

The Home
Department

ONE THANKSGIVING DAY

By Helen Watts-McVey

The day is done, and as we are too tired to think, we take up our favorite paper, or live over again the "days that are dead;" and this dwelling upon memory's pictures has both its sad and its sunny side. This day, of all others, belongs to the family—home-gatherings, family reunions, meetings and greetings of friends, and feastings about the old home-board, amid the old home scenes from which the young feet went out into the restless world beyond, never to come back quite the same. They carried away with them something the world's warfare wrenched from them, and for which it has no recompense to bestow. Home was indeed home in those old days, when father and mother bore the burdens and buffetings of the rude old world for their children's sake, and the dear, scarred hearts grieved bitterly when at last the nurslings found their wings and flew away.

But at Thanksgiving time, the "children" come trooping back, and father and mother, grown dimmer-eyed, greet them with warm hearts, seeing little change, despite the troops of little folks the wanderers bring back with them from the world.

Are they all here? All the boys and girls that went away? The faded eyes glisten as they count the faces, gleaming down the row. No vacant chairs—in the stalwart men and graceful women, the old eyes see but the "children" of their love. Father wipes his spectacles, smiling still, and looks down the row to where "mother," lovely white-haired mother, sits behind the cups and saucers. To him she is unchanged. He has seen her every day, and she but grows dearer with the passing years. But the children: as you grow accustomed to their presence, you feel faintly that there is something wrong. You look at mother, and you see a wistful look in her patient eyes, and you know that she, too, is looking for something she does not see. At her right hands sits a bright-faced matron, whose fair hair recalls the golden curls of little Ella; but the quiet, sober face beneath it lacks the laughing dimples that Ella always carried, and the smile that lights up her face is little like the abandon of merriment that always hung about Ella's atmosphere. Yet, as she calls across the table to "Tom," she flashes her saucy eyes, and her graceful hands have the old, gleeful gestures. The voice has the same sweet ring, yet there is something plaintive in its cadences.

You look at "Tom," and the rich deep voice that answers is little like the high-keyed treble you listen for, and instead of the ruddy, boyish face of the memory-picture, you see a sober-eyed, serious man whose lips only smile—Tom used to laugh with his eyes. You look at him with a startled realization of his length of limb, and wonder whether he could get into the low-celled garret; or if he could lie comfortably, or sleep as dreamlessly in the low bed upstairs, from which he ran away one winter's morning, long ago. What has he done with his old, boyish appetite? How listlessly he handles his knife and fork, or nibbles at the cake mother made so much of "because Tom always liked it." And you see, too, that his hands are larger and

whiter; they were small and scrubby in the old days, and Tom never did take kindly to soap and water. He catches your eye and smiles—Yes, it is Tom; but there is something gone.

Tom lives in the city now, and controls a large manufacturing plant, and men count him a king in finances; but this morning he caught the dear, faded old mother in his arms and kissed her, just as he used to do in the old, old days.

A shrill, merry challenge pipes up from the pathway outside, and you turn to call Charlie; but it is only Charlie's boy, so like his old self, skurrying down the walk, with hands and mouth full of pantry stores and in full pursuit of the young rogue—is it mother? No, mother sits before you, smiling. It must be Fanny; but you had forgotten that Fanny was middle aged. And then you remember that Fanny has daughters of her own, and lives just over the ridge, and that her home is famed for its hearty hospitality and wholesome good cheer.

A soft, low voice recalls you, and you turn to the right, where a face bearing traces of some bitter sorrow, furrowed more by tears than by time, and framed in slightly frosted hair, smiles at you—a slow, quiet smile whose fountain seems away down in the depths of a chastened heart; and you wonder, for a moment, who is this patient-faced, sad-eyed woman who sits where you told them to seat little, curly-haired, laughing Loy. You loved her the best of all your brood, you thought, because so few could understand her varying moods. Then, suddenly you remember that, long ago, little Loy, with the saucy smile and swinging hair, went away from the old home, to follow an unkind fortune; and you remember to have heard that the sea of her life was torn by cruel storms and swept by wild winds, and that the sky was tempest-clouded, all the way. But she comes back to you, today, calm and strong and hopeful in a beautiful faith that smiles even through traces of tears. And you remember, too, that little Loy has won a name, and is claimed by a wide circle of friends who bless her because of the work she is doing, and that her home is far, far from the quiet place that gave her birth. But she speaks, and you know that she is only little Loy in heart, even though the brown curls lie in simple bands upon the calm, white forehead. But you wish she had not changed, for you loved her so as she was.

Big, bolsterous Ben—Ben, who used to have a voice like a foghorn, and from whose wild, harum-scarum ways every farm animal fled in terror, and who was always ready to "make things move;" who loved nothing better than the exercise of his strong limbs and steel muscles. But his heart was as big as his burly frame, and the restless boy has developed into a man whom men love and respect, and the world is better, because of Ben. Ben is quiet enough now, and deep down in his brooding eyes lies a fund of thought which ripens into big inventions, at times; and his voice is low and tender with a great love as he speaks to the old father and mother, and his big hands are never weary of lifting the slightest load from their bowed shoulders. Here is a letter with a faraway

postmark. You lift it wonderingly. Who is it from? You look around the table—every chair is filled; surely, none are absent! Then you realize that there are the new claimants upon your love that "the boys" have brought home with them, and you break the seal and read the greetings and regrets that Katie sends you—Katie, that was always "father's boy," and was forever at your heels, ready to help or to hinder, to coax a favor or commit a fault; but she was always so dear, and you missed her so, when she went away. She writes: "Somewhere, not far from you, dear old Daddie, the spirit of your 'Tom-boy' is hovering, and you must try to feel the touch of her wings on your dear old cheek."

Then, you realize that there was another. You look across the hills, and the voices are all hushed as you bend your head above your plate, your hands before your face to hide your tears. You know, and they know, that over there in the cemetery is a marble shaft, and upon its smooth face is inscribed the legend of little Lottie's life. A little sob shakes your breast, and somehow, you know without lifting your eyes that other eyes are full of tears at thought of the little daughter and playmate who left you long ago to follow the trail of the fairies, but somehow, never found the paths to Earth again. And you have missed her so!

It is but for a moment, and you must not sadden the home-coming of your nurslings with your tears for the gentle little soul that has slept so long, and you turn to those that are left you, feeling that "He doeth all things well." And when, bye-and-bye, the strangely-sobered children rise quietly, though with much gay badinage, from the table, leaving many choice dishes untasted, many choice morsels untouched, you follow their forms with wondering eyes, for they bear about them an atmosphere of distance and change which leaves your old heart strangely lonely and chill. And, somehow, you wonder what mother is waiting for—there seems nothing left.

But not for long. Here comes a wild rush of noise and laughter; a bolsterous, skurrying band, that pour, like wild things, into the vacant chairs. It is like old times. How they clamour and call for their favorite bits of turkey and thin slices of pink ham! Here are the appetites—here, the laughing eyes and tumbled curls! How the little gormands sweep everything before them—not always without a scramble and squabble, but—it is like old times, and you laugh till your sides ache at the antics of the little rioters. And when the last morsel is crowded into the puffy little cheeks, the last bone picked clean, the scramble for the last confection ended, the little, sticky fingers touch your own, the little greasy mouths kiss you, and sweet young voices shriek or coo their satisfaction, then rush away as they came—a whirlwind of fun and frolic, and leave you comforted, though with swelling hearts and silent lips. You feel something down in your throat, choking back the "God bless them" that you fain would utter; everything grows dim and misty through the tears that will blind your eyes, and you look at mother, and see that she, too, is

blinking back the tears, though bravely trying to smile. And you draw the dear old head down upon your shoulder and together sob out the thanks you both feel for this once-more gathering together of the children and the children's children about the home-board that has been silent so long, and you have so hungered for their coming.

AT EVENING TIME

Love, give me one of thy dear hands to hold,
Take thou my tired head upon thy breast;
Now sing to me that song we loved of old—
The low, sweet song about our little nest.
We knew the song before the nest was ours;
We sang the song when first the nest was found;
We loved the song in after, happier hours,
When peace came to us, and content profound.
Sing the old song to me, tonight, beloved,
While I, my head upon thy faithful breast,
See wonderous visions in the fair firelight,
And our whole hearts are satisfied with rest.
Better than all our one-time dreams of bliss
Are peace, content and rest secure as this.

What though we missed love's golden summer time?
His autumn fruits were ripe when we had leave
To enter joy's wide vineyard in our prime,
Good guerdon for our waiting to receive.
Love gave us no frail pledge of summer flowers,
But side by side we reaped the harvest fields;
Now, side by side we pass the winter hours,
And day by day new blessings are revealed.
The fever heat of youth, its restless glow,
Its high desires and cravings manifold,
Its wild delights, its victories and defeats,
Have passed; and we have truer joys to hold.
Sing, then, the dear old song about the nest—
So long withheld, and yet, so full of rest.

—Selected.

Salt-rising Bread

Under a separate heading, I give directions for making salt-rising bread, in accordance with the request of several readers. This bread requires great care, from start to finish, as it is much more uncertain of success than bread made with yeast. It requires to be made oftener as it dries out so quickly, and while "rising" gives out a very unpleasant odor. This odor is the result of acetous fer-

AN OLD AND WELL TRIED REMEDY
MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP for children
teething should always be used for children while
teething. It softens the gums, allays all pain, cures
wind colic and is the best remedy for diarrhoea.
Twenty-five cents a bottle.