A BAD EVENING.

Somerville Journal.

The rain beats on the window pane,
The wind, with sob and moan,
Makes the night mournful, as I sit
Here by my fire—alone.

I cannot read—my novel lies
Unnoticed on my knee.
Into the dying fire I gaze
In lonely reverie.

The night winds sob and moan without,
The firelight's fitful gleam
Casts mocking shadows all about—
As in some horrid dream.

* * * * * * *

The fire is dead. With sudden start
I wake, weary and sick at soul
To think I haven't paid the bill
For that last cannel coal.

HER HUSBAND'S MOTHER.

A Thanksgiving Story.

Eva Best in the Detroit Free Press:

"And what do you call this, Mrs. Van Hamm?"

"H—h—hash, Leonard."

"O, 'h—h—hash,' is it? Of all the vile concoctions—take it away!"

"But I thought only to be e—e—economical—"

"You thought only to poison your husband with food not fit for beasts! Take it away, will you?"

Into the savory compound half a dozen bright tears fall as Mrs. Van Hamm carries the dish out into the kitchen. A great lump swells in her throat, a great weight tugs at her heart-strings, and, though the room grows dim with the briny mists in her tired eyes, she knows 'twill never do to let them fall until her lord and master is out of the house.

And once he is gone—once the front door has banged its wooden oath back at her—she throws herself upon the chintz-covered lounge and cries, and cries, and cries! O, that she were dead—that she had died before she ever saw the handsome face of Leonard Van Hamm! If only Madeline Waters had succeeded in capturing him—if only she had! Somehow, after a while, the thought of that possible might-have-been begins to interest her mightily; and what with her own sunny nature and the queer pictures her fancy draws, she actually begins to grow amused, and the pretty, woe-begone lips take upon themselves curves of an upward tendency!

She is so sweet tempered—so gentle; so full of life's gladness and the poet's tender appreciation of all earthly beauty, seeing in it but a reflex of that more heavenly loveliness that shall come with the perfection of self, that be he, her husband, never so unkind or inconsiderate, she can always, after he has left the house, throw off the gloom with which he has surrounded her so continually of late.

When they were lovers—so short a while ago it is in reality—so long ago in seeming, no smallest hint of what was to come to her after the honeymoon had showed itself. She knows now that his real affection is unchanged—that did any great danger assail her his heart would respond to hers as quickly and as warmly as of yore. But over all this hidden loyalty there has grown an ugly crust of selfishness that transforms his fine face in her eyes and makes his presence little less than a torment to her. Though she tries, nothing that she can do seems to please him. She has had little experience to be sure—very little. The eldest daughter of wealthy, indulgent parents, who thought that to give her mental culture were enough—who looked not to the woman's life as wife and mother that she must afterward lead, but to the brilliant social position in which they placed her, and joyed to see her shine therein like a facetted diamond. Out of this bright world Van Hamm had taken her, out of the clash and clatter of social circles, right home, at once, to the house he had furnished for her in a distant city.

All went smoothly enough at first. There was a round of delightful evenings at home, when she busied herself with something she called drawn work and he read the evening papers, or some entertaining magazine, aloud, both occupations often interrupted during the earlier changes of that quickly waning moon by fond expressions and caresses innumerable. But gradually the gibbous planet brought a chilling atmosphere with its dimmed radiance, and now it had come to pass—the dark of the honeymoon being upon them—that fretful expressions, fault-finding, aye, and even worse things than these were filling he erst happy horizon. If only Madeline Waters had captured him.

One hour later the postman came fetching a letter that makes her earlier worries seem as naught. Leonard's mother, whom she had seen but once and that for one little hour at their wedding, is coming—Leonard's mother is coming to spend Thanksgiving with them—Leonard's mother. The words ring in her ears. And not only will she spend the national holiday with her son and daughter-in-law, but she will come two weeks before—in fact, as the daughter-in-law realizes with a quick glance at the missive in her hand, by the date mentioned, she will arrive that very day.

And Leonard's mother comes. Comes with a noisy clamor that seems to mean a sort of usurpation of all rights reserved by the daughter-in-law. But she kisses her maternal relative-in-law, and allows herself to be hugged an ejaculated over, and never once does the smile she puts on a mask, slip from her features.

"Well, Leslie, dear, here I am. Received my letter, did you? And how's Leonard?"

"He is well, mother; quite well."

"As much in love as ever, I suppose—or is he?"

"I must leave you to decide from appearances, mother. Sit here, please, before the fire—it's quite sharp and frosty out here this morning."

"Thank you, Leslie; will Leonard be at home for dinner?"

"Oh, yes, indeed. And now if you will excuse me, mother, I will go and see about it."

"Keep a hired girl, of course?"

"Well, n-o, not just at present. You see Leonard thinks that for just two a servant is a bit of extravagance——"

"What, Leonard turned economist—my son Leonard?"

"Does it really surprise you? Oh, yes, indeed; he has grown quite economical of late."

"Oh, has he? Humph! Well, go along, Leslie, but you must let me follow you. I am more at home in the kitchen than in the parlor any day."

Oh, if she wouldn't—if she only wouldn't! But she does, and, somehow, before Leslie knows just how it comes about, Mrs. Van Hamm, sr. is quartering apples for sauce, peeling potatoes and deftly doing all the little things that lie in her helpful way towards getting dinner. She is standing behind the kitchen door wiping her hands on a long white roller towel when her son enters the side door leading into the dining room where Leslie is busied about the table.

"What in the name of all that is confounded is that front door locked for? Didn't I tell you never to lock it so that I couldn't undo it with my night key? Are you losing your senses Mrs. Van Hamm, or——"

"Leonard!"

"Mother!"

"Aren't you surprised, Len?" With hands outstretched and a gracious ignoring of the harsh words accorded Leslie the mother goes forward to meet her son. Leonard, kissing her hastily, crimsons a little guiltily at remembrance of what she makes no sign of having overheard."

"Well, Leonard, I thought I'd surprise you—and I'm sure, now, that I've succeeded. It's a long journey from home here, but, as I'd never visited you, I made the effort to come, and I shall stay until after Thanksgiving. You've much to give thanks for, Leonard, much."

"Glad you think so, mother, and it's a real treat to see you. Leslie, ain't dinner ready, yet?"

"Y—yes, Leonard—that is—nearly."

The hesitating, half-frightened voice of the young wife catches the mother-in-law's ear. It tells her a story that she grieves to hear—a story that she feared to hear from the very beginning; but a story of the truth of which, nevertheless, she has traveled many miles to learn.

"Dinner is ready, Leonard. Come, mother."

"At last? Well, I am glad to hear it. Sit here, mother; and if you can find anything fit to eat I shall be delightfully surprised. Leslie's no cook, you know."

"So I preceive," says Mrs. Van Hamm, the elder.

"Leslie, are you never going to learn that I like my steak well done? Just look at that mother—it's absolutely sickening."

"I thought you seemed in a hurry, Leonard, and so—so—"

"So you gave us a little suggestion of a butcher's shop, did you? Pah!"

"I will cook it a little longer if you like, Leonard—"

"Do, if you expect me to eat it."

"Yes, Leslie," adds Leonard's mother, "and I myself couldn't touch the stuff, really, while it is in that state. For goodness sake cook it until it is *done* next time!"

Red-faced and confused the young wife goes hurriedly kitchenward with the beefsteak. For Leonard to taunt her has ever been bad enough; but for his mother, whom she hardly knew, to so openly, so impolitely chide her—Heaven pity her if horror were to be added to horror—the Ossa of her grief piled upon the Pelion of her despair!

"Much to be thankful for, did you say, mother?" she heard her husband say as the meat hissed once more above the embers. "Well, I'll leave that for you to discover. How in this world a woman can live and not know how to cook, beats me!"

"She can't know everything, Len. And I suppose her folks thought music, dancing and literary accomplishments would stand her in good stead," answers her husband's mother.

"'Music, dancing, literary accomplishments'—fiddlesticks! Is music going to make a pie? Is dancing going to cook a roast?" This she hears through the hissing of angry juices as they fall upon the now dying embers.

Dancing! How with his arm about her—with the sobbing sound of the dreamy waltz-music wrapping them in its melodious, impalpable folds, he had, time and again, breathed into her happy ear, "Oh, Leslie, my love, my darling, to go through life with you thus would be—heaven!"

"And I can never express my wishes—never say a simple word but she weeps—it's exasperating! If ever—hullo! There you are—it's done this time, I hope!"

"Give me just a very small piece, Leonard. Meat's never worth a picayune if it's done over—thanks!"

"You're right, mother; but what's the matter?"

"This apple-sauce. Did you forget the sugar, Leslie?"

"No, mother, I didn't forget it; but Leonard says I waste so much sugar when I try to sweeten——"

"I never said to leave it so tart that it twists a person's tongue into knots, did I? There's reason in everything, Mrs. Van Hamm! I'd thank you to pass mother the sugar-bowl."

"No, thank you, Leslie, don't trouble yourself. Unless the sugar is cooked in with the sauce it never tastes right." This with a shoving to one side of the portion dished up for Mrs. Van Hamm, senior.

"Got anything to drink, Leslie? Tea, coffee, chocolate—anything?"

"Why, n-no, Leonard. You said that at dinner we were never to have hot drinks——"

"When we were alone, I meant. Yes, I know I did, but mother's here now—a fact that seems to have escaped you—and why upon earth you didn't think to be a little polite and make her a cup of tea passes my comprehension. You always drink a cup of tea at dinner, mother, don't you?"

"I never enjoy a meal without it. No, thank you—no pie. I never eat a pie I don't make myself. Leonard, do you remember the mince pie I used to make for you to take to school?"

"Remember them? Well, I should say so! Those were pies! Not watery, soggy articles such as these. Do you think, mother, do you honestly think you could teach Leslie how you manufacture such delectable viands?"

"Well, my son, it depends. You see Leslie's bringing up was so different from mine. Her scales were on the piano—mine on fish; and the quill she used to write with would never teach her to cook the goose it came from. But I'll try—I'll try."

"There's your chance, Leslie, seize it! And may I never have to swallow such diabolical messes as I have swallowed since Bridget—"

A choking noise stops his utterance and puts a sudden end to his mealy harangue, while the flight of his wife from the dining room is enough to arrest his selfish train of thought. Has she gone mad? Or what upon earth can the foolish woman mean? Can't she allow a fellow to talk—simply talk!

"Well, good-bye, mother, I'm off. You'll soon see how much I have to be thankful for—ha-ha!"

"Good-bye, Leonard, my son."

"See you again at supper. Tell Leslie, please, she must try to get along with less gas—that last bill's a frightful one. Let her use candles if she has to have a light—these dark days fairly eat up money." And lighting an expensive cigar Mr. Van Hamm goes up town.

When the man of the house is fairly gone, Mrs. Van Hamm, the elder, seeking high and low, finds Mrs. Van Hamm, the younger, in her little sewing room up stairs lost in a perfect paroxysm of grief.

"Leslie!"

"I—I—I'm here! And if ever I was glad I was anywhere it is that I am here!" sinking down beside her sobbing daughter-in-law, who is crouched in one corner of the little sofa.

"Are—are—are you?" sobs Leslie, politely.

"Yes, I am. And so will you be, too, my dear! It's just as I feared—he's his father over again!"

"Who's father over again?" weeps the young wife.

"Leonard's."

"In—in—deed!" she wails.

"Yes, indeed. But leave him to me—leave him to me!"

"Ye—yes, ma'am!"

"Leslie, dear, that man worships you—he loves you with his whole heart and soul—O, I know him! But he has allowed the rank weeds of selfishness, watered by your tears, to so hedge him in that he has lost sight of the sunshine of love and is content to stay in the shadow of his own self-complacent egotism!"

"M—m—mother!"

"Cry all the harder if you want to at this truth I'm telling you—it will only do you good if it rids you of the last briny drop. Leslie, I was somewhat severe upon you at dinner time—perhaps you noticed it—yes? Well, that isn't anything to what I'm going to be. There—there, don't look frightened! My dear daughter, there's a certain bull I'm going to take by the horns, if you will permit me—a terrible animal, ferocious and cruel, and one that gains strength with age. You didn't know your mother-in-law was so skilled a matador, did you, or that she was an adept in throwing banderrilleros?"

"What do you mean, mother?"

"It's a secret. A sham battle would deceive an onlooker; but the shots fired, though they seem disastrous, make no wounds. I shall fire volley after volley at you, Leslie—nay, listen, girl—and, although the sound be something appalling, there will be no bullets to hurt you. I shall spare you nothing—my words shall seem to cut like knives—my tongue be sharper than a sword. But be brave through it all, remembering thrice armed is she who hath her quarrel just; and, looking beyond the noisy din of battle, watch for the rising of the sun of peace that shall set only at the ending of your own life's day!"

At supper Leonard is not allowed the usual luxury of finding fault at his pleasure; his mother is ahead of him. Does he but direct his attention this way or that, everything his eye falls upon critically is, by his watchful parent, hauled over the coals—from biscuits to canned fruit, from wafers to jelly. The tea is too strong, the milk too blue, the butter old, the cheese rank. Even the creased tablecloth is condemned, the big napkins ridiculed, the very arrangement of the tea service censured. Leslie's bringing up is again laid upon the tapis, picked relentlessly to pieces and finished off with vinegar sauce. Each time Leonard opens his mouth, his mother also opens hers, and her tongue, being a feminine one, wins every race, from starting point to finish, and the son, at last, perforce sits, for the first time during his short married life, with nothing to do but to listen silently to rhodomontades that bid fair to throw his most elaborate efforts in the shade.

For a whole week this goes on—the fault finding, the bitter taunts, the rancorous gibing and by the week's end Leonard has verily come to find himself an Othello with his occupation gone. He even begins to look curiously at Leslie, who throws strange, inexplicable glances towards his mother, but who stands the belaboring so calmly and well that he grows to respect her courageous dignity and wish that his mother, though certainly in the right, wouldn't be quite so hard on her.

By the middle of next week he has grown absolutely restive, and looks at his maternal relative with eyes in which insurrection seems ready to set alight the dangerous fires of rebellion. Leslie—poor, patient, gentle little Leslie—how can she stand it all so silently? He has been a bit harsh and fault-finding himself of late—but never so malicious, malevolent or vindictive as is his mother! Positively he is ashamed of her ill-treatment of his wife—his poor Leslie! How can his mother expects so much of her? What if she were brought up differently from other common mortals—cooks, seamstresses and the like? She, his wife, could write poems—tender bits of verse that touched one's finer sensibilities and play with the technique of a master! That is, at least, she could, once: now, how could we expect such things from the drudge his own mother seemed to expect her to become? What did his mother know, anyhow—his mother that was brought up on a farm and went to school in a log school-house—of things occult, mysterious and soul-inspiring, or of the brain and world from which his Leslie came? Did she expect that he would be satisfied to see his wife turn herself into a slave without one thought above the pantry? By heaven, there should be an end to all this—and at once!

"This is about the dozenth time I've warned you, Leslie," hears Leonard as he comes down to breakfast next morning, "to make one loaf of bread last three meals; it's pure extravagance, wastefulness, that will come to want on your part. I'll admit that baker's bread is no good any way you put it, and you are just paying out good hard cash for tasteless dough and air-holes; but as you don't know enough to make bread white people can eat I suppose you'll just go on until you land my son in a poor house! I'll never try to teach you to make bread again—not by a good deal! I'm annoyed to death by your dullness! If ever a woman was perplexed, harassed, vexed and tormented, trying to teach her son's wife the first meaning of the word economy, I'm that woman. If ever—"

"Mother!"

"Good morning, Leonard. Don't interrupt me, please. When first I offered to try to teach Leslie here, to manage her house and cook a decent meal, I little reckoned on the miserable material I was to wear my very life out upon! Why any one who loves to eat as you do, Leonard, should have married so complete an ignoramus—don't glare at me, boy!—so complete an ignoramus!—a girl who knows how to finger a polka or compose a jugling rhyme better than she does the composition of porterhouse rolls or a veal omelet—why, I say, you should have been hoodwinked into marrying Leslie Gwynn when there was Jane Judkins crazy to take you—Jane Judkins, who not only took first premium at the county fair for her head-cheese and gingerbread, but who inherited old Judkins' farm beside——"

"Mother!"

"And who would have never given you cause to open your mouth concerning breakfast, luncheon, dinner or supper for the rest of your natural existence—"

"Mother, stop! If Jane Judkins—confound her—were the last woman alive I'd not look at her twice! What—compare her—that raw-boned, sandy-headed, red-faced, loud-voiced creature to my Leslie? And, mother, though it may be all very well to harangue and go on at a certain rate, it appears to me that of late you have been pitching it pretty strong. It is true Leslie hasn't had the same sort of education you have—"

"The same sort I have had?—hump! I should think not, indeed—bless my soul and body—no!"

"But with all that I don't see that it's necessarily to her disadvantage—"

"You don't? Leslie, stop your bawling! If there's anything I do hate to see it's a grown up woman bawl! Leave the room!"

"My wife, stay where you are!"

Leslie, softly crying, touched by the unwonted tenderness shown her by her husband, stands looking with tear-dimmed eyes from one to the other of her marital relatives. Leonard's eyes blaze with defiant anger, while his mother's gleam quizzically upon his wrathful countenance. There is a long silence between the three occupants of the little breakfast room, and at its end the man slowly turns toward his now hysterical wife, and, stooping, places a kiss upon her tremulous lips. In another moment he is gone.

"It has come—it has come at last! That last scourging did it, Leslie—and I only wonder that my tongue didn't wither at the roots! Why, daughter, dear, how hysterical you are—you are shaking like an aspen! Is it possible that one little kind speech and action from that doty son of mine can so effect you? If this little stray beam upset you how, then can you stand the full rays of the glorious son of happiness?"

The last Thursday of November dawns mistily and softly. A hazy sun climbs the gray ladder of dawn, and the whole atmosphere is pervaded with savory odors that hint of a coming feast. A gigantic turkey is turning from gold to richest prown in the Van Hamm oven. Mother Van Hamm, in white cap and apron, is acting high priestess, and Leslie, soberly smiling, flies hither and thither at every command. And when the noon bells chime, and the noon whistles blow, and a certain young man comes hurriedly home from his office, whither he has gone for his mail an hour since, he finds the great fowl promptly placed upon the table, the tiny bell set ringing its silvery summons to dinner, and the ladies of his household each standing behind her chair in the dining-room.

"Why, Leslie, dear, how prompt you are! Bless me, what a famous turkey—who cooked it?"

"Both of us. My son, this is Thanksgiving; have you any special thing to give thanks for?"

"I have, mother—for my wife. Leslie, dear Leslie, I am more than satisfied with you in every way; more than thankful that you are my wife, even though mother thinks—"

"That she is the dearest, sweetest, truest, loveliest, best little wife in all the world. Forgive your old mother's play acting, my boy; but you had to be made to see your own good fortune—that of unconsciously possessing an angel. Yes, it is all true, Leonard; and now allow me to answer the question I read in your questioning eyes. I took the reins, my son, and showed you at what a reckless pace you were driving—and I stopped you, I believe, just this side of the awful abyss already so filled with the wrecked happiness of many another misdirected, married pair. And now, with your eyes opened at last, to the golden sunshine of a perfect, unselfish love, lift up your voice, my son, and give thanks this day unto heaven!"

The coal mining industries of Trinidad, Colo., are something really wonderful. The mines are what are commonly called the "side-hill mines" so frequently found in Pennsylvania and other mountain mining regions. There are three veins of coal, the upper one seven to twelve feet thick, and so easily mined that the miners at 50c per ton frequently make to exceed $100 per month. The leading operator there said the time was likely to come when coal would be put aboard the car at Trinidad at 75 cents per ton, and leave a handsome profit to the mine operator For full information address Trinidad Land and Improvement Co., Trinidad, Colo.

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Several papers of Paris have published that Dr. Laugardierre of Toulouse had, at different times, experimented with success with a new treatment of sure efficiency for the cure of that terrible disease, the croup, says the Paris Temps. The new treatment consists in the use of sulphur. Dr. Laugardierre narrates thus his first experiment:

"I called for some sulphur powder; took a tablespoonful of it which I diluted in a glass of water, ordering to drink one tablespoonful of the mixture every hour, shaking it before using. Next day he child was better. New potion for the next day. The following day the child was cured. The only thing left was a loose cough which I attributed to the false membranes circulating in the tracheal artery. Asking the parents to save them for me in case the child should expectorate them, two days after a sudden fit of coughing expelled them, and three dried-up pieces the size of a large bean were brought to me."

After that cure the doctor obtained several others, but none more convincing than the following:

"A little girl was dying; neither cry nor the least sound could come from her larynx; the pimples of diphtheria were on her ears, neck, head and cheeks; her wheezing breathing could be heard at twenty meters off.

"The doctor had secured a tube to insufflate nitrate of silver into the larynx. The parents opposed that, but consented to make the child swallow the sulphurated potion during the night.

"On the next day the child, which I had considered as lost, was resuscitated—the voice was restored, the potion was continued during that day, and the next the child was cured."

The communication of Dr. Laugardierre is of too much importance to not be the subject of a serious and immediate examination, and it is for the academy of medicine to order such.

Among the many articles acceptable as gifts none is more appropriate than cut glass. Dorflinger's American Cut Glass is by far the best. Their trade-mark label is on every piece. Your dealer should be able to show it to you.

Two Editorial Sanctums.

Mr. Gilder's sanctum is the handsomest in New York, in fact, altogether æsthetic. It has an open fire-place, brass andirons, with rugs, hangings, draperies, and pictures in the highest style of art, says the Epoch. It is full of greens at Christmas, of flowers at Easter. In it Mr. Gilder is altogether charming. His wife is much more substantial looking than he is. She is a cousin of Mrs. Grover Cleveland, hence the intimacy between the two families. Mrs. Gilder is also much given to art, and spends much time at the brush, especially in summer, when she is at Marion, Mass., where her husband has built for her a studio of big granite blocks, which is said to be the most unique in America.

Harper's Magazine is certainly no whit behind the Century in gifts or grace, but there is a mighty difference in the editorial environments, Mr. Alden's tiny room has no semblance of ornament—in fact it is crammed and cluttered with books and papers to such a degree that even the occupant is sometimes put to it to bestow himself, much less the casual visitor. There is as great a contrast in the appearance of the editors as in the offices.

Mr. Alden has one of those strong, impressive, magnetic personalities whose influence clings and haunts you, and whose most casual sayings have a trick of coming up freighted with new meaning in each new turn of affairs. He is an ideal talker. His voice is full of charm, the words and matter such as to make attentive the dullest ear. Mr. Alden lives with his family at Metuchen, N. J., and is reckoned by the inhabitants of that good village their proudest possessor.

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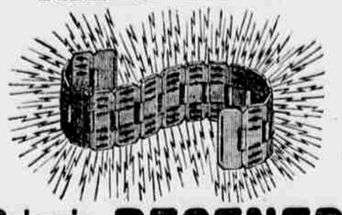

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