



THE SONG OF THANKSGIVING.

We're thankful for a host of things Too numerous to mention: For sweethearts true and hearts to woo, And all things worth attention. For all and everything that gives Our lives so much of pleasure We offer thanks. Long may we taste This overflowing measure.

OUR THANKSGIVING.

The morning came. It came as our Thanksgiving mornings had come—with fresh, frolicking winds and sunlight, and blue skies; with merry voices, with cloudless faces and happy hearts.

I remember just how yellow and murky the sunshine lay on the floors that morning, and how I thought the wind wailed about the corners of the house—to me it had no frolic. The children came in from play while I was at work, all flushed and eager, and happy, jostling and pushing each other good-naturedly in the entry.

Dinner time came at last and they gathered round the table gleefully—just as gleefully, I thought, with a half bitterness, as if they had all been there.

"Why, what's this for?" asked Harry, stopping. "Mother, you've got one chair too many."

"Hush, Harry—I know—don't you see?" said then Lucy finished her sentence in a whisper. "Why had I done it? I hardly knew. To lay the plates and set the chairs, and pass that one plate by—that plate that always was by mine—it seemed hard. It was a very little thing; but you know how dear these little things become to women sometimes."

So I had put it there—the empty chair; and with its pitiful, appealing blankness beside me, I sat down to the festive meal. I remember just how everything looked, as in a picture—my husband's face, with its peaceful smile, and the children grouped around in the old places; and a flock of yellow sunlight that had fallen in through the warm south window upon the table cloth. I remember everything. I know that John had just bowed his head to ask a blessing on our food, and the children's eyes were closed, when I saw—I saw as distinctly as I see this paper upon which I write the words—a shadow fall across the empty chair.

I turned my head, and I saw him, my dead boy Willie. I know it was Willie. You need not doubt me, for I tell you I cannot be mistaken. Should not I know him, I, his mother? I looked deep, deep into his eyes. I saw the old, rare smile; I touched his own bright curls upon his forehead; I spoke to him; he spoke to me.

"Willie!"

The voice was breathless, but it was his.

"Willie! Willie!"

Again the old, rare smile. With one hand he motioned silence. His father's voice hushed the amen, and the children looked up and began their chatter.

"Did you speak to me, Mary?" asked my husband.

"No."

"Why, I thought some one spoke during the blessing."

So they did not see him. I alone was chosen. I looked into his face, smiling, smiling down into mine so tenderly—you cannot know how tenderly; but in his eyes I saw—and I thought my heart would break to see it—a certain, sad, reproachful look, that I had caught on his face once, years ago, when I accused him of injustice of some trifling, childish fault—a look that had haunted me in many a still hour since. And then I heard him say distinctly, though to not another ear was the breathless voice audible:

"I want them to be happy. I want you to enjoy the day. Did you think I should not be with you, mother?"

He was with me, thank God, and I was happy. I talked, I laughed, I chatted with the children; their merriment increased with mine; my husband's pale face lighted up; I felt my own eyes sparkling. And all the while, where they saw only that empty chair, I saw the beautiful, still face and happy smile. I saw him pleased with the old familiar customs. I saw him mindful of the children's jests. I saw his eyes full of their own home love, turn from one to another and back again to me—I saw and I was content. All that day he was beside me. He followed us into the sitting room and took his old seat by the cozy fire. He listened to his father's stories and watched the children at their games, and joined us when we gathered around the piano for our twilight song. I heard his voice; the children asked what made me sing so clearly.

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To seats we came did occupy We'll not look up with wistful eye And covetous unrest; But bending low down our gaze To poorer homes, to sadder ways, Thank God we are so blest.

Thank God that though our home is small, It still contains the dear things all, Rich in affection's wealth; Thank God we have enough to eat, Thank God for clothing warm and neat, Thank God for perfect health.

Thank God we feel the fire's warm glow, While many cold and fireless go In many a cheerless home, Oh, yes, most gratefully we'll lift Our souls to God for every gift, Add trust for all to come.

Thus 'round our fragrant little board, With cheerful hearts we'll praise the Lord And keep the jubilee; Nor shall there anywhere be found, Within this nation's utmost bound, A happier family.

FANNY PERCYAL.

THE ORIGIN OF THANKSGIVING.

A Purely Puritan Festival of Rejoicing Over Worldly Things.

As if to resist the bitterness and sadness of the falling year, the most genial and kindly of all our festivals occurs at the end of November. Its very name, "Thanksgiving," betrays its pious origin—an origin unimpaired with any prior tradition. The great Christian festival of Christmas stretches backward to yule logs and mistletoe, to Scandinavian and Briton heathenry; nor does it lose by the graceful, happy association. But Thanksgiving is purely Puritan. It is the good, warm heart conquering the tough head and ascetic manner of the old pilgrims.

In Elliott's "New England History" you may read that in 1623, after the harvest, Governor Bradstreet sent out a company to shoot game to furnish a dainty feast of rejoicing after the labors of the colony. Having followed the directions of the governor, and the principle of the excellent Mrs. Glass, they cooked their game and invited Massachusetts and some ninety other savages, and all fell to and devoured the feast, thanking God

"Mary perhaps the boy has been to you." At this moment the clock on the mantel struck 12. We listened to its strokes till the last one died away.

"It is Thanksgiving morning," said my husband, solemnly. When the morning really came, with its fresh, frolicking winds and sunlight, and blue skies; with its merry faces and gay voices, and the happy children rapping at my door, I thought of what he said, "Perhaps the boy has been to you." Sometimes I think he must have been, so real and sweet is, even now, the memory of his coming. All that day he stood beside me. All that day I saw his peaceful face, and felt the blessing of his smile, and heard his low, sweet voice. What for months I had looked upon and feared with the bitterness of a great dread, the face, and smile, and voice made almost painless.

The children's merry greetings did not hurt me; my fingers did not tremble when they twined the fresh green leaves about the walls. The older children went with us to church that morning. The little church was very still and pleasant, and somehow the service stole away down into my heart. It was no eloquent preacher that we heard; only a plain man, with God's plainest gifts of mind and culture! But the day was real to him, and I listened. A bit of Mrs. Brown's music kept singing itself in my soul:

I praise thee while my days go on, I love thee while my days go on, Through dark and death, through fire and frost, With emptied arms and treasure lost, I thank thee while my days go on.

I think that I did thank him—I who, only last year, had sat there with my boy beside me.

I think that when the dear familiar words flooded the church with harmony again, as on that other morning, and John and I clasped hands silently—I think we uttered the old, old cry: "Blessed be the name of the Lord."

We stopped after church together where the boy was lying, to let May lay down her little green wreath, and I was glad that she could do it calmly. Somehow I felt as if tears would be profanation just then. Then we went quietly home.

It was a happy home that day—as happy as it could be when we did not see him. Yet I knew he was there.

"Did you think I should not be with you, mother?"

I heard it over and over; I hear it over and over now; I shall hear it when the next Thanksgiving sun brightens his grave. He wished us to be happy; I know he was with us. I think he always will be.

ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS.



AN OUTSIDE THANKSGIVING SCENE.

A HUMBLE THANKSGIVING.

We cannot show a grand array Of toothsome things Thanksgiving Day— The day so very near, Our little pantry will not boast Delicious viands by the host To every palate dear.

'Neath weight of all the good things known Our little table will not groan, No, not the very best; Our little home will not be blest With many a welcome, joyous guest To help us at the feast.

Yet, notwithstanding what we lack, We'll not regretfully look back And sigh for better days; But we will fill in every part The spacious store rooms of our heart With gratitude and praise.

We'll count our present blessings o'er, And we shall find they number more Than all our trials do; Our happy, thoughtful hearts shall be Delightful guests—right royally They will reward us, too.

To seats we came did occupy We'll not look up with wistful eye And covetous unrest; But bending low down our gaze To poorer homes, to sadder ways, Thank God we are so blest.

Thank God that though our home is small, It still contains the dear things all, Rich in affection's wealth; Thank God we have enough to eat, Thank God for clothing warm and neat, Thank God for perfect health.

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"for the good world and the good things in it."

Think of that little shivering band clustered on the bitter edge of the continent, with the future before them almost as dark as the forest behind them, many of them with such long lines of happy memories in Old England flashing across the sea into the gloom of their present position like gleams of ruddy firelight that stream far out of the cheerful chimney into the cold winter night—and think of the same festival now, when our governors and our president invite millions of people to return thanks to the great giver of harvests; and the millions of people obeying, sacrifice hecatombs of turkeys and pumpkins and pour out seas of elder and harmless wine.



GOOD OLD THANKSGIVING CALLING IN THE POOR AND WEARY.

It might be dangerous to stake one's reputation upon the assertion that Thanksgiving is a strictly religious feast. It is a day of practical rejoicing in the good things of this world, and there may even be people whose mouths are fuller of turkey than their hearts of thanks. But every year the area of the feast enlarges. Every year there are more people who sit down to "groaning boards," as the reporters happily express it, upon occasions of civic festivity.

Dear old Thanksgiving! Long and long may his hospitable board be spread. Long and long may he stand, benignant, at his door, calling in the poor and the weary, the blind and the lame, even as the old Puritans called in Massachusetts and ninety other savages. Rich in blessings and reverend in years, may good old Thanksgiving last with the continent, knitting closer the ties of family and friendship; its cheerfulness beaming like the smile of a patriarch; its charity burning like a central fire, warming all the year and lighting up every dark day of care and sorrow.

THE MIKADO'S FATE.

A THANKSGIVING TRAGEDY.

It was about the first of November that the big turkey, the Mikado of the farmyard, was given a house all to himself and everybody waited upon him in the most untrusting manner. At first he was somewhat astonished at so marked a change in his fortunes. Such extraordinary consideration as he now received at everybody's hands amazed him for a time, but he soon settled it in his mind entirely to his satisfaction.

"Ho! ho!" he said. "Ha! ha! They have just learned my worth. I have always known that I was a great genius, with a brain as big as a wash tub, and I think the other turkeys, poor insignificant things, and the chickens, sorry creatures, knew it also. At least, they have all shown a wholesome respect for my power, but I must admit that I have been slow to impress the people with my importance. It has come at last, however. See how they truckle to me, how low to me, supply my every want almost before it is felt, and make menials of themselves to cater to my pleasure!"

This he said to himself as he walked by himself. The other citizens of the farmyard looked at him with gloowering faces and the bitterness of envy in their hearts. He had always tyrannized over them, and they hated him with a hatred all the more deadly because it was concealed under the mask of respect. Now, though he had never done a humane or generous thing in his life, they beheld him housed and feasted like a king, with the same of admiration served up to him every hour. They couldn't understand it; they saw no justice in it, and they murmured against it.



"OH, I AM THE GREAT MIKADO."

A poor, hard working hen who had brought up her family by the strictest economy and most faithful industry, and who had been robbed of her last bite again and again by the heartless Mikado, spoke her mind about it.

"It's an outrage," she said, "an outrage on all decent fowls to see that brute of a Mikado in clover up to his comb while the rest of us scratch from morning till night merely to keep life in our bodies. Such things are rapidly creating an aristocracy of sex. In the future when male and female are both equal before the law there will be none of this. But it's the way of the world, and always has been. The basest and least deserving get into power, because they are so coarse that they can ride right over any obstacle, having no sensibilities to wound."

Here a great swell of a cock, a monopolist of high degree, looked away and pretended not to hear; but the others listened attentively, sighed, and admitted that it was hard to rise in the world while such monsters as the Mikado had the power to oppress.

A middle-aged anarchist sputtered around at a great rate; but as he had always talked rather more than he should they didn't give him the closest attention. A fair and fat hen of good figure smiled scornfully, and said that one could expect nothing but coarse vanity from a person of really low pedigree like the Mikado. For her part, come what would, she had the comforting knowledge that the blood of the Brahmins flowed in her veins. Her ancestors were Asiatic kings. Then she strutted around to show off her figure, which really was perfect.

A young turkey, who was considered something of a crank because he wore glasses, was greatly given to philosophy and metaphysics, had gone so far as to lecture a little and was thinking of starting a newspaper, here piped up: "It is my opinion, friends, that we are to blame for our lack of success. The Mikado is merely carrying out the theories of the new school of Boston thinkers and the occultists of the east, which he has dropped on. I verily believe, through my teaching. He has a powerful will, and he has secretly and persistently demanded the good things of life and is getting them. The great force, my friends, is mind. But while we have been talking about it, he, like the pirate he is, has grabbed the idea and put it into operation."

An old and opinionated cat that had been apparently sleeping on a fence post now had a word to say. "You are very inexperienced creatures. When you have lived as long as I have (which none of you are likely to do, I am sorry to say, for reasons it would be indelicate now to mention) you will know that what appears sometimes to be great good fortune is really the greatest curse that could befall us. I will not here go into particulars, but I will entreat you not to be envious of the Mikado. This is a very dramatic world. The man who is up to-day may be down to-morrow. Envy no one. Perhaps your hard lot is better a thousand times for your soul's good than the wealth of a Gould or a Vanderbilt, or even the Mikado. Ben Franklin spoke wisely when he said:

He that is down need fear no fall, He that is humble needs no aid."

Just then the Mikado, whose doors had been opened by the beautiful daughter of the house to give him an hour's walk in the sunbath, came near them with lordly gait, head erect and wings scrapping the earth in overwhelming pride. In spite of the cat's sermon on humility, in the face of the fact that they knew she spoke the truth, they felt shriveled and mean in the presence of this petted and admired creature. He walked near them, smiled scornfully, and said:

Stand out of the way, you creatures small, Stand out of the way of my shadow; For I am the king and boss of all, Oh, I am the great Mikado.

And they stood out of his way, though here and there was one who could not refrain from shedding tears, so deep was his humiliation. The mistress of the house, accompanied by a friend, just then appeared on the other side of the fence, and the object of their attention seemed to be the Mikado. He wasn't slow to show his appreciation of the distinction, either. He strutted and gobbled in the most pompous and self-gratulatory way.



THE MIKADO AT THE FEAST.

"Isn't he magnificent!" said the visitor. "I should think he would weigh nearly twenty pounds. Oh, isn't he a treasure!" The Mikado heard this remark and almost fainted with delight. "Ah," he thought, "I was right in always believing myself an important personage. I hear it now from the lips of those who have heretofore pretended to be my superiors."

"What do you feed him on?" asked the visitor.

"Cat meal scalded in hot milk and various little dainties. It's a joy to see him eat."

At this the Mikado felt himself bursting with pride.

"My daughter is to be married on Thanksgiving day, and he is to be the great feature of the table," said the hostess.

"Oh, my," thought the Mikado, "won't that be fine? I am to figure at a wedding, to be the great feature of the whole proceeding, it seems. I must order something nice to wear." The cat on the fence post also heard, but she only licked her lips and smiled knowingly.

The days went on and the Mikado only grew fatter and more domineering every hour, and the other fowls became more and more cast down.

On Thanksgiving morning his doors were opened and he was invited to come forth. This was the day on which he was to receive greater honors than ever, and he waddled out, cumbered by his excessive flesh, with legs as loggish as usual. He was a little surprised when the hired man grabbed him by the arms and suddenly inverted him. It was an undignified attitude for a bird of his plumage, to say the least; but he reflected a moment and concluded that it was but fitting, after all, for a creature of his distinction to be carried, and of course this awkward fellow didn't know how to carry him gracefully or even comfortably.

He had no time to freeze other thoughts, for in a moment more the hired man had assassinated him, and his head was lying on one side of the chopping block and his body on the other.

His late envious associates ran in all directions, chilled with horror, nor were they seen again that day. He graced the feast, to be sure; he was the great feature of it, but not in the capacity he had so conceitedly anticipated. Instead of the fine suit of fashionable garments he had expected to be arrayed in, he appeared shorn of his feathers, with his skin cruelly browned and his legs cut off at the knees, a sorry and humbled Mikado, surely.

In a short time his very memory was forgotten, or recalled only with a sneer, or to be cited as an example of what conceit will bring any one to.

The day after Thanksgiving there was a little talk over his head and his bones, which were found in a ditch by his despoiled comrades. His fate was a lesson to them, and "After all," said one, "I might have known that such a sudden rise into affluence could bode no good. Up like a rocket and down like a stick, you know."

"Do you remember my words," said the cat, who came strolling along, bulging in body more than usual from having enjoyed extraordinary Thanksgiving blessings. "I told you to envy no one; that it was a dangerous thing to reach such eminence as the Mikado enjoyed. Poor fool, he did enjoy it while it lasted."

"Could it be," said the young turkey with the eyeglasses and taste for metaphysics, "could it be that my doctrines led him astray? Still, he has a good illustration of the truth of what I have been preaching—that if you persistently desire the best you will get it. But the best, in his case, didn't seem to be really good for him, after all, and now the question arises: 'Is it good for any of us? I must admit that I am somewhat confused on this point, and, in spite of the Mikado's grave faults of character, I lament the tragedy in which he was the victim. For some reason, his death was the occasion of general rejoicing in the house, and I have even picked up a word here and there which goes to show that the people who were the cause of his death gave thanks over his body. They actually called the day 'Thanksgiving,' so grateful were they that he was gone. Perhaps they feared that in his excessive love of

power he would rise some day, seize the reins of government, and trample them all under his feet. If so, I half excuse the murder, though I am too much of a Buddhist to sympathize with a festival which sanctions the destruction of living creatures, and the eating of them, too. In the round of existence, depend upon it, my friends, all such things are evened up. They who kill shall be killed in turn; if not in this life, in some embodiment in the far future."



THE TALK OVER HIS HEAD AND BONES.

The hen who was in favor of equal suffrage said that after all there were compensations in life. She still held her old views; but she had learned a lesson in patience. Her dream of political equality would be realized; but she must wait, and while she waited work as well as talk. A very aged old bird of no particular lineage cleared his throat just then. As he was generally silent, he commanded great attention when he did speak. He said: "You are getting on to the true philosophy of life at last. Agitation doesn't accomplish half as much as people think it does. The influences which really move the world are subtle. Your talkers think they revolutionize the world; but the real power comes from higher, much higher"—and he subsided into silence.

The noted anarchist rooster had nothing at all to say until his views were called for. Even then he evaded it until cornered and compelled to talk. Then he straightened up and put on his old time, important manner. "It is the beginning of the end, my friends," he said. "Monsters like the Mikado die of their own greed. They are their own executioners. Had he divided his abundance with us we would all have had a layer or so of the fat which encumbered him and brought him to grief, and he might have been alive to-day. But, no—he must have the earth. Nothing was too much for him. We had to starve that might live. All of you can testify that he lived upon the proceeds of your labor, for you scratched and he came along just as your bite was ready for your mouth and snatched it from you, and you dared not say your souls were your own."

"But what of the lady with the purest blood of Asia in her veins?" asked a dapper young cock. "I haven't seen her to-day."

"She has left," said a dozen voices. Here the cat spoke again. "I am sorry to say that our fair friend has shared the Mikado's fate. The chief cause of pride with her proved her ruin. Her good blood gave her a fine figure, and the people of this country are a flesh-eating race. They have no scruples against eating any of you who are so unfortunate as to possess sweet, clean flesh. So you see that it is never safe to boast."

"Oh, dear; what a difficult and dangerous world to live in!" said all in one voice.

The old house dog, who was fond of Shakespeare, came on the scene, sniffed contemptuously at the Mikado's bones, and said: "Alas! he lived for self, and now none are so poor as to do him reverence."

GERTRUDE GARRISON.



A THANKSGIVING NIGHTMARE.

FOR WHAT SHALL WE BE THANKFUL?

Some Old, Or Repeated Questions, and Their Unfashionable Answers.

"For what shall we be thankful?" say the sorrowing. "Grief alldeth with us, and in our hearts is the bitterness of continued trouble."

"For what shall we be thankful?" say the poor. "The earth overflows with plenty, but we are destitute. Cold and hunger is our portion, and want is our companion all the days of the year."

"For what shall we be thankful?" say the hopeless. "The days go on, but they bring us no joy. The sun and the moon traverse the heavens without warming our chilled hearts or lighting our dark pathway."

"For what shall we be thankful?" say the disappointed. "Wherever we turn, there, waiting to dishearten us, lurks disappointment. When we rise it is that causes us again to fall."

"For what shall we be thankful?" say the tempted, the mistaken, the fallen. "Our temptations have overcome us; our mistakes have destroyed us; our sins have crushed us. For us there is nothing left but wretchedness."

"For what shall we be thankful?" say the baffled. "When we strive we fail; when we pray no answer comes; when we hope our hopes are never realized; when we love our loves are lost to us."

"For what shall we be thankful?" say the bereaved. "Death has robbed us and left us moaning. Our sore hearts cannot take up the cry of rejoicing, for we weep uncomforred."

"For what shall we be thankful?" say the sick. "We suffer and know no ease. We are full of anguish night and day."

"For what shall we be thankful?" say the persecuted. "Our enemies outnumber us; our burdens are greater than we can bear."

"For what shall we be thankful?" say the weary, the wounded, the forsaken, the heavy of heart. "For us there is no rest, no happiness, no help. Weariness is our portion and burdens our inheritance. We have no cause for rejoicing from the beginning of the year to the end."

For these, for all these, it is written: "Rest in the Lord. Oh, rest in the Lord. Wait patiently for Him and He shall give thee thy heart's desire."

To these, to all these, the promise has been given. To these, the words from a plain old sermon come with power to heal: "There is still heaven to be thankful for. Whatever sorrows beleave us here, whatever fatal mistakes darken our lives, whatever irreparable losses befall us, we may yet rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him in the little life that remains; for beyond this world's gain or loss, high in the serene air of heaven, when existence ceases to be a lesson and becomes vivid life, there and only there shall He give us our heart's desire in its immortal fullness. Here knowledge is defiled, love is imperfect, purity the result of fiery trial, wealth is rusted into covetousness; but in heaven is the very native country of pure knowledge, perfect love, utter sinlessness, and riches that neither moth nor rust corrupt, that bless and cure not."

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