

The IDOL of the DAY



The FIRST THANKSGIVING

The snow upon the hillside lay,
And thatched the cottage roof,
Was filled with icy weft,
The boughs were leafless on the trees,
Across the barren plain
The north wind swept desparingly
And moaned like one in pain.

(It whimpered like some hungry child
That clasps its parent's hand
And pleads for bread when there is none
In all the dreary land.)
Above the little Plymouth town,
Circling with empty maw,
Mocking their hunger, flew the crow,
Shrieking his "haw, haw, haw."

Patience, a blue-eyed maiden,
(Her eyes with tears were dim),
From hunger feeble, trembling knelt
And raised her voice to Him.
"Dear God," she said in pleading tones,
Tender, plaintive and sweet,
"We've almost starved, an' won't 'oo
please
Send down some fings to eat?"

Then all day long her watchful eyes
Gazed down the village street,
Not doubting but she soon would see
Some one with "fings to eat."
And, lo! before the sun had set,
With wild fowl laden down,
Four hunters from the forest drear
Came marching into town.

And (as in answer to the prayer),
To add to all the cheer,
And banish famine from the place,
Came Indians with deer,
The joyous villagers rushed out
The Indians ones to meet,
But Patience knelt and said: "Fanks,
Dod,
For sendin' fings to eat."



"HE SHALL DIRECT THY PATH."

A Thanksgiving Story.

"Trust in the Lord with all thy heart
• • • He shall direct thy path."
Old Martha Brent, murmuring
snatches of her day's verses, little realized
that a challenge to her faith was
close at hand.

She was dusting some books on a
shelf in her sitting room, and just then
she accidentally knocked one of them
to the floor.

The books had belonged to Martha's



ACCIDENTALLY KNOCKED ONE TO THE FLOOR.

husband. She dusted them daily, but she never had opened them since his death, ten years before. Above the book shelf hung a bronze medal her husband had won for bravery in battle.

Stooping to get the fallen book, Martha also picked up a paper that hadumbled out of it. It was a deed conferring a small piece of property below the town to one Frederick Willis.

"Well, now, to think; I never knew James deeded that away!" thought Martha.

She had just laid the paper aside when the door burst open and a little boy came flying in.

"Granny!" he whispered, hurriedly, "you won't let him take me from you will you?"

"Why, Jacky!" said Martha. The boy's beautiful, flushed face was upturned to hers full of eager entreaty.

"Promise, you won't, Granny!"

"No, no, Jacky," she said, patting his head; "you never shall leave Granny unwillingly."

"Morning, Martha," said a large,

rather determined-looking man, appearing in the doorway.

He was Stephen Butts, a relative of the man who had married Martha's only daughter, who, with her husband now was dead.

He presently stated the object of his visit. He had come to town from his ranch, wishing to take Jacky back with him. He and his wife would be glad to adopt the boy, he said.

"No, Butts," Martha replied, with a touch of asperity, "I shouldn't feel a bit relieved to be rid of Jacky."

"And I must stay to take care of Granny," chimed in the child, slipping his firm, pink hand into the wrinkled brown one.

Butts argued the matter awhile. He wanted the boy. Finally he went away, saying that he would not accept Martha's decision as final. He would be in town again for Thanksgiving.

That afternoon Martha went to the office of her lawyer, Mr. Crell.

Mr. Crell greeted her cordially. "I'm glad you called in today, Mrs. Brent," he said, giving her a chair. "I wanted to see you."

"No good news!" he said. "I've heard from Mr. Ford, but I'm sorry to be obliged to tell you that he writes he does not see much use of continuing your pension case. He cannot discover any one who knew Sergeant William Clay?"

James Brent had retaken his true name when he got his discharge from the army three years before his death, and came to live in this western town, and now it seemed impossible to prove that he and Sergeant Clay were the same man.

His widow mortgaged the home to Lawyer Ford, the pension attorney, who seeing no chance of winning the case demanded payment of the mortgage. Crell told of Ford's demands.

Martha started. She grew very white. She had a poor head for business matters, and she had not fully realized, when she mortgaged her property to meet the expenses of employing the Washington lawyer, that she must lose it if she did not get her pension. In the latter event the ten years' arrears due her would easily have paid up the mortgage.

"I hope we may be able to save the place some way," said Mr. Crell, observing her distress. "How about selling that land on the river?"

"Oh, sir, I cannot sell that; it—"

Martha, half extending the deed from under her shawl, drew it sharply back to her.

A fierce flood of terror set every nerve in her old body trembling. "What did you say, sir?" she asked, weakly. Mr. Crell explained that it would be wise to sell the land. "I'm sure your husband would approve," he said.

Martha rose from her chair abruptly. "Yes, I believe James would want me to sell it," she declared; "he'd want anything rather than Jacky and I'd be without a home!" She went away quickly.

Martha did not work well that afternoon. Here mind was distracted. She kept slipping her hand into her pocket to feel the deed. It's possession confused her actions.

Unable to stand the strain any longer she started to Crell's office to tell the story. But on the way she met Jacky returning from school.

"Come, you're tired. Let's hurry home," said Jacky. "Why, that's not the way home, Granny! You're starting uptown. See, it's well I came to fetch you. Take my shoulder; I'm pretty big now."

Martha's determination wilted weakly away. She went home with her boy. It was not until they were seated at supper that her sense of right put in a claim again.

"I've taken the second wrong step, and I've got to stop here!" She pulled herself up.

She knew that if the worst came to the worst she might go to the poor-house, and tried to persuade him to go to Butts.

Jacky's face clouded; he flung himself back in his chair.

"Now, Granny," he cried, with tears, "you're talking as though you wanted me to go and you said you didn't; you promised that I might always stay with you."

Martha's face fell from the wheedling expression it had assumed. She gave up the effort to persuade the child to wish to leave her as beyond her strength. She rose abruptly after a few minutes and walked to the stove. She lifted a lid and snatched the deed from her pocket.

"Why, what are you doing now?" Jacky asked, surprised at the nervous intensity of her actions.

Martha stopped herself snoring at his question.

"I was going to burn this paper, but maybe I'd better not," she muttered. She sat down again, quite spent from the day's perplexities. She did not coherently plan what she should do. She let matters drift for the next few days.

Then one morning Mr. Crell came to her house with a notary and a deed all drawn up for her to sign. He gave her the deed to sign. She trembled and before she could write her name the pen fell to the floor. She would not pick it up. "I won't sell the land," she said. "Let this place go if it will, and Jacky and I are going to live on the shack on the river land."

Nothing the perplexed lawyer could say would alter this decision, and at last he took the notary away.

However, sincerely desirous of saving the old woman from the consequences of what seemed a strange vagary, Mr. Crell came to her another day, saying that he had arranged by telegraph to postpone the time of paying the mortgage.

But Martha stubbornly refused to alter her plans. She put a little furniture into the two-roomed log shack on the river property, and moved there with Jacky.

"There won't be any crime in just borrowing the land while I live," she told herself.

One evening, when they had been in the shack some weeks, as he sat studying the depressed lines that had come into her face, an idea occurred to Jacky.

"Granny," he broke out, "the reason we're not very cheerful here is just because we haven't enough home-ables."

Then, as Martha caught her breath, she glanced at him sharply.

"We ought to have grandfather's medal hanging up as it was at the cottage," he explained. "You see, Granny, we're always so proud and happy when we look at it and remember what a brave soldier he was. It makes us wish to be all honorable and right ourselves. Why, Granny?"

Martha had suddenly dropped her face in her hands, and was swaying her poor old body to and fro.

"Jacky! Jacky!" she cried out, "Go get the medal, quickly!"

He flew for it, quite distracted at the remarkable effect of his words. He had merely repeated things she had often said to him.

Martha had controlled her agitation when he came back to her side after a few minutes. She was sitting up very straight and calm, and there was a brightness in her eyes, as if the spirit behind them was working strongly. Her mouth had dropped from the set look it had recently worn. It trembled slightly.

"Jacky," she said, "stand before me, my man. Jacky, you say that thinking of grandfather ought to make us brave and honorable. Do you mean it?"

"Oh, yes, Granny."

"And if he was ready to do his duty in his way, we must do ours in our way as bravely?"

"Ye-es, Granny."

"Then, Jacky, we shall. I'll do mine and you'll do yours, little lad, even though it's the hardest trial that could come for us to be parted."

The next morning Martha carried the deed to Mr. Crell and told him the story of how she had found it and of her resolve to restore the land to Willis.

"Oh, Mrs. Brent!" he exclaimed when he was through reading it, springing up to grasp her hand. "How glad we are you brought me this at last! You say you were not able to read all of it? Well, Frederick Willis



"HOW GLAD WE ARE."

was a soldier serving with your husband, and the land is left him in gratitude for once saving Brent's life. It is mentioned here that Brent served under the assumed name of Clay. Now all to do is to find Willis, and through him prove Brent's identity, and we shall get your pension!"

Thanksgiving Day when Stephen Butts drove in from his ranch, Martha was back in her cottage. He looked at her pleasantly as she opened the door for him.

"I haven't come to see you to let us have the boy, Martha," he said kindly. "Jenny said I shouldn't, since you're so set by each other."

He had his wagon loaded with pumpkins and butter and eggs and other good things produced on his ranch. He stored them away in Martha's chair.

"He shall direct thy paths," she murmured, with new fervor.



THANKSGIVING



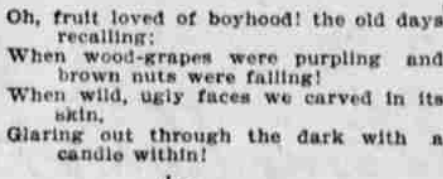
THE PUMPKIN.

Oh, greenly and fair in the lands of the sun,
The vines of the gourd and the rich melon run,
And the rock and the tree and the cottage unfold,
With broad leaves all greenness and blossoms all gold,
Like that which o'er Nineveh's prophet once grew,
While we waited to know that his warning was true,
And longed for the storm-cloud, and listened in vain
For the rush of the whirlwind and red fire-rain.

On the banks of the Xenli, the dark Spanish maiden
Comes up with the fruit of the tangled vine laden;
And the Creole of Cuba laughs out to behold
Through the orange leaves shining the broad spheres of gold;
Yet with dearer delight from his home in the north,
On the fields of his harvest the Yankee looks forth,
Where the crook-necks are coiling and yellow fruit shines,
And the sun of September melts down on his vines.

Ah! on Thanksgiving Day, when from east and from west,
From north and from south come the pilgrim and guest,
When the gray-haired New-Englander sees round his board
The old broken links of affection restored,
When the care-wearied man seeks his mother once more,
And the worn matron smiles where the girl smiled before,
What moistens the lip and what brightens the eye?
What calls back the past, like the rich pumpkin-pie?

Oh, fruit loved of boyhood! the old days recalling;
When wood-grapes were purpling and brown nuts were falling!
When wild, ugly faces we carved in its skin,
Glares out through the dark with a candle within!



THANKSGIVING AT ELMVILLE



The good people of the church at Elmville had decided that something must be done, and at once. The treasurer, a young man, who had recently come to the village, had made a financial statement that October Sunday morning, upon which certain persons felt very much scandalized. Such a thing had never been done before—not even thought of; then it revealed the fact that the Reverend Wesley Norwood had received but \$51.75 for six months of faithful service.

"I don't believe in bringing up such matters in the religious services of the church," growled Brother Cook, who always protested that it was a waste of money to pay the minister so much salary.

"I quite agree with you," responded Mr. Barnes. He was not a member of the church, but attended because it was a respectable thing to do—gave you standing. "If these things must come up every Sunday, I shall attend church elsewhere."

Notwithstanding this, it was generally agreed that it was a shame, and something must be done. But when things had gone in a haphazard way so long it was no easy matter to face right about. After several weeks of deliberation, the necessary something seemed as far from accomplishment as ever.

"It is too bad that they do not collect the pastor's salary," remarked Mrs. Hunter at the Ladies' Aid meeting. Who she meant by "they" was

not entirely clear, inasmuch as she was one of the officers.

"If no one else will do anything, we must," rejoined Mrs. Allen; the various members nodded approval.

It was soon planned. The pastor had received \$51.75; they would pay him \$98.25—make it even \$150—and have enough left in the treasury for incidental matters. On Thursday evening of next week, which was Thanksgiving, they would invite themselves to the parsonage, and have a



"WHAT SHALL WE DO?"

good time while making the pastor happy. It would be easy to prepare something extra while getting ready for Thanksgiving. It was to be a grand secret; not a soul but members of the society should know a word of it.

At the close of the business meeting of the Young People's League, the president made a close scrutiny to assure himself that all present were members; he then proposed that, as "They would not do anything," the League take up the matter.

"I understand that we have nearly sixty dollars in the treasury; we could pay the pastor \$48.50—bring the salary up to \$100—and have enough left to pay all bills and begin the new year out of debt. If we do this I suggest that we observe the utmost secrecy and make it a complete surprise." All readily agreed to the plan and pledged the proper reticence in the matter.

Four of the most faithful met after prayer meeting to discuss the situation, and decided that they must at once collect \$248.25, the balance necessary to pay the six months' salary due. This they proceeded to do so quietly that no one surmised a general canvass was being made. Before Sunday the entire amount was secured.

Friday, after school, the Junior League met and decided that inasmuch as the grown up folks would not help in the matter, they would do what they could; so they voted to pay over every bit there was in the treasury. Upon counting \$23.25 was found to be the correct amount.

"Oh, girls!" cried Lottie Newman, as she made some figures in the treasurer's book, "It will make just even \$75 and I hope we can get enough to make it a hundred."

After the choir had run over the Sunday hymns, someone proposed that they pay the proceeds of the last concert on the salary. The sum of \$30.25; after referring to the margin of his anthem book, the chorister reported that it would make \$82 all told. On Thanksgiving morning they would call at the parsonage and surprise the pastor with a check for this amount. Perhaps it would somewhat atone for the sin of whispering during the sermon.

Thanksgiving day was a trying time for the Norwoods. The baby was sick the night before and kept them awake; and when they did get to rest, they overslept. What with rushing to get breakfast over and make ready for the service at church, prayers were shortened and the chapter omitted altogether.

"Oh, Wesley, I am so tired! Everything has gone wrong today," said Mrs. Norwood that afternoon. "The children never were so naughty before. What will people say about Robbie fighting? The flour-barrel is empty, the potatoes are all gone, and we have not a thing in the house for breakfast, only bread and butter; and the grocer sent us word yesterday that we could not have another thing until we paid him. What shall we do?" After which lengthy and somewhat incoher-

ent speech, she laid her head on his shoulder and found refuge in tears.

"Never mind, Dear; the Lord will provide"; then he slowly added, as if in an afterthought, "some way."

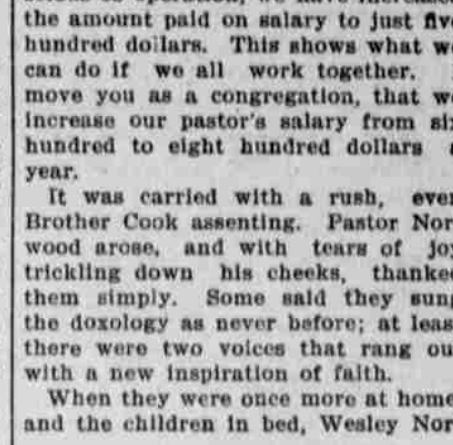
A few minutes later Pastor Norwood was bowing to the organist, who slipped a check in his hand and said properly, "With the compliments of the choir." Just as they were seated, the door bell rang again, and this time the Junior League marched en masse and the astonished minister stood speechless with a check in either hand. Then the older League came, and presently the Ladies' Aid, and last of all the trustees, all adding their offerings and crowding the small rooms. Each party looked stiffly askance at the others, wondering by what trickery their secret had become known.

After an hour of discourse and song, the treasurer arose and said:

"A few days since our pastor had received but a mere pittance for many months of faithful labor. While he had wrought earnestly for the church and its societies, so that, for the first time in years, all were in a prosperous condition, he unselfishly forgot his own needs. No, no! Brother Norwood, you must permit me to finish. Then one society and another, by some strange coincidence, conceived the thought of giving the pastor a pleasant Thanksgiving surprise. It is needless to say that we have surprised each other quite as well. But best of all, I find that in the few days of unconscious co-operation, we have increased the amount paid on salary to just five hundred dollars. This shows what we can do if we all work together. I move you as a congregation, that we increase our pastor's salary from six hundred to eight hundred dollars a year.

It was carried with a rush, even Brother Cook assenting. Pastor Norwood arose, and with tears of joy trickling down his cheeks, thanked them simply. Some said they sung the doxology as never before; at least there were two voices that rang out with a new inspiration of faith.

When they were once more at home, and the children in bed, Wesley Nor-



THEY READ TOGETHER.

wood again took his wife in his arms and opening his Bible at a place much marked and worn, they read together with the guileless faith of children, "And it shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."



Centuries Old.

Days of festival thanksgiving have been celebrated for many centuries. Under the old Mosaic law the Hebrews held an annual harvest festival under the trees and in tents of palm. The German Protestants have an annual "Harvest Home" festival, accompanied by religious services, and this custom was brought to America by the early Dutch immigrants.

Thanksgiving for us today is a time for rejoicing that life has been spared to us and that we have escaped many dangers, overcome many trials and enjoyed many pleasures during the last year. It is also a time when we should remember kindly those who have been less fortunate and should put forth some special effort to make them happier.