A HARVEST CANTICLE.

WHAT IS bounty but love in the giver
That waits for no plea to bestow,
The evergreen boon of the river
To the fields that are blessed by its flow?
Does the light when the morning uncloses
Count the leagues of its flight to the plain?
Does the sky call the roll of the roses
That hold up their lips for its rain?

God is never at loss with His plenty,
And Nature, His handmaid, no more
Ripens sweets for the feast of the dainty
Than bread for the fare of the poor.
'Tis a loan with no burden thereafter,
'Tis a grace never measured nor weighed:
If the banquet turns weeping to laughter
The debt of the eater is paid.

O Goodness so grand in its doing!
Are there gluttons who starve at its board:
Craven souls, whose insatiable suing
Has poisoned the comforts they hoard,
Who, insane with the joy of receiving,
Are glad for no sake but their own,
Who are deaf to the song of thanksgiving
And tongueless to utter its tone?

Give us want, give us nothingness rather
Than this: better never be born
Than to harvest the fields of our Father
And leave Him unthanked for the corn.
The just wil pay measure for measure
And the selfish give love for a fee:
But they squander an infinite treasure
Who sin against love that is free.
—Theron Brown, in N. Y. Independent.

Miss Hannah's Thanksgiving

MISS HANNAH LITCHFIELD'S old, gray horse took his comfortable way along the mountain road that led from the church in the village by four miles of sandy incline up to his own slab barn. Miss Hannah, alone on the seat of her high buggy, gave an occasional flick with the whip, but in a meditative manner as though out of some inner mood.

They were having "an uncommon spell of weather" this fall, so the old men said. It was the Sunday before Thanksgiving, and yet the soft haze in the air, the quiet through which an occasional drifting of rustling leaf or overripe nut sounded softly, made it seem more like October than a late November day.

There was a faint whistle through the sere leaves of a small weedy cornfield she was passing. The shocks were leaning as though stacked by incompetent hands.

"Hope Seraph'll get her corn in before snow flies," Miss Hannah grumbled, hitting Tom so briskly as to surprise him into an effort at trotting. Then she turned her eyes resolutely away from the rickety house beyond, standing half way up a bare, stony hill, and the faded, sad-eyed woman in the door looked after her longingly, and lifted the corner of her apron to her face.

"Hannah ain't ever going to forgive me," she said, weakly, to her oldest, a sickly girl of 14.

"Why, what'd you do, ma?"

"It's mostly I guess what I didn't do," was the answer. "Hannah's dreadful smart, and she hain't no patience with those that ain't like her. Then your pa was sickly like you, and died, and she didn't like that; though I can't for the life of me see how he was to blame. He couldn't help it. But Hannah called him lazy. And we owe her, too, you know."

"Should think we did," broke in a boy of 12. "Don't we have to most kill ourselves every year picking berries to pay the old interest. Wait till I get to be a man and I'll pay off her $200; see if I don't."

"I guess you will, Benny," said his mother, admiringly. The boy's ambitions were a never-failing wonder to his mother and sister.

"Ma, did you know next Thursday is Thanksgiving day?" asked a younger boy.

"What difference does that make to us?" was the mother's weary rejoinder. "It's many a year since I've seen a Thanksgiving day. I guess the Lord's forgotten us, or else we're too bad for Him to care for. I don't know what we've done, for sure. Mebbe it's like Hannah. He hain't no patience with folks that's down and good for nothing. Anyway, He hain't thought of us in a good while."

Miss Hannah, going on her way, might have been shocked if she had heard these sentiments from the lips of her cousin Seraph. She always went to church, rain or shine, although old Capt. Skinner said "Miss Hannah could hear the greatest amount of sermons, and not one of them stick to her any more than water to a duck's back." Yet he would have been mistaken this time.

"There's no use talking," had been the sturdy words that had pricked through her armor of selfishness, "of keeping Thanksgiving unless you've got the Lord's love in your hearts, and let it run over, as He did, toward those around you. And you never can make a sure thing of it while you cherish an unforgiving feeling for a human soul, or hold back a hand that ought to be stretched for a human need. The Lord will never accept any halt or half-way sacrifice. Go to your knees, and then work to see what you can bring Him."

Now Miss Hannah had "kept Thanksgiving," as she said, for the 20 years that she had been left alone on the small, rocky, mountain farm. Every year this had been well tilled and cared for, and brought in sufficient for her moderate needs, and a little to place in the bank against the rainy day of old age and infirmities. For this she had sat down to her solitary board, where a stuffed rooster with cranberry sauce and vegetables and pumpkin and apple pie were spread, and gave thanks. She never thought of going further than herself. When her cousin Seraph, who had been the only companion of her lonely childhood, had married, against her express wish, "that shiftless Joe Parker," she simply "let her go her own way."

The neighbors called her "hard," and so she was. What was the matter today? She was growing old—56 last midsummer. Perhaps her mind was weakening.

She had never noticed before how lonely the small, weather-stained house looked as she turned in at her own gate. How would it seem to have a face smiling a welcome from the window—or some one watching at the door?

She "put up" Tom, made her cup of tea and ate her cold ham and bread, but it did not refresh her.

"That black rooster'll weigh seven pounds if he does an ounce," she remarked to herself, "and I suppose I'll have him; though what on earth, Hannah Litchfield, you're talking about keeping Thanksgiving for, I can't see. You haven't got a bit of it in your heart, and you know you haven't. You are a hard, lonesome old woman, and roosters, nor turkeys either, can't help that. You don't love anybody but yourself, and may the Lord help you! I'm a pretty halt and poor thing to offer, but I guess I'll have to give up, and let Him lead me awhile," she whispered softly with the fading shadows, and then came peace.

The next morning Miss Hannah was up betimes, and her small washing waved in the earliest breeze. That was nothing unusual, but the trip that she took with Tom, soon after, was more so. There was a smile as she passed the rickety house and weedy cornfield, but no stop until they reached the town poorhouse, standing bare and unshuttered, on its bleak hillside.

"I want you to go home with me, Cynthy Ann, and stay awhile," Miss Hannah said to a gentle, faded little woman who came stiffly to meet her. "Are you willing?"

"The Lord be praised!" was the answer given through tears. "He knew 'twas hard trusting Him in this place, so He's going to brighten it up for me."

"And you are not coming back again, not while I live," Miss Hannah said, as they wound their way among the hills. "You can't exactly be said to be a relative, though my grandfather's wife was your step-grandfather's sister. But it's been given to me to see that it's nigh enough relation for the Lord to find a duty in it. And, Cynthy Ann, now that I'm getting old and gray, I guess it's about time for me to be looking up my duties," she admitted, grimly.

That was all the confession Miss Hannah could be expected to make. Her nature would be one rather to do than to talk.

And all that day and the two following the small, tidy house witnessed such life and activity as it had not seen for many a year.

"It seems too good to be true," Cynthy Ann said that afternoon, as she sat by the window looking down the winding, stony road, placidly stoning raisins. "To be out of sound of Marm Becker's scolding, and a getting ready for a Thanksgiving dinner. I haven't seen one, no nor smelled one—and I think the smell's most as good as the eating, don't you, Hannah?—in 20 years."

"I've smelled them in that time," returned Miss Hannah shortly, "but that's as deep as it went, I guess. I mean to feel it this time."

"Let me pick that rooster, Hannah," Cynthy Ann said the next morning as the devoted bird took a hot water bath. "It's just what I'm fit for, a sittin' down job. And it makes me think of ma, more'n 50 years ago, and how she'd say: 'Now, Cynthy Ann, you may look out the pin feathers, and mind you don't leave one large enough for grandma's sharpest glasses to spy.' Ah, I knew what good times meant in those days!"

"Well, it does seem good, I must say," said Miss Hannah, setting the fowl and some old pans beside her companion, "to have somebody interested in what's going on and to speak a word back to you. It's dreadful lonesome when you say something bright not to have a soul to know it. Well now, you feather him, and I'll go right to stirring up mince meat and making those pies. They're better, I think, kept a few days, don't you? And I'll put on the cranberries and let 'em stew slow and all down to jelly. Some folks just cook 'em up like apple sass and leave it. Bah! 'Tain't fit to eat. Folks used to know how to cook, Cynthy Ann—at Thanksgiving time anyway."

Amid this unusual ripple of talk a small boy made his appearance, with wondering eyes, and nose tilted high as though to take up all the savory odors that filled the kitchen air.

"Oh, it's you, is it, Benny?" Miss Hannah said, peering over her glasses.

"AIN'T YOU GOING TO INVITE SERAPH AND HER FAMILY?"

"Yes'm," the boy returned promptly, holding out a grimy envelope. "Here, ma sent you your int'rest," and then his eyes wandered to the steaming pies just placed on the table, with a look that told how his boyish mouth watered for them.

Miss Hannah drew her second pair of glasses down from her forehead to their proper position, and, opening the envelope, counted the money.

"Three twos is six, and four ones and six make ten, and two silver ones make 12." Then she counted it over, beginning with the silver this time. "It's all right," she announced then, slipping the envelope into her pocket. "You can go now, and tell your ma so. Here, you can have an apple to eat on the way," and the boy with a scant "thank you," slowly backed out the door, beginning, however, a quick run as soon as he was outside the gate.

"Seraph'll hear all about it now," Miss Hannah said to herself.

But some way the work went on more quietly after this. The truth was, the timid little Cynthy Ann was making up her mind to the doing of a disagreeable duty.

"Hannah," she broke out at last, "ain't you going to invite Seraph and her family here to Thanksgiving? You and I can't ever eat all this stuff."

"I'm thinking of it, yes," was the answer that almost took her breath away.

"Oh, I knew it! I knew you would, Hannah! You're too good to hold spite longer."

"No, I ain't, not a bit; but I told you, didn't I, that the Lord was a leading me to see duties. I ain't no believer in signs and things, Cynthy Ann," Miss Hannah went on after a little, "but last Sunday, I'm free to tell you, I was troubled in my mind beyond anything I remember before, even when I was converted, and I asked the Lord for a sign; and then I put my finger in the Bible and opened it, and what I read was, in Deuteronomy, like this: that if there was a poor man among our brethren, or needy, we was to open our hand and to give to him. And now I don't dare do anything else, you see," and Miss Hannah really looked relieved at this "confession of faith."

"The Lord be praised!" ejaculated Cynthy Ann; it seemed to be a way of hers. "Have you invited them yet?"

"No," curtly.

"Oh! wouldn't they enjoy thinking of it, and kind of getting ready?" she urged, timidly.

"Cynthy Ann," and Miss Hannah spoke slowly, "I do not think best to make it too easy and pleasant. Sarah was a member, and she had no right to marry a man who wasn't. She must suffer for her sin still. I shall not invite her until Wednesday afternoon."

If we could imagine an "avenging angel," with thin, gray hair drawn into a tight pug, two pair of spectacles pushed high on forehead, and lips set close, Miss Hannah might have served for the character at that moment. But in spite of herself she grew gentler with every hour until Thanksgiving. One cannot cherish love in the heart without its showing, of course. It was like the asters Seraph's youngest girl brought, all the choicer for being so late.

For they all came, of course, shabby but clean—and hungry. "The four children really seemed hollow, clear to their boots," as Miss Hannah said afterward. But that was after she had had the pleasure of filling them up. Then when they had gone out into the soft Indian summer for a play, the three elders drew their chairs together, and talked, at first hesitantly, then more and more earnestly, drifting back to the days of their childhood and youth, when they, too, had dreamed and hoped and planned. And as they talked the tones grew softer, sometimes even tremulous.

"I should have prayed to die long ago," the sad-eyed mother said, "if it hadn't been for the children. I ain't of much use to them though. Nothing but an old string that holds them together."

"I am not even an old string," Miss Hannah said, "but Sereph, I'll join myself to you after this, and we'll tie together," and then some way, the two wrinkled hands came together in a long clasp; and then, presently, there was slipped from one to the other, the same grimy envelope Benny had brought.

"I never meant to keep it," Miss Hannah said. "Get a comfortable shawl, or shingles, or anything. And the note, Seraph; see; it won't ever trouble you any more," and lifting the stove lid, Miss Hannah laid on the coals a yellow paper, that both watched shrivel to ashes. "You see, Seraph, I'm bound to have one real Thanksgiving while I'm in the flesh; and ever since I asked the Lord about it, He seems to open the way wider and wider, till I 'most feel as though I should be a singer yet and a player of instruments, I'm getting so full. Cynthy Ann's going to stay, so I'll have a face looking out of the window for me, and that Ruth of yours must have some doctoring; and Benny's bright and will pay for schooling; and Sammy, too; and as for little Katy—well—she's just as cunning as need be. Think of her bringing me a bouquet. Out of her own head, too. Seraph, I guess you've seen your worst days. When the Lord really calls on Hannah Litchfield to help do a thing, she usually expects to hold up her end to the best of her ability. And she's going to now."

The voices dropped into silence. The short day was dying in the west in a flush of golden glory, through which the sun sent back his rosy promises of another perfect coming. The children came through the gate and up the walk.

"And I shall call her Aunt Hannah," little Katy was piping in her childish treble, "'cause she's just the sweetest lady I 'most ever see."

"Sweetest!" and Miss Hannah's lip curled scornfully, then gently softened into a smile. "Well, let her think so. The Lord and a little child may make her so yet. They have done many a miracle in this world."

The flush in the west deepened to purple, then faded into a somber gray. The mountain side was lost in shadows. The children, tired with play, dropped down on the broad door stone and talked softly. And within, three women, worn and weary in many a battle of life, sat close together, and each heart sent up a voice of thanksgiving for the gifts of Love the day had brought.—Howe Benning, in Chicago Advance.

Thanksgiving.

The treasures of the harvest time
Are heaped in goodly store;
Earth lays her tribute at our feet
In plenteousness once more.

The hearth is swept, the board is spread
For friends from far and near,
And loving hearts are hasting home,
Perhaps in many a year.

Oh, 'tis the true Thanksgiving time
When round the old hearthstone
We greet the loved of other days,
And clasp hands with our own!
—Elizabeth A. Davis, in Golden Days.

BATHING AND HEALTH.

Cleanliness Means Much More Than a White Skin.

If we have the authority of Scripture for the statement that cleanliness is next to godliness, and if godliness is a means to health, happiness, prosperity, long life and final salvation, we can readily understand the sentiment of the philosopher who uttered those true and comprehensive words. Cleanliness in its broadest sense means much more than the state produced by the free use of soap and water. In point of fact, soap and water, however lavishly used, may not constitute a genuine bath. Many persons rarely if ever get more than what the back country women calls "cat washes," or the "lick and the promise" that many a busy housemother frequently gives to her children. The surface of the body is covered with numberless pores that are in as urgent need of clearing out as are all other depositories for foreign matter. Whether it be the dust of the street, the smoke and grime of shop or factory, the unpalpable powder that is ground by restless feet out of carpets, mattings and wood floors, or the imperceptible dust of the atmosphere, matters little. The pores of the skin are filled with material that must be removed in some way if one would enjoy good health. To attempt to clear out these little cells by the use of soap and cold water is a hopeless undertaking. The cleansing process must come from within, and this can only be accomplished by starting the perspiration, which, accumulating in the tiny ducts back of the pores, force out the dust collected there. In view of the fact that cold has a tendency to close the pores, it is difficult to understand why some eminent authorities advocate only cold baths and seem incapable of giving any credit to the use of hot water. Of course there are differences in temperament, constitution and condition, and most persons who have reached years of discretion have been compelled to admit the truth of the adage: "What is one man's meat is another man's poison." There are undoubtedly many people who are greatly benefited by the use of cold water—indeed, no one questions its value as a remedial agent. But as a bath agent and cleanser it is most valuable when used after hot water. The Turkish bath is the ideal means for cleansing not only the outer covering of the body, but also the entire system. There are many diseases that are greatly relieved or entirely cured by inducing profuse perspiration. Scientists tell us that it is an easy matter for the experienced bacteriologists to diagnose a case by examining the perspiration. The disease germs pour out of the skin and are by the expert as readily recognized as any other living creatures. For perfect health and the very best hygienic conditions a bath as hot as can be taken with comfort should be indulged in at least twice a week. Plenty of fine toilet soap and a section of Turkish toweling, or what is much better a piece of a Japanese gourd, should be used freely. These gourds, which are fibrous and spongy, are sold at the druggists and are the best wash rags in existence. The individual should remain in the hot bath until the sensation of being "completely cooked through" is experienced. The first indication of the time to stop comes in the shape of a fullness and beating in the throat. As soon as this is felt, open the outlet in the bath tub and turn on cold water through a pipe attached to a sprinkler. Use this shower bath until the surface of skin is comfortably cool and a reaction takes place. Then wrap the entire body in a thick bath robe and take half an hour's sleep if possible. The slumber which follows such treatment is most refreshing. Those who have studied bathing for many years acknowledge that this is unquestionably the best method of bathing.—N. Y. Ledger.

Apple Suet Pudding.

Chop very fine one quarter pound of beef suet; slice into the chopping bowl four sour apples. Chop through once or twice and shake over a little flour. Stir with a silver knife and mix all together. Put one teaspoon baking powder and a little salt into a cup of flour. Break one egg into the bowl with the apples and suet. Sift in the flour and moisten with milk. If the apples are very sour add a teaspoonful of sugar with the flour. Make the batter quite thick. Pour into a well greased steamer and steam three hours. Sauce one-half cup butter, two thirds cup sugar. Cream together, and, when the sugar is dissolved, add the white of one egg. Beat hard and add one-half teaspoon of vanilla. Set on ice, and, when serving the pudding, put one spoonful on each slice of hot pudding. This is our favorite pudding, and is the nicest I ever make.—Boston Globe.

Proper Tea Pouring.

There is an etiquette of tea-pouring which is strictly observed by our English cousins. The first cups are offered to the older guests and guests of honor—since these first cups are weakest, while the latter brews are considered less palatable, and are served to the children. However, we Americans prefer frankly asking each guest whether the liquid is liked strong or weak—which is the simpler and better plan, since to many feminine the first cup is decidedly "washy" and a real affliction.—Leisure Hours.

—Endless leather belts, acting as moving staircases, convey the patrons of a large Parisan store from one floor to another.