for ages. Don't you remember how there wasn't enough to go round the last time and mother said she didn't want any? She did, though—and" Musette hesitated a moment, "you know father wouldn't like to eat dinner without mother!"

"Run and ask them then," said Mark. "I bet they don't come, because they won't leave the rest."

"Why couldn't I ask Mary Ann and Georgianna?" said Musette with sudden eagerness. "Of course mother'd have to bring Tommie, any way, and two more you know wouldn't matter. They needn't have partridge, only Mary Ann does love it awfully and I'd just as lieves have chowder, and you remember how Georgianna cooked it for you last time—O, Mark, do let's! there's cranberries enough and mother made an apple pie this morning. She'll bring it, and Mary Ann would let us have some of her pickles she did up this fall, and you know we've bushels of chowder—shall I ask them, Mark?"

Musette's voice was like a beautiful instrument, which responds to the deepest feelings and carries conviction to the dullest listener.

"Go and ask them," said Mark, in a resigned voice. "I'll see the things don't burn."

Fifteen minutes later father and mother, Georgianna, Mary Ann and little Tommie were gathered around the big flat rock which was to serve as a table.

"Partridge all done and chowder, too," exclaimed Mark. "Are the plates hot? You pass them around Musette, what's the matter with you, why don't you hustle?"

"O Mark! Perhaps Jim and Lem'll come in a minute and—"

Mark dropped the big spoon down into the chowder with a splash. "I tell you Jim and Lem were