

## A COUNTRY THANKSGIVING.

Oh, good man, close the great barn door:  
The mellow harvest time is o'er!  
The earth has given her treasures meet  
Of golden corn and herded wheat.  
You, and your neighbors well have  
wrought,  
And of the summer's bounty caught;  
Won from her smiles and from her tears  
Much goods, perhaps, for many years  
You come a tribute now to pay—  
The bells proclaim Thanksgiving Day.  
Well have you sown, well have you  
reaped,  
And of the riches you have heaped.  
You think, perhaps, that you will give  
A part, that others, too, may live.  
But if such argument you use,  
Your niggard bounty I refuse.  
No gifts you on the altar lay  
In any sense are given away.  
Lightnings from Heaven a voice abroad:  
"Who helps God's poor doth lend the  
lord."  
What is your wealth? H'd have to know  
To have it, you must let it go.  
Think you the hand by Heaven struck  
cold  
Will yet have power to clutch its gold?  
Shrouds have no pockets, do they say?  
Behold, I show you then the way:  
Wait not till death shall shut the door,  
But send your cargoes on before.  
Let be that giveth of his hoard  
To help God's poor doth lend the Lord.  
To-day, my brethren—do not wait;  
Yonder stands Dame Kelly's gate  
And would you build a mansion fair  
In Heaven, send your lumber there.  
Each stick that on her wood-pile lies  
May raise a dome beyond the skies;  
You step the rents within her walls,  
And yonder rise your marble halls;  
For every pane that stops the wind  
There shineth one with jasper lined.  
Your wealth is gone, your form lies cold,  
But in the city paved with gold.  
Your hoard is held in hands Divine,  
It bears a name that marks it thine.  
Behold the bargain ye have made;  
With usury the debt is paid.  
No moth doth eat, no thieves do steal,  
No suffering heart doth envy feel.  
Ring out the words: Who of his hoard  
Doth help God's poor doth lend the Lord!  
Go get your cargoes under way;  
The bells ring out Thanksgiving Day!

## A Memorable Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving week was always a busy week at the Gates homestead, but it seemed to Dear that it was busier this year than ever. She couldn't quite understand it, either, for as they were coming home from church on Sunday she heard her mother say to Aunt Margaret, with a little break in her voice, that she had "no heart for Thanksgiving this year." Dear knew why, and she thought they would have a sorrowful Thanksgiving, or, perhaps, no Thanksgiving at all.  
But Tuesday morning there could be no doubt that they were to have Thanksgiving this year, for there was what Tiptop called a "bonfire" made in the great brick oven in the kitchen, which since Dear's remembrance, was opened and heated only during Thanksgiving week. Tiptop mounted a chair so that he could see into the oven, and shouted "Fire!" and danced in ecstasy till, forgetting that he had on a chair-bottom for a floor, he danced off, and bruised his nose, and had to be comforted by Dear just when she was so busy seeding raisins.  
Roundtop and Squarotop counted it a great privilege to bring in the long sticks of hickory wood to heat the oven, each holding an end, tugging it along with great gravity, and an occasional fall on their tocs, and if they were allowed to thrust a small stick into the oven, their satisfaction was complete. Dear paused, as her hurried trips through the kitchen, to look into the blazing depths and think of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.  
Then they all stood around to see the coals drawn out and the oven swept; and when their mother, holding her hand far in to test the temperature, solemnly declared it was "just right," they watched breathlessly while the loaf-cake and spice-cake and cookies were carefully put in, and breathed a deep sigh of relief when the oven door closed upon the good things committed to its keeping.  
Wednesday morning the oven was heated again, and filled with nince pies, which came out so delightfully brown and so deliciously fragrant that the Gates children grew desperately hungry, and thought Thanksgiving would never come. And then such pumpkin pies, an apple pie, and tarts, and at last, as the evening drew on, great batches of brown bread and rye bread and wheat bread filled the oven to the door.  
When the chicken-pie and turkey were ready for the next day, the tired mother dropped into the low rocking chair, and taking Tiptop on her lap looked wearily into the fire.  
"Let me hold Tiptop, mamma," said Dear, thinking how tired her mother

was; but her mother made answer only by holding Tiptop with a closer arm. The children gathered around as the twilight came on, and sitting there waited for their father to come. Gradually silence fell upon them all, broken only by the subdued roaring of the fire in the stove, and the loud ticking of the clock on the mantel-shelf.

As Dear listened, how vividly came back that sorrowful night when she stood and heard the clock ticking louder and louder, as Tiny gently breathed her life away; and it seemed to Dear that she would never again hear the clock ticking in the night without thinking of that scene. She glanced at her mother, and did not wonder that she had no heart for Thanksgiving this year. Indeed, she thought they all had more cause for complaint than Thanksgiving.

Half-blinded by tears, she started up, and, going to the window, looked out. It was a frosty starlight night. There was no snow on the ground, but here and there patches of ice were forming over the pools of still water left by the heavy fall rains.  
"Why don't papa come?" said Tiptop, fretfully.  
"He will come soon," said the mother, soothingly, and in obedience to an old habit, began absent-mindedly humming Greenville, the one tune she knew, and by whose aid she had year after year hummed the Gates babies to sleep.

"Is papa at the shop?" asked Dear, in the first lull in the humming.  
"No; he went down to the cotton-mill with a load of bobbins, and he ought to be here by this time."  
"May I go a little way and meet him?" asked Dear.  
"Yes," remembering that Dear had been in the house all day—"only first light a candle and make the tea, and put more wood in the stove, and bring me Tiptop's night-dress, and untie the boys' shoes, and wear your hood and don't be gone long."

Dear had closed the outside door, ready to start on a run, when she heard old Fan's whiny in the direction of the barn. "Papa has come, and is unharmed," Fan thought she, feeling a little disappointed that she could not meet him and ride home. Instead she turned to the barn.  
At the stable door stood old Fan, steaming as if she were having a vapor-bath. "Papa had a load home," thought Dear as she went up to pat Fan. But what was that she stepped on? A thill? Yes, a broken thill, still hanging to the harness. Starled, Dear glanced around the yard. The wagon was not there, and now she saw that only a part of the harness was on the horse, and that was trailing on the ground.

Before this feeling in her heart had time to take shape, Dear opened the stable door and let Fan in, and, carefully closing the door, ran for the street. The road over the hill lay like three narrow foot-paths, with straight ridges of turf between, and along these narrow paths Dear sped with flying feet, straining her eyes to see she dared not blink a bat.

At the brow of the hill she paused and looked down. The road wound like a brook down the long hill-side, turning to the right and to the left, with here and there steep pitches and many bars, till it was lost in the darkness far down toward the valley. As far as her eyes could reach there was nothing unusual to be seen; but at her feet lay a broken harness strap. Up that road Fan had come, and down that road Dear must go. On and on, over bars and pitches, scarcely touching the ground, loose stones hit by her feet flying before her, till, suddenly, halfway down the steepest pitch, she came to a place in the road where the stones and the gravel had been plowed up as if by the plunging of a horse.

Here lay the wagon-seat. A little farther on lay two or three planks across the road, and at the foot of the steep pitch lay, on its side, a wrecked lumber wagon, which had run backward till it capsized; and across the steep gutter by the roadside lay a load of planks which had slipped from the wagon as it went over. Here was a part of the broken reins, belonging to the harness with the ends under the load of plank. The wagon was her father's? Dear knew that; but where was her father? She stood and looked on either side, up the hill and down into the valley. Nothing moved; there was not even wind enough to bend the tall dead grasses by the roadside, and no sound was to be heard in all the still night but the gurgling and babbling of the little brooks that had gullied deep channels in the water-ways on either side of the road. Dear could bear this silence no longer.

"Papa, papa, where are you?" and the wild cry went up the hill-side and down into the valley bringing no answer.  
"O papa, what shall I do?" she called again, and as she listened with straining ears, she heard, or thought she heard, a low moan near her. She dropped on her knees. "Papa, papa, are you here?" It was a prayer now! Surely she heard a sound as if in answer and it seemed to come from the plank that had slid over the gutter.  
In an instant Dear was over there, peering among the planks. She could see nothing but she could hear a sound plainly now. She tried with frantic haste to raise the planks, but there was not strength enough in her small arms for that, and almost without thought she darted, not up the hill to her mother, but down into the black valley at the foot of the hill, where a cart-path leading from the woods intersected the road. Along this dark path, overgrown with alders, she went till she came to a low shanty built between two trees, and, bursting open the door, she cried:  
"O Biddy McCoy! come quick something dreadful has happened on the hill."  
"What is yer sayin'?" said the startled Biddy, starting from her seat, but as Dear was already out of doors, she added, snatching the action to the words: "Here, Bridget, take the baby, and you Mike, to a stupid boy by the fire, and get yer lantern an' a come-along; and get yer waiting to put anything on her head she followed Dear.

The child was already out of sight but Biddy went on at a sounding gallop till she came to the foot of the hill. There

she saw the small figure lying before her and beckoning her on.

"Shure, ah! something dreadful has happened," said the breathless Biddy, crossing herself as she came up to the wrecked wagon. "Is any one hurt?" as Dear called her to help.

"I'm afraid—I'm afraid there's some one under the planks," gasped Dear, trying single-handed to lift the load.

"Here gurl, that's no way to warrak, tak' the top one first. Mike, ye lazy sowl, get along wid yer lantern!" and her voice went down the hillside like the blast of a trumpet, starting even the slow Mike into a run.  
"There, hould that," said she, handing the lantern to Dear, and with Biddy's stout arms at one end and Mike's at the other, the planks were flung over into the road. Dear held her breath, and before the planks were all off they could see that a man lay there stretched in the bed of the gutter. The planks were over him like a roof, or the cover of a box, and, when the last one was off, Dear saw her father's face, still and white, but she could not utter a sound.

"Howly Mother, help us," ejaculated Biddy. "Take his feet, Mike, and help get him out of the water. He'll be drowned intirely if he's no kit already." For as he lay damping up the narrow channel, the cooked water had risen and spread around him in an ever-rising pool.

As they took him up and laid him down in the road, the motion seemed to rouse him to life, for Biddy, stooping over him with the lantern, saw his eyes suddenly open. He looked about him in a bewildered way, and then clutched at the reins that were still in his hands, shouting: "Whoa, Fan, whoa!" Then he slowly raised himself on his elbow, and seeing the planks scattered about him muttered: "Why! she's got away."

"Are ye much hurted, sur?" asked Biddy, concernedly, taking his arm as if she would help him to his feet.

"I don't know, I'm cold," said he slowly.

"An' well ye might be livin' in all that water," and she told them how they found him lying in the gutter, with the planks over him, but not on him, and the water around him.

"Is that y, Dear? and has the horse gone home?" asked he after a moment, seeing the little, shaking figure beside him.

"Yes, para," and all at once the convulsions subsided beyond her control, and she fell on her knees, quite unable to say or do anything but sob.  
The sight and the sound of her sobs did more than anything else to restore her father to himself. With Biddy's help he slowly rose from the ground, and, after standing a moment, he said, steadily: "I believe I am all right, only cold and a little confused. The fall must have stunned me, but for your help, my good woman, I should have been a dead man soon."

"It was yer little girl tould us. We shouldn't have known."  
He held his hand to Dear, and she caught it and held it under her chin, till unable to speak.

"Do ye think ye could, walk sur? Ye've no right to be standin' here wid yer wet clothes."

Thus admonished they began to move, Biddy and Mike and the "lantern," went with them to the top of the hill. By that time Harvey Gates had obtained full possession of himself, and he bade Biddy good-night, telling her he would see her on the morrow.

"Now, Dear," said he, "run home and tell yer mother quietly, that the wagon broke down, but that I am all right and will be in directly."

It was not until near noon the next day, when Dear broke into an irrepresible fit of sobbing, that her mother knew how near death had been to them that night. She turned very white and after a moment said: "Children, we have great reason to be thankful to-day."

A little later Harvey Gates came in. He had been down with Luke to get the planks out of the road and to see Biddy McCoy. He told a pitiful story of the poverty in the little shanty. "There will be no Thanksgiving supper there to-day," he said. Mrs. Gates winced a little. She was a thrifty woman, and it was not easy for her to understand the blessedness of giving. "And such a baby, such a little rite of a baby!" continued Harvey Gates, as if speaking to himself.

"A baby?" repeated Mrs. Gates, pausing on her way to the oven; "did you say Biddy had a baby?"

"Yes, and the poor little things looks half-starved."

"Mamma," said Dear, eagerly, "why can't we have them all up here to Thanksgiving supper? we've got enough for them."  
Harvey Gates glanced at his wife. After a moment's hesitation she said: "Yes, they can come, I suppose, if there ain't more'n forty or fifty of 'em," and she opened the oven door, and basted the turkey with energy. "Harvey," she called, as she heard him going toward the door, "told Biddy to bring the baby; and here, you take that tickshaw in the entry to wrap it up warm."

And so the McCoy's had the grandest Thanksgiving supper of their lives; and no more thankful company gathered in New England that day, the Gates family feeling very tender over their escape from a great calamity.—Josephine R. Baker, in S. S. Times.

The Garfield farm, near Watertown, Codington county, Dak., was run over by a prairie fire, destroying twenty-three stacks of wheat; 125 tons of hay; 400 bushels of barley; all of the farm machinery, including a threshing machine; barns, stable, and granary; seven cows; three horses; Durham bull valued at \$400; one cow, four calves; 4,500 bushels of oats, and 400 bushels threshed wheat. Total loss, \$5,000 to \$6,000; insurance, \$3,500.

A Phillips Exeter Academy student boasts that he boards himself on seven cents a day. Somebody should watch that gentleman's health, or the neighboring chicken-roosts.

Maine has 21,000 miles of wilderness, and the whole state of Massachusetts could be set down in the middle of them and not be able to find its way out.

## TAKE HEART.

All day the stormy wind has blown  
From off the dark and briny sea;  
No bird has past the window flown,  
The only song has been the moan  
The wind made in the willow tree.

This is the summer's burial time:  
She died when dropped the earliest leaves.  
And cold upon her rosy prima  
Fell down the autumn's frosty rime—  
Yet I am not as one that grieves.

For well I know on sunny seas  
The blue-bird waits for sunny skies;  
And at the root of forest trees  
The mayflowers sleep in fragrant ease,  
And violets hide their azure eyes.

O thou, by winds of grief o'erblown  
Besides some golden summer's bair,  
Take heart!—thy birds are only flown,  
Thy blossoms sleeping, tearful mourn,  
To greet thee in the summer year.

## RICH OR POOR.

"So you've come back again, Jerome?" said old Mr. Sewell. "Well, we heard you was thinkin' of returnin' to Elm Mountain. Bad pennies always come back—ha! ha! ha! And you did not make such a big fortune as you calculated, eh?"

Jerome Clay leaned over the old zig-zag rail fence and rubbed his eyes. Had time stood still all these years while he had been in the South? For here was Farmer Sewell in the same old blue-checked overalls, with the same battered straw hat, the same wrinkles between his brows, driving the same old red cows home through the twilight lane, where the scent of trampled sparmint came up, and the melancholy notes of a whippoorwill sounded faintly on the purple silence.

And yet—and yet it was twenty odd years since he had left Elm Mountain, with all his worldly goods balanced in a bundle on his back. He had been a dashing lad of twenty-one, then; there were silver hairs in his black locks, now, and he lay a dead past buried under the sweet magnolia groves. And here was Moses Sewell, just the same as ever, only a trifle yellower and more dried up.

"Yes," Clay said, quietly, "I've come back. And you are right when you say that fortune's don't grow on every bush."

"Goin' to your uncle's house?" said Mr. Sewell, leaning over the bars. "He's dead and buried, poor fellow. Always had a weak chest you know. And the girls ain't no younger. The three old maids we call 'em—ha, ha, ha, ha!"

And again the old farmer chuckled himself into a state of semi-suffocation.

"Come in and see us," said he. "My daughter Aurilla," she's come back a widow and does tailorn' and plain sewin'."

The old woman's stone deaf but she's dreadfully quick at catchin' a person's meaning!"

And off he trudged over the patches of sweet smelling sparmint, his broad figure vanishing into the gloom like a shadow.

"Three old maids, eh?" repeated Jerome Clay to himself. "Clara and Bess, and little Kate, the golden-haired beauty, the soft eyed poetess, the wild little sprite who was a mixture of Andromeda and Queen Mab. Then, surely, Father Time has not atood still!"

The light shone out, as of old, from the red-curtained casement, the great fire of logs was blazing on the hearth, and the three cousins greeted the returned wanderer with unaffected warmth.

They were changed, of course. What else could have been expected? The beauty had grown sharp and freckled and her lovely hair had lost its burriness, and she was not quite as tidy as she used to be in the old days about her ribbons and frills. Soft-eyed Bessie's sweet voice had degenerated into a whine; she had grown round-shouldered and lost one of her front teeth; and little Kate was a stout, middle-aged woman, who reminded one of Umine no more.

But they were cousins still—the girls who had played and romped and flirted with him in due arithmetical progression. And therestill existed a bond of steadfast friendship, and he told them the story of the Southern wife who had been buried for five years under the manolias, and they all sympathized and beauty even cried a little.

"I have brought my three children to the North," he said. "I left them in New York, and if I can get some acquaintance, whose-souled woman to take charge of my home, I'm thinking of settling here in Elm Mountain. Clara, dear, you used to be fond of me in the old times! What do you say to undertaking the charge?"

The beauty seemed to grow smaller, sharper, more business-like, in a second; if cousin Jerome had come home a millionaire, she would have jumped into his arms.

But Clara Neely was not romantically inclined. To her, love in a cottage possessed no charms.

"I couldn't Jerome," she answered, quickly. "I'm not very strong, and I couldn't assume any responsibility of an arduous nature. Besides, I'm not fond of children. I'm greatly obliged to you, I'm sure, but I'd rather not."

Jerome Clay bit his lip.  
"Of course," he said, "it is for you to decide. But if Jessie—"

The poetess shrugged her shoulders, and laughed a light, shrill-sounding consultation.  
"Cousin Jerome," said she, "it's just as well to be frank about these matters. I wouldn't marry a poor man—not if I had enough to scrape along as we do here, with only half what one requires to live on decently. But to plunge into poverty, with two or three children belonging to another woman no, I thank you."

For time as may easily be perceived, had eliminated a great deal of poetical element from Bessie Neely's soul.  
The gamban Upsilon did not wait for the question, as far as she was concerned but added, promptly, that she quite agreed with her sister in all these matters.

where you were welloff, Jerome," said she, in the pitying, patronizing manner which your genuine man most abhors. "Dear pa, you know, always disapproved of your going south. And you might have got the situation of agent to the White Castle Place, at eight hundred a year, and a cottage found, if you'd only been here on the spot. Pa used to know the old agent, and could have recommended you!"

Jerome smiled.  
"White Castle?" said he. "That's the big house on the hill, where we children used to peep at the roses and white grapes through the glass sides of the great greenhouse. A grand place, as I remember it."

"And the position of agent is most responsible, and highly considered," broke in Bessie.

Jerome Clay went away feeling rather depressed.

It is not the lot of every man to be thrice rejected in one evening.

"They think I am a failure in life," said he, half smiling, half sighing. "Well, perhaps they are not wrong. People's ideas differ."

Aurilla Haven, the old farmer's daughter, had been a wild hoyden of a schoolgirl when Jerome Clay went south. She was a silent pale woman of three and thirty now, who did the "tailorless" work of the neighborhood, and had hard work to get along.

But her dark brown eyes lighted up when Mr. Clay spoke of his far-off home and her cheek glowed scarlet when Mr. Sewell chuckled out:

"So the three old maids wouldn't have nothing to say to you? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do you blame them?" said Jerome.

"Well, no," confessed the old man.

"Gals naturally want to better themselves nowadays. If you'd come back with your pockets full of gold, they'd sing a different song, you'd see."

Aurilla looked pitying at Jerome Clay. She, too, had found life a failure, and in her quiet way did all that she could to comfort the tall, quiet man, who had hired the spare chamber in her father's house for a few weeks, since his cousins had altogether omitted to invite him as their guest at the old place.

She was not pretty—never had been—but she had a sweet, oval face, with fringed eyes, and a mild, wistful expression, which Jerome Clay liked.

And one day she spoke out what was in her heart.

"Mr. Clay," she said, "I can't help thinking of those poor, little, motherless children of yours. If you bring them here, I'll take care of them. I always liked children, and it shall ease you nothing. Father will let me have the big north bed room for a nursery, and their board won't signify. They can go to the public school, and I'll make their clothes, if you'll buy the material."

"Aurilla, you are a genuine woman!" said Mr. Clay, earnestly. "None of my cousins have spoken to me like this."

"Perhaps—perhaps they didn't think of it!" faltered Aurilla.

"Possibly," dryly remarked Mr. Clay. "But, Aurilla," gently retaining her hand, "is it of my children only that you think? Have you no tender, pitying feeling—the sweet sensation that is akin to love, you know—for me? Aurilla, will you be my wife?"

And Aurilla did not refuse.  
"Now that you have promised to marry me," said Jerome Clay, "I will tell you all my plans, Aurilla. I have bought a house here—"

"Here, Jerome?"

"Yes, here. Will you come with me to look at it?"

"I will go wherever you wish, Jerome," said the bride-elect, in a sort of innocent bewilderment.

Mr. Clay put her into a little carriage at the door, and drove her up the mountain-side, through the huge, stone gateway of White Castle, to the velvet lawns in front of the colonnade. I portico, where statues of Ceres and Proserpina stood in dazzling marble on either side, and an antique sundial marked the golden footsteps of the God of Day.

"It's a beautiful place!" said Aurilla, he answered quietly, "it is our home."

"You mean to tell me, dear," cried the delighted widow, "that you've been fortunate enough to receive the agency? I thought Mr. Wright—"

"Mr. Wright is the agent still," said Clay.

"What I mean is that I have bought White Castle and its ground. This fine old house is to be your home henceforward, Aurilla."

"But, Jerome, I thought you were a poor man?"

"Did I ever tell you so?" he laughingly retorted. "Did I ever tell anyone so? If the good people in Elm Mountain choose to believe me a pauper, is it fair to hold me responsible for their rash consciousness? No, Aurilla! In money, I am rich—rich beyond my wildest aspirations. But when first I came to Elm Mountain, I believed myself bankrupt, indeed, in the sweet coin of love and human kindness. Sweetheart, it is so with me now. It was your hand that unlocked the gate of happiness to me; it shall be your hand that is to reap the rich reward."

He bent, and kissed her forehead tenderly.