### TRULY THANKFUL.

## A THANKSGIVING STORY.

BY A. E. LANCASTER.

Written for The Evening Telegraph.

L.-One Account. Mrs. Scraunel, who keeps house for father and me, often amuses us by her innocently profane quotations of Scripture. Only this morning. when father was out visiting some of the poorer families in the villages who used to be his parisbloners before he grew too feeble for constant work, and I took his place-only this morning Mrs. Scrannel came into my study where I was writing my sermon, and, seeing Alice seated near me, looking so happy, exclaimed, clasping her hands together:-

"Ab! it's a true saring, Mrs. Mavecick, what the Scripture says, them as sew the whirlwind shall reap life everlasting,"

Then she darted out again without another word, and improvised a dinner herself, though it's my belief that she had come for the purpose of receiving orders.

Yes, Alice and I are happy, though the storm through which we became so was very dread fut for us both. Without endeavoring to reconcile Mrs. Scrappel's somewhat incompatible statements that we have sowed the whirlwind and are now reaping life everiasting as the proper and legitimate consequence, I am sure that the trouble that engulled us during the week in which we were to have been marriedcan never become painless in recollection.

Before ever I noticed the change which transformed Alice Bleaberry from a listless, meditative girl into a thoughtful, serious one, I used to wonder at myself that I had reached the age of thirty and never been in love. Now, I have long ceased to wonder; for that I should ever meet with another nature that would so perfeetly dovetail with all the juttings and promontories, the bays, nooks, and alcove of my own, stands before me as an impossibility.

So it happened that one Sunday noon, as I walked home with father from church, the image of Alice Bleaberry became fixed in my mind, as an image standing apart from all others. In due time I made known to her my feelings, they seemed good in her eyes, and we became engaged. With the story of that time I have nothing to do; my story is with the events immediately succeeding it.

One week before our intended wedding Mrs. Scannel came running to me with the ennouncement that a servant had come from the Bleaberries with the intelligence that Alice had been suddenly taken ill, and was not expected to live, adding, as a conglomeration of texts remarkably applicable to the occasion, "My son, if sinners entice thee, go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every people.' Understanding Mrs. Scannel perfectly well, and feeling that this was merely meant for an assurance on her part that the danger was imminent, I went as hastily as I could to the place where Alice Bleaberry and her uncle lived.

It was too late, The last sigh had been breathed a few minutes before I entered.

Alice's uncle, her only relative, with whom she had lived alone ever since she was a child, was seated in one corner, surrounded by a few sympathizing neighbors. For the last few months the old man's mind had been thought to be gradually departing. For nearly fifty years nest the sexton of the church where my father used to preach, he still insisted on retaining the functions of that office, although the small fortune that had lately been left him by a decayed branch of the family enabled him to keep a servant, and like wise made it possible for him to dispense with active service.

For the past few months his irrends, I say, had believed that his mind was giving away. The facts on which this belief rested were that much of his time was spent in seclusion over the invention of a complicated piece of mechanism, to which reference at length will be made elsewhere. Of all the beings that surrounded him. Alice was the ouly one who sym' pathized with old Mr. Bleaberry in this hopby. embraced so late in life and cherished with a pertinacity which should naturally have been a characteristic of younger years. Perhaps this pertinacity was less wonderful, however, when it is considered that the mechanism referred to was intimately connected with the duties of sextor, which he had so faithfully transacted for

To return to Alice, however. The truth which poor Mrs. Scannel had meant to convey in her distorted quotations was only too apparent. All the known tests for death were applied in vain. No trace of life remained in her. The circumstances of her seizure were very singular. She had been suffering from no previous disease. Her health had been unusually even and good. Suddenly, upon the very morning in which I had been summoned, she had been 'attacked with a faintness and giddiness, to which rapidly succeeded that sickish, vacant feeling in the bosom that always brings in remembrance to those that once experience it the idea of death. This state did not last loug. Within half an hour from the first premonition of the attack she had breathed her last, without being able to utter one word to those around her.

I will not attempt by a single word to describe my emotions as I bent over her remains. Words have been used for such descriptions ever since time commenced, and they have been used in vain. Enough to say that hope had died as instantly out of my soul as treath had died out

of her body. It was just one week before Thanksgiving Day of that year when Alice Bleaberry died, and consequently four days before Thankgiving Day when we buried her. The many-mooded climate of the United States had been in one of its happiest and brightest phases, and so continued for the rest of the week.

Well, we buried her in Bleaberry church, the prettiest church in all Tinsdale village. I ought to have mentioned, that, although Silas Bleaberry held no more distinguished office than that of a sexton, he was descended from one of the oldest families of that community-a family which gave its name not only to the church of which I am the minister, but to a dozen other

localities in and around the village. At the hour of burial, in deference to the great age, the great sorrows, and the suspected monomania (innocent as it was) of Sexton Bleaberry, we had to humor him in what we then considered his whim, and a gravely-grotesque whim at

occupied the old man's felsure for so many | was a line from the beginning, and, verily, | shorter, yet is their strength renewed like the | months, and almost brought apon him the charge of laxity in his duties. A further mention of this will be made it the handwriting that is to follow my portion of the task.

I have tried thus far to make a plain statement of facts without more than a passing glance at the private emotion which even now seems to clog my pen at the formation of every word.

Thunksgiving day came, and in my grief I asked myself really what I had to be thankful for, and my spirit was so bowed down in the excess of selfish grief that my old father took for the hour his long varated place and preached was like leaven in the lumpish hearts of the poorer sort of villagers. After the sermon there was a marriage of one of the village boys to one of the village girls-a rough-and-ready couple who stood before the altar with the phlegm of its being an every-day affair to them.

Ah! that was to have been my marriage day too, and my bride was in her tomb, dressed in the very dress she was to have worn, with the orange blossoms on her head and the long veil

shrouding her form. So, when my father, addressing the congregaflon present, said, speaking of the newly-wedded couple before him, "I pronounce that they are man and wite, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, I and I remembered the words of the blessing which wound up that marriage solemnity, I could bear no more, but stepped from the chancel over the the little chapel beyond.

And there ----But a hand here laid upon my arm reminds me that my portion of this story is done, and that most of the rest will be related by a ponnumbler and more delicate than mine.

#### II .- Another Account,

The thing that I find it most difficult to forgive in my husband, Lester Maverick, even after this lapse of time, is that he too should have joined the villagers, or at least not have thwarted them in saying that my poor uncle Silas was little better than a monomaniac.

He was nothing of the kind, as events have since proved. I suppose I ought to take up the story at the point where Lester left off, but the truth is that, after commencing some dozen times, and trying to state events in a preconceived and regular order, I find that the only way to make progress is to jot down occurrences in the order in which they naturally present themselves.

To begin, ther, Uncle Silas was never monomaniac. He had been sexton for half a century, and his sextonship had led him into peculiar ways of thinking; and it was better that his originality should crop out in the form it did so late in life than never at all. When the last member of the last branch of the family died out, excepting him and me, and he discovered that we were all that were left to each other in the world, in the way of blood relationship, it was natural that he should employ his remaining years in working out an iden that bad occupied him the greater part of his life, and had, indeed, been suggested to him by his every-day business.

What that idea was, so mechanical, so unique, and so original in the invention to which it gave birth, I find that Uncle Silas prefers telling himself. I shall therefore say nothing more about it, except to add that Uncle Silas makes it a condition that I shall copy out his manuscript. and correct such spelling, punctuation, and orthography as may need it. That task I accept, and now prepare to relate the only romance that has ever interrupted the quietness of my

One week before the Thanksgiving day on which I was to be wedded to Lester Maverick I died.

There is no doubt about it. I heard all the friends and neighbors, who had been hastily summoned, say so; and since no sense but the sense of hearing was left, it was not difficult for me to persuade myself that I was at least in the first stage of death.

But I remember before the attack came on how baimily beautiful the moraing was, like a summer day returned, like a beautiful day dead and its spirit wandering in the midst of us.

Had I been doing anything to cause this sudden illness, and still more sudden death?

For a long time after I came to life again I answered to myself, no. Then it slowly came to me that in reality I had secretly and silently borne a great grief on my mind for months past. and had not let even Lester share it. That grief was Uncle Silas' suspected monomania; with a perpetual assurance to myself that it could not be true of him, and a perpetual endeavor, through the grace of God, to shield him from ever hearing the dreadful things that were said about him.

Night after night, hours after I had been in ted, I heard the old man in his workshop below, which looked out upon the graveyard of Bleaberry Church-old Bleaberry Caurch which my grandfather built-I heard my uncle sawicg, bammering, planing, and I knew what he was about. But I knew also that any of the villagers who happened to be out late could see his lamp shining through the chinks of the shutter that shut out of the view of the graveyard by night, and would repeat (with all the "malice" which they prayed against on bended knees on Sunday) the dreadfat gossip they had set afloat about a benevoltn and innocent old man. Had we been living in the times of the Massachusetts witches we should have been

burned as sorcerers. Perhaps it was all these things preying secretly on my mind for so long a time that calminated in one fatal stroke. I was attending to some of the usual household work, when suddenly a faint feeling broke over me as though my lungs had been suddenly exhausted of their air. I tried in vain to rise and call for help. In making the endeavor the faint feeling broke over me with a tenfold strength, which caused me to fall back insensible in my chair,

The sense of hearing was the only sense that recovered itself, and even that was faint. But among the twenty voices near me the only two I cared to distinguish were those of Lester and

my uncle, and those I heard until the last. I have been informed since that, owing to the extreme suddenness and unaccountability of my attack, every known mode of ascertaining to a certainty whether death had taken place or not was applied. The result of all these was to prove that I was dead, and I heard Mrs. Scannel say, with all the unction of a believer who thinks he has got a Scripture passage nice and thinks well of me, for the last time she saw me pat-I heard her say, "Blessed is them as that. It had relation to the strange piece of dies in the Lord, for they flee away like score years and ten, and if, by reason of always mechanism stready twice referred to, which had a bird to the mountain; but the Devil takin care of yourself, they be longer or

their works do follow him." The amount of consolution Mrs. Scannel intended to convey in this passage is beyond calculation. As for me, all emotion seemed to have left me with my breath, and to have dropped into a condition of indifferent aequiescence. I know now how lov ngly my hands were chafed, and by whom, and what gentle touches and kisses were laid upon my eyes and lips and forehead. But at the time the sense of touch was gone. With the exception of faint perception through the ears, my body had no more feeling than the dank air through which you pass your hand.

A celebrated physician was telegraphed for one of his stirring, old-fashioned sermons that , from Philadelphia, but he almost laughed over my corpse, and pished and pshawed at my uncle and Lester while he crushed the twenty dollafee in his hand.

Was it a trance I was in? I never knew. If so, it is unlike all other traness I have ever heard of. Once I met a clergyman, one of Lester's school friends, who had, years ago, been buried alive. When the last shovel-full had been thrown in, his gonded nature, gitted with a momentary super-strength, burst the iron walls of catalepsy, and announced itself in one shrill shrick which thrilled to the marrow every mourner present. Ever since his rescue, that man has borne about with him the face of a Lazarus come to life again, the uncarthly face of a being who has passed beyond the boundaries of this life, and all but overtrod those of another world. But it is not so with me. My face is as natural as ever. My uncle threshold of the little side door that led into Lester, Mrs. Scrannel all tell me' so. In leed, it was only to-day that Mrs. Scrannel said to me, in the language of compliment, "Blessed are they that are married and given in marriage. for their eyes shall stand out with fatness and be like the angels in beaven."

Yes, unaccountable though it be, the condition into which I had fallen was that of serene and indifferent acquiescence. That faint sense of hearing, my only hold on life beyond that blind working of my intellectual and spiritual nature, which the withdrawal of my senses was so speedily shutting up in insurmountable walls. informed me that the preparations for my funeral were being completed. I heard, in constantly dwindling accents, the reading of the sermen for the dead, the screwing down of the coffin lid, the ratiling of the hearse, the letting down of my body to the grave, the striking of the first clod above me, like the tap of a skeleton upon the breast. With that sound the last of my senses left me. My whole being collapsed and shut up, leaving no time for fright, and I became as one that had never lived.

The first impression that stole back to me was that of awakening from a dream of which I remembered nothing. Fresh air from an unknown source blew down upon me. I heard birds twittering, I knew the sun was shining, and I ielt warm drops upon my face.

Then an unutterable fright and joy struck through me, as I unclosed my eyes, looked up. and saw that those tears had fallen from Uncle Silas, who seemed to lean out of the sky, far above, bending his arms toward the dead.

#### III .- Latest Account.

What my niece Alice Bleaberry says is all true, and what her husband Lester Mayerick says is true too, and now I'm a going to have my say, not a very long say, neither. True as I hope one day to be buried in a

coffin of my own invention, on that very Thanksgiving morning Alice speaks of I was standing by her grave looking down upon her face. All the many menths I had been at work on that coffin I had never dreamed that my own niece would be the first one on whom its advantages were to be tried.

Everybody in Tinedale village, where I was born, and where, please God, I shall die, unless I shall be struck down while going to Wasnington to take out a patent for the aforesaid coffin -everybody in the village, excepting Alice believed I was a crazy old man. Even the Rev. Lester Maverick-this is Alice's husband nowused to look upon me as little better than a poor mariac, harmless, but still a maniac.

I have not been a sexton for fifty years without seeing some strange sights, out of grave\_ yards as well as in them. The people used to look at me in church when Mr. Maverick read in the lesson for the day that passage in the Bible which speaks about him that hath a fami, liar spirit; and some of the neighbors used to say that the "spooks" used to come tapping, in the middle of the night, at the shutter of my workshop window overlooking Bleaberry grave. yard, and ask to help me in my sawing and chiselling, and that I used to make cups out of death's-heads and knife and fork handles out of the cross-bones.

I think it must have been the sight of my old wrinkled face, only six seet above her as she lay in her coffin underground, that gave her strength to recover from her first fright, and use the rope and ladder which line the chimneylike arrangement attached to the head of the coffin. And this brings, me back to my invention again, that the villagers made so much fuss about because they understood nothing at all about it.

I said that during the fifty years I had been sexton I had seen many strange sights outside graveyards as well as inside. Perhaps the cruellist and most dreadful sights are toose I have seen inside them, though I cannot dwell much upon them here. When portions of the large bleaperry grave-yard have been bought by men who wanted to become property owners, I have seen graves that have been closed for years opened, and poor people coming in twos and threes to carry in baskets and butter-kettles the mouldering bones of long-dead relatives. When a person has been buried under suspicious circumstances, I have seen the corpse disinterred two or three days after the burial, and discovered, on opening the coffin, with the face torn and bleeding, the rips mangled, the hair torn out by the roots, and the position of the body reversed, as though the person had been buried alive, and coming out of his trance, had had a short but desperate struggle in the tomb. It was such things as this, more particularly, which set me a thinking. May be my mind acts slowly, may be I am older and weaker than I think, and may be I was a little bit afraid of being laughed at. Be that as it may, it was only when I arrived within a few years of my present age that I began to put in practice a long matured play. I'm afraid Mrs. Scraunel, housekeeper to the Mavericks, was harder against me than any of the other neighbors. But, I think now that she's seen it's turned out all for good, she she said, "Mr. Bleaperry, your years are three-

ravens that pick it out and the young eagles shall cat it." She's a very good woman, is Mrs. Scranuel, and there's not a passage of Scripture but what she has at her dog rs' ends.

Knowing that I could trust no one else, I made Alice my confident, and she it was who gave me the aid of a cheerful countenance from the first moment when I commenced my coffin to the last moment when I finished it.

A beautiful work it was when it was all done. mahogany of course, silver mounted (the little fortune I had lately come into enabled me to bear the expense), and the lid reaching to the neck and there ending. From the agerture above the face (and I often used to think what satisfaction I should feel in being buried in just such a coffin) a sort of woolen chimney arose, furnished inside with a bell, rope, and ladder. I didn't know exactly what to call my coffin, for not understanding Greek and Latin, I did not feel that I would be good at getting up any of those names of ten syllables that I had sometimes seen placarded on the curbatones when I went to Philadelphia; It did, indeed, once occur to me to call it the Phoenix coffin, because I had often read in the country newspapers about some great politician rising a Phoenix from his ashes. But then, on second thoughts, I came to the conclusion that the Phonix, by this time, must be a little tired of baving so many people compared with him, and it would only be kind in me to give him a little rest.

While I was in this quandary, perfectly certain that I had invented something that would some day or other be found of use to the world, Allice, who knew all my perplexities and sympathized with them, died, or at least appeared to. In opposition to all my friends and relations, in opposition to the wish of even the Rev. Lester Mayerick, I insisted on her being buried in the coffin I had invented. It seemed to me that Providence bad thus stricken down my brother's child to prove to the world the value of my experiment.

We buried her, and for the four days that I visited her grave my friends laughed at me for my credulity. I cannot say that I had any confident expectation that she would rise from that turf and be among the hving once more. But on Thanksgiving morning-the day she and Rev-Lester Mayerick were to have been marriedjust before church let out (and, strange to say a matriage service had been solemnized there). I repaired, full of my own thoughts, to Alice's grave, and leaned my head, as I had done for many times during the days she had been buried, over the aperture of the chimney, which arose two or three feet from the ground. Tears fell from my eyes upon the sweet face beneath, and even while I wept, I heard an inarticulate sound below.

Opening my eyes, I saw Alloc's looking up into mine.

In two minutes after that, with my help, she had extricated herself, and was in my arms. In five minutes more I had bathed her face from a brook that ran hard by, and carried her, faint unto death, but living, and to live, into the little chapel annexed to the church. Rev. Lester Maverick was then leaning against

the wall, his hands up to his eyes, as though struck with sudden blindness.

I went out and left them both together there, and I never knew how they met each other, and what was said and done, and I'm sure I can't imagine.

All I know is that they were married a few days atterwards, old Mr. Maverick officiating, and that when the ceremony was over, Mrs. Scrannel-God bless her! she knows more about Scriptures than any woman I ever saw beforecame up to me, and taking me quite kindly by the hand, said, "Mr. Bleaberry, happy, happy, happy be thy dreams; all we, like sheep, have gone astray, for of such is the kingdom of

### IV .- Very Latest.

N. B .- The gatherer together of the floating materials which compose this historiette would merely remark that Sexton Bleaberry's invention is probably the original of what has since been so successfully imitated in Paris and some of the principal cities of the United States. He died, unfortunately, before he was able to secure a patent, but his invention had the one merit of bringing together two loving hearts, who always look forward to Thanksgiving Day as an occasion for being TRULY THANKFUL.

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Reinsprances .....

and Municipal Taxes. Expenses.

#### OFFICE OF THE DELAWARE MUTUAL SAFETY INSURANCE COMPANY.

PHILADELPHIA. November 11, 1868.

The following statement of the affairs of the Company is sublished in conformity with a provision of Ita Charter:-

PREMIUMS RECEIVED On Fire Risks ... \$918,711.80 Premiums on Policies not marked off

81,355,557,51 PREMIUMS MARKED OFF 

\$894 923 49 Interest during the same period-Sal-\$1,002,422 31 LOSSES, EXPENSES, ETC., During the year as above Marine and iniand Naviga-.8424 052 74

..... 59 141 02

50,586 63

43.555 89

-8710,837.81

406 845 71

### ASSETS OF THE COMPANY

November 1, 1868. \$200,000 U. S. 5 per cent. Loan, 10 40s. \$208,590 00 120,000 U. S. 6 per cent. Loan, 1881... 136,800 00 50,000 U. S. 6 per cent. Loan (for Pacific Railroad)................................. 50,000 00 136,800 00 200,000 State of Pennsylvania 6 per cent. Losh 125,000 City of Philadelphia 6 per cent. Losn (exempt from Tax). 50,000 State of New Jersey 6 per 211,375 00 128.594-00

20,200:00 Morigage 6 per cent, Bonds (Penn's Railroad guar-20,625.00 20,000 State of Tennessee 5 per cent. 7,000 S ate of Tennessee 6 per cent. 21,000 00 5,031 25 principal and interest guar-

anteed by the City of Phi-ladelphia, 300 sbares stock 10,000 Pennsylvania Railroad Com-15,000:00 5,000 North Pennsylvania Rati-road Company, 100 shares 11 300-00 3,500 00 stock..... 20,000 Philadelphia and Southern Mail Steamship Company. 15,000.00 80 shares stock ...

207,900 Loans on Bond and Mort-gage, first itens on City Properties... \$1,109,000 Par Market value, \$1,130,325 25 Cost, \$1,093,604'26. Real Estate.. 36,000 00 Bills Receivable for Insur-Balances due at Agencies— Premiums on Marine Poli-

cies, Accrued Interest, and other debts due the Com-40,178 88 Stock and Scrip of Sundry Corporations, \$3156. Esti-Corporations, mated value.......\$116 150 08
Cash in Bank........\$116 150 08
Cash in Drawer...........413 65 1,813.00

PHILADELPHIA, November it, 1848.

110,563 73 \$1,647,367,80

The Board of Sirectors have this day declared a CASH DIVIDEND of TEN PER CENT on the Ca PITAL STOCK, and SIX PER CENT. Interest on the SCRIP of the Company, payable on and after the 1st December proximo, free of National and State They have also declared a SCEIP DIVIDEND of

THIRTY PER CENT, on the EARNED PREMIUMS for the year ending October 31, 1868, certificates of which will be issued to the parties entitled to the same, on and after the 1st December proximo, free of National and State Taxes.

They have ordered, also, that the SCRIP CERTIFI. CATES OF PROFITS of the Company, for the year ending October 31, 1864, be redeemed in CASH, at the Office of the Company, on and after 1st December proximo, all interest thereon to cease on that date. By a provision of the Charter, all Certificates of Scrip not presented for redemption within five years after public notice that they will be redeemed anall be forfeited and cancelled on the Books of the Company.

No certificate of profits issued under \$25. By he Act of Incorporation, "no certificate shall issue un less claimed within two years after the declaration of the dividend whereof it is evidence,"

DIRECTURS. Edward A. Souder, Thomas C. Hand, John C. Davis, James C. Hand, Theopi ilus Paulding, Joseph H. Seal, Henry Stoan, William C. Ludwig, Theopt lius Paulding,
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Hugh Cring,
John R. Penrose,
Jacob P. Jones,
Jacob P. Jones,
James Traquair,
Edward Darrington,
H. Jones Brooke.
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John B. Semple, Pitts.,
A. B. Berger,
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John C. DAVIS, Vice-President.
HENRY LYLBURN, Secretary.
HENRY BALL, Assistant Secretary.

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NORTH AMERICA, No. 232 WALNUT STREET, PHILADA. INCORPORATED 1784. CHARTER PERPETUAL Marine, Inland, and Fire Insurance. ASSETS JANUARY 1, 1868, - \$2,001,266-72, \$20,000,000 Losses Paid in Cash Since its

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George L. Harrison;
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T. Charlton Henry,
Aifred D. Jessup,
John P. White,
Louis C. Madeira, Arthur G. Coffin, Samuel W. Jones, John A. Brown, Charles Taylor, Ambrose White, William Weish, Bichard D. Wood, S. Morris Wain, John Mason. John Mason, ARTHUR G. COFFIN, President. UNITED SECURITY

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S. E. Corner FIFTH and CHESNUT Ste PHILADELPHIA.

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Tuesday, "26, 8 A.M.
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Friday, "27, 9 A.M.
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Fare to Trenton, 40 cents each way; intermediate places, 26 cents.

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