

THANKSGIVING EVE.

A TRUE INCIDENT. Hand in hand through the city streets, As the chilly November twilight fell, Two childish figures walk in and down— The footlock, Teddie and his sister Nell.

MISS JANE'S OFFER.

BY LUCY C. LILLIE.

Miss Jane Brewer opened the door of her white frame cottage with a timid reluctance, and stepped out upon the small porch almost as though she had no right to be there. She glanced up and down the quiet roadway with furtive, sad eyes. She felt glad there was no one in sight. It seemed as if her errand was written on her face, and indeed, to any one who knew the usual tranquility of that face, which had its own mature charm, recalling the soft prettiness of her girlhood, it would have been easy to see that Miss Jane was far from happy to-day.

"I shall see them in the window, I suppose," she reflected, with a little quickening of her pulses as she neared a light yellow and brown cottage with a milliner's case rather obtruding on the road.

Two heads were visible. Miss Mollon, the milliner, was claiming against the late Captain Brewer's property had proved successful, and a rather lank youth of twenty-one, who was Miss Mollon's pampered nephew and heir.

Miss Brewer hesitated a barely perceptible second, and then bowed to the enemy. "After all," she thought, hurrying on down Main Street, "they have the right to it. But, oh, if dear father had only told me! But then he may have tried to do it after that stroke."

At the entrance to Judge Downing's law office a dainty pony carriage was drawn up, and its occupant, a tall, sparkling young girl, exclaimed, quickly.

"Oh, Miss Brewer, are you going to be at home this evening, and if I come up, will you show me that stitch?"

she thought as, having laid aside her things, she brightened up the kitchen fire, and then sat down to think over what to prepare.

Greta Downing always declared there never was such a cozy, cheery kitchen as this one of Miss Brewer's; everything spotless and shining—the sideboard with its clear china and odd pieces, inherited from her father's mother; the window looking out on the roadway, with its deep cushioned seat, and row of plants well cared for above—every point was homelike and worth observing; and Greta, coming from her father's solemn dignified mansion, used to enjoy thoroughly those visits to her friend, when they would spend the "gloaming" in the homelike kitchen, and chat about everything of interest, first in Greta's life, then town "society," wherein the bright young girl was a special favorite.

"How did you feel, Miss Jane, when you had your first offer?"

And, to Greta's complete surprise, Miss Jane, with her pretty blush, had answered, "I can't tell you, my love; I never received an offer in my life."

"It seems to me, Greta," said her friend, as they sat at the pleasant tea table, which was well supplied from Miss Jane's best stores, "you haven't much of an appetite. How do you know but this is our last meal in the old house together?"

"Oh, Miss Jane," exclaimed Greta, "it does seem so hard! But then," she added, with the cheerfulness of inexperience, "of course you'll get another."

"When all," said Miss Jane, "there'll be fully one hundred dollars to your credit."

"But, of course," observed Greta, "you'll live somewhere. Do you know," she added in a moment, and with a lively color sweeping her face, "I've been thinking lately—if a person wasn't alone, you know, it wouldn't matter much if they weren't rich."

"Greta, don't let me tell you that I have heard a great deal about him, and I believe—yes, you might even share his poverty; or, lest you hamper him too early in his career, you could easily wait for him; and, Greta, don't let pride stand in the light of two people's happiness and whole future."

Miss Jane's quiet voice trembled.

Greta suddenly raised her pretty tear-stained young face to the delicate elderly one above it. "Miss Jane," she exclaimed, earnestly, "don't you know, you told me once you never had an offer. Oh, won't you tell me? Wasn't there—didn't you?"

"So you think there must have been something?" Miss Jane said, indulgently. "Greta, my dear, if I thought my—well, one experience in my life would help you, you should hear it. Now listen. It isn't much of a story, no great romance, only, as it did come to me, my life could never somehow seem to take any other course. I must have been about your age, and was living right here of course, when I made this gentleman's acquaintance. He was a young man with good business prospects, but very poor at the time. I need not go into particulars; we seemed very soon to understand each other; but my step-aunt Hannah, who kept house for us, was for some reason strongly averse to it, and was constant-telling me that John was only trying to make a fool of me. I was, no doubt very silly, but I am not now, in various little coquetries, and tried to get by an assumed coldness in my manner. At last came a day when he decided to seek his fortune in the South. How often I have thought of all that time this very week! The last time we went out together was to a Thanksgiving party. How well I remember our talk on the way home! It was, chiefly about what he was to do, so that he might come back soon. He said that he wanted to return well enough off to ask a girl whom he knew when a little boy, for her hand. I turned it off as quickly as I could; although when, at parting, he said he would surely see me the next day, I could not but feel that in our good-by he would at least bid me wait for him; and oh, Greta, I was a happy, sleepless girl that night. I was up early the next morning you may be sure, and fairly flew down the stairs, my heart was so light, in spite of the fact that this important meeting would mean a parting as well. It was nine o'clock when a little note from John came to her. He was suddenly summoned to his uncle's death-bed, and had to take the early stage; but he added these words, 'I will come again, though all the seas gang dry.' You know the dear old song? Only the night before he had sung it, and I easily supplied the words which, I felt, John had not dared to put in."

"What were they?" whispered Greta who was listening with almost painful intenses.

"And I will come again, my love, though all the seas gang dry."

"And did he?" queried the girl, gently. "Miss Jane," said Miss Jane, "I blame myself often. I don't think I had done something I should not have done. He came again."

"Yes, my love; for a long time I cannot deny that I was, and my aunt's peculiar way of treating me did not help matters. I was really ill for a few weeks, but at last I grew more contented. So you see," she added, "I was quite right when I say I never had an offer."

"Long after Greta had gone away, cheered and encouraged by Miss Jane's sympathy, as usual, Jane Brewer sat by her lonely fireside, thinking over many things that telling her story, even in brief outline, brought to mind.

She had said she was courageous, yes, but even now a sharp keen pang smote her heart as one scene after another in those days twenty years ago rose to efface the lifeless present, to thrill every nerve as if the brief joys of her girlhood were again smothering. It was easily remembered, from every outline of the thin dark face, with its nervous energy and yet sensitive reserve, to every word he had uttered, to every scene in which she had "lived"; for that, it seemed to her, was the only personal living. Since then it had all been external—all for others. She recalled the pompous wooing of a certain Dr. Hazleton, whom she had peremptorily forbidden "to speak"; the various "attentions" which well she knew might be more if she had willed it; of her step-aunt's indignation over what she termed her "folly" in putting off these fine gentlemen; then of the day when she was thirty years of age, how she had put on that slim old wedding ring of her grand-mother's, saying to herself she surely had the right to feel now that girlishness was at an end, and pledged herself with the old ring to maidenhood. And now—it was all gone! The brief dream, the girliness, the gaitety of those happy days—even, thank God! thought Jane, "the suffering."

For she had known it was right to put him, in one way from her mind. She had often wondered about him—whether he was happy with the wife of his choice—had often prayed to God to bless him, and never a Thanksgiving day but she had thought of that one radiant one, and laid the memory tenderly in God's keeping. And now, thought Miss Jane, as lamp in hand, she moved about her little dwelling, shutting doors and setting things to right—now not even a home was left her. After Thanksgiving day all but the memory of a happier past must vanish.

It was, perhaps, a blessing for Miss Jane that in the days which intervened between this evening and Thanksgiving day she had all her time filled with preparations to depart, and deciding on where to make a new home. There was melancholy enough, no doubt, in the packing up—a prostrant it almost seemed, in moving from their long accustomed places certain household gods—yet it was a necessary occupation, fatiguing enough to make her sleep at night.

"That old piano was mother's when she was a girl," she said to Greta one day. The judge's daughter flitted in and out constantly during those trying days. They were standing in the parlor, where at present the least confusion reigned. Some way his memories were so sacred to Miss Jane that she wanted to "spare it" as long as possible. "I've heard father say she was a fine performer," she added with a regretful look at the narrow, slim-legged little instrument.

She seated herself, in her shabby, dusty garment assumed for the work in hand, and, in a quaint manner of her own, began a little waltz, one of the few few "pieces" she had learned in her school days. Greta was by no means very susceptible to the impressions, nor was she in the least imaginative, yet, some way, as she stood by listening to Miss Jane, who played, I must admit, in a very "thrum-thrum" fashion, a sense of the picturesqueness of the scene came over her, and she never could forget it. Miss Jane at the old tinkling piano, her hands moving sedately over the yellowish keys, her delicately faded profile above the black veil of her gown, carved against the sunshine which, in wintery rays, just lighted here and there the old-fashioned, darkly furnished room as if, as Miss Jane played, the spirit of her girlhood was evoked, and Greta thought she at the moment just what her old friend had been twenty years before—more ardent than she dared express, more timid about opposing the will of her elders, and yet, as now, "faithful and true." Why, thought the girl, indignantly—why had that stupid "John" never come back?

"There," exclaimed the Miss Jane of to-day, rising suddenly and clapping the lid of the instrument. "It won't do, Greta, my love, for me to be idling here." She stood a moment irresolute, her sweet brown eyes a trifle misty. "I suppose I'll have a place to put it in if I do go to live with Semantha Dobbins," she continued. "I shouldn't like to tuck it away as if I'd forgotten it in a garret." And with an evident effort she returned to the practical affairs of the moment.

Greta Downing went home still under the spell of what was to her an unusual experience. She was thrilled, distressed, annoyed, and to relieve her mind despatched a long letter to Mr. Paul Harvey, in answer to his last, and although it was definitely accepting the offer he had at last shown courage enough to make her, she was so full of Miss Jane that she wrote three pages all about her; how dear she always given her, and dwelt in terms full of indignation upon the cruelty of her best friend's present position, and at last she added: "Isn't it queer? She told me she never in all her life had received an offer of marriage, and she's perfectly lovely. There was some one once whom she waited for, but she never heard from him, and she never heard a word from him. If you ever dare to be like that, sir, etc., etc."

Little Greta went about her own household duties, which, I must say, in the large, quiet, and well-regulated mansion were not very onerous, very contentedly after that; but at dinner time she stole up to her father, put her arms around his thin neck, and laid her soft young cheek against his bony one.

"Father," she said demurely, "I've been and gone and done it." "Eh? what? what's that?" demanded the judge. He was always afraid of some out of the way proceedings on Greta's part.

"Well, you see," the girl continued, "I wrote Paul Harvey—oh, father, don't scold me! What's a girl to do that's in love with the man that's asked her?"

days in Miss Jane's old home was more than one visit from Miss Mollon, who walked about and acted with an exasperating air of proprietorship, her lank nephew in her wake, while, often ignoring Miss Jane, she would plan various alterations in the house. To escape them Thanksgiving eve, Miss Jane fairly fled to the attic, where, indeed, she had intended to search in an old trunk of her aunt's for a bit of lace she wanted to give Greta. It was almost dusk, but drawing the box into the window, and turning its contents over with nervous finger, lifted up a skirt of broad plaids which gave her a little shiver. How well she remembered the dreadful days when Aunt Hannah wore it! It was turned inside out, and as she shook it there seemed to be something like paper in the long pocket. Miss Jane drew it out, gazed at it, and then sank down fairly paralyzed. It was a letter addressed in a dearly familiar handwriting to herself—opened hastily by other fingers—never seen by her eyes until this moment.

She heard the retreating footstep of her unbidden guests. Then the door closed. The wintry evening closed in, but still she sat there, the faded paper in her hands, for how long a time Jane Brewer never knew. But at last she rose, and almost tottered down the stairs. No sleep came to her eyes that night, although blinding tears fell from them, and the morning broke gray and chill, snow flakes flying all about the lonely little cottage, to find her changed woman. But it is this second vigil for the one cause which Jane had kept had its depth of misery, there was cause for joyful pride as well. She had not misjudged him! He had been true, and yet he had thought her false!

The morning drifted on. Miss Jane moved mechanically about the house, and deciding that the blinding snow-storm would be excused enough to admit of her staying at home, set out, about ten o'clock, some bread and tea, which would be her Thanksgiving breakfast and dinner in one.

She was trying to swallow it when there came the jingle of sleigh-bell, a heavy tread up the little path, and a loud rat-tat on the door. Miss Jane, as she sprang up instinctively, smoothed her always tidy, pretty hair, and went to admit her impatient visitor.

A tall, stout, elderly gentleman of very imposing "presence" stood there a moment irresolute, gazing down upon the slender black robed figure, the tranquil if careworn face before him. "Then he held out a strong hand from which he had drawn his handsome fur lined glove.

"May I come in Jane?" he inquired, with a queer twinkle and yet a suspicion of moisture in his eyes. "You see I promised to come again, only you wouldn't let me."

"The tall, familiar, yet unfamiliar, figure before her, the whirl of snow flakes, the white country road, all swam in a mist before Jane Brewer's eyes. It was twenty years but she had trusted him all the time, and this was her Thanksgiving day at last.

"You see, Jane," Mr. John Knowlton was saying, as five minutes later he and his old sweet heart were standing with clasped hands in the quaint old parlor, Jane trembling still in every nerve with joyous yet bewildered anticipation, it was like this; I wrote to you asking you to marry, and saying I would come on at once if you'd say the word. I got no answer I thought I would look into the matter for myself; so on I posted, and found you, poor little woman, ill. I saw that aunt of yours, who told me not to torment you further, that you were as good as engaged to Hazleton."

"Jane's head drooped. "I never got the letter, and I never said or thought anything of the kind," she murmured; and added, lifting her face, with the blush of a girl on her cheeks, "John, there was a time when I thought you'd broken my heart."

The World of Women.

Shaded velvet in green for sleeves in brown gowns.

Plain close-fitting jackets of fine cloth for nice wear.

Large plaids for street suits to be trimmed with dark velvet.

Black and red widely-striped satins made up with red velvet.

Cream cloth vests for brown, purple and dark green cloth suits.

Large, conspicuous buttons, accompanying director styles.

Mrs. Bonheur will receive \$60,000 for her "Horses Threshing Corn" from an American dealer.

Tailor-made gowns of tweed have short circular cloaks of the same material, with silk-lined hoods. Very rough goods are the most popular for walking costumes these days.

The resident medical officer of the Dr. Woman's Hospital in Melbourne is Dr. Margaret White, a lady graduate, who was unanimously selected for the position by the Board of Managers.

Clean your mirrors with soft paper instead of cloth. We have seen this advice repeated numberless times, and yet we see cloth constantly used, with its usual accompaniment of lint and trouble.

Some of the new silk petticoats have tiny flounces on the wrong side as well as on the right; and the newest tailor-made gowns are lined with silk and have little trills of the same material underneath the edge of the skirt.

Evening capes of fine ladies' cloths, in delicate, aesthetic lines like terra-cotta Nile green, old pink or vieux blue, are being made up in, Henri Deux shape, and lined with striped flowered brocade in delicate patterns and faint "fade" colors.

A crimson serge, with a short bodice edged with silk, had a deep tinted cream lace collar round the shoulder, and was open to display a frilled shirt front of purple velvet, and it was drawn into the waist with a purple velvet sash tied into a bow at one side.

Miss Kate Field, though a busy business woman, does not like to work at a desk. Much of her writing she does on a tablet in an easy chair. It is said that she even "curls up" while thus engaged, and that she acquired that habit unconsciously from Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

The new feather boss, of the softest plumes of the owl and in tawny natural colors, cost \$50, and measure two yards. Boss of curled ostrich feathers in the same length cost \$35. Little round collars of marabout feathers in gray and white cost \$7.50; in clipped ostrich plumes, \$9.50.

An odd conceit in pockets is the pocket-book flap. A coat of heavy overcoat cloth has square pockets set on the outside with double stitching. The flap of each pocket is extended in a fancifully cut tab that runs through a strap on the pocket, closing the pocket and forming a pocket-book or pocket diary. The effect is a trifle funny, but the contents of the pocket are kept in safety.

Considerable use is being made of chamois this season. Blue and green wool dresses have chamois vests, collars, and cuffs. There are chamois bonnets, and the chamois gloves are in greater variety and better made than usual. A derby glove made of bright yellow chamois has trimmings and large buttons of black. White chamois gloves are made now with cable seams, like the finest kid gloves.

There are some absolutely new designs in gowns. One very charming design was made with a plain skirt, and a short zouave reaching to the waist of black astrachan—that kind of astrachan which has a wide curl in it and is commercially known as "Caracule." This had a short bodice, with double frills down the front, and huge sleeves of shaded heliotrope velvet, shading from the palest mauve to the deepest purple. It was lovely, not expensive, I grant, but unique—a superior advantage to mere cheapness.

Another was made of a violet faced cloth, with a hem ornamented with seven folds of black satin; the bodice of this was a blouse of black satin with a stiff front, like a man's shirt, fastening with little gold buttons, and over it was to be worn three shoulder capes of the violet cloth, edged with the satin folds, and pleated into a yoke piece of Caracule.

Cloth jackets with shoulder capes, double or triple, says Harper's Bazar, are in great favor with large girls and small alike. They come in soft warm cloths, gray-blue, tan, brown or red, and are partly fitted to the figure and warmly lined. Long cloaks for smaller girls cover their dresses entirely, and are made full or with a Watteau pleat in the back, belted in or else with the belt or cord passing under the pleat.

Tabbed capes edged with cord or else gathered on the shoulders. Elsters for school girls to wear in rain or shine are of striped or plaid wool, made double breasted, with a military cape that is detachable. Fluffy cloths in light Russian blue or old-rose make dressy Diarettoire coats for girls of 8 to 12 years when trimmed with black or brown fur.

Girls' felt hats match the cloak in color, sometimes being of a lighter shade. They have wide, soft brims without lining and often without wire, while others are slightly undulating, requiring wire to keep them in graceful shape. Full soft crowns of velvet are added, with the left side much higher than the right, and a twist of satin ribbon around the base. A chic trimming is a long looped bow of satin a trifle more than an inch wide coming forward on the left side, and holding a thick rosette, through which two dark quills are thrust. A blonde haired girl looks lovely in a soft brimmed hat of tan color, with darker brown velvet crown quite low and flat, the back of brim caught up with pink ostrich tips, while in front of the crown two brown quills are crossed like the letter X. Gilt and silver galloon in a bow of many loops with sharp ends brown felt hats, and holds the quills that are so popular this season.

Tea is gathered from the plant four times a year.

Icebergs sometimes last 200 years.