

A Captured Thanksgiving Dinner

PRETTY Mercy Standwell drew out the end of the huge iron crane almost as high as herself—and peered into the pot which it had brought from the fire, shielding her face from the blaze with a pretty, plump hand. Someone had to stay at home to look after things, and this morning Mercy had insisted on the others going to meeting and leaving her to this task, and she had been utilizing the three hours of the long sermon in adding to the stock of food. There were a goodly number of home folks and guests, and no one knew how many her father and mother would bring from the service.

"So ho, mistress," came a deep, mocking voice; "ye have been preparing for our coming, it seems. Beshrew me, but the odors are good. What say ye, boys, turning to a line of practical, sailor-looking men who were following him into the room. "Shall we sit for a while and let this fair wench minister to our appetites? 'Twill be a difference from our blackamoors' cooking, I am thinking."

A hoarse growl of assent came from the line—from all but one, who looked doubtful.

"Will it be safe, captain?" this one asked.

"Safe!" the deep voice echoed grimly. "What have we with a land word like that? Besides, it sounds weak in thy big mouth, Turbell. It is their Thanksgiving time here, and they word long sermons. Let us be thankful, too, and partake of their good cheer. We shall then be fitted, when they return from service, to pick out good men and true for our vessel. And for thy word safe, the soldiery are at their gorging a mile away from here. We can eat and be merry, call our need from the praise singers when they come back, and be dipping across the water before news of the exploit can get over the loaded tables to their ears. Now, Turbell," his keen, scornful eyes flashing about and seeming to see and comprehend everything; "get all the men inside. You fill up the table here, and I will take charge of the one in the next room. It will be time enough to bag chickens and pigs and other live stock when we are through; and perhaps there will be a few scraps left from our feast that we can carry back to the vessel. It will be a change from the blackamoors."

All this time Mercy had been standing by the fireplace; and her eyes, which at first had dilated with terror, gradually calmed and grew watchful and speculative. She had thought they might be king's men, on a raid to impress seamen. Now she believed they were buccaneers, or pirates; but it amounted to the same. The one impressed in the king's name, the other in their own. In either case, the possibility of escape or release were equally small; only, with the pirates, in the event of capture, explanations might be difficult, and then punishment would be quick and certain.

neighbor, the most promising young man around, and the playmate and schoolmate and dear friend of Mercy, had gone out in a boat for a day's fishing. But he had rowed too far. A schooner had slipped from behind an island, a boat being dropped from her davits filled with dark-faced men. Mercy had been on the shore with others and had witnessed it all. And from that day to this no tidings had come back of Robert Wade.

Mercy was thinking of her playmate as she tried to keep the cups of the men filled, and of the similar fate that was pending over her dear ones. And doubtless there would be bloodshed, for the dear ones would resist to the last.

For the most part the men ate noisily, with loud guffaws of enjoyment and much rude badinage. The viands were before them, and they helped themselves liberally, with long reachings. It was only the cups that needed replenishing; but the men seemed to throw the contents down their throats at a single gulp, and then cried lustily for more.

Four times the big pot was refilled and emptied, fresh coffee being added with each refilling. But the men's impatience would not allow for boiling, and when hot water was poured in for the fifth time Mercy had an uneasy apprehension that the coffee was very weak.

Suddenly a cup flew across the

room, crashing against a looking glass and breaking them both.

"To blazes with dishwater," a man yelled. "Here, girl, what ye got that's good to drink—strong?"

"Nothing, sir," answered Mercy, keeping her voice steady with an effort.

"No wine or cider?" threateningly. "No. The only barrel of cider that we had is too strong to drink. It is vinegar now. Father made it for that."

"Father made it for us to drink," mockingly. "And vinegar is just right. Bring in a pitcherful, quick."

"Quick! Didn't I tell ye!" yelled the man. "We don't want any palaveria."

Mercy caught up a large pitcher and hurried out, an eager light coming into her eyes. If she was to do anything, she must do it now. But what?

As was often the case in rural communities, the Standwell young people had some little interest in the farm. Mercy owned a calf and a few of the chickens and a field which she sometimes gave to crops and sometimes left in grass for the hay. The last season it had been in grass, and her seven or eight tons of hay now rose in a large stack on the slope below the barn, where it awaited a purchaser. With its proceeds she expected to buy two or three more calves from her father, some English dress goods from the store, and some presents for the various members of the family.

When she left the house her mind was on the stack, and her face cleared of some of its anxiety when she noticed the wind blew away from the barn.

"Ye was a long time drawin'," grumbled the man who wanted his vinegar, surlily, as she came to him with the pitcher.

"Vinegar runs slow when the bung is small," she answered, "and, besides, the pitcher is heavy."

"Lazy steps lag," he retorted.

"Ye'd ought to be a boy, and on ship-board."

Ten minutes later the captain leaned back, wiping his mouth on the back of his hand.

"Now, what do ye give us for the finish?" he called to Mercy. "Have ye cake and other sweet stuff?"

"Yes, sir, many kinds; and pies and things fit for a Thanksgiving."

"Well, bring them all on. But what's that smoke?" suddenly, and springing to his feet, he rushed outside, drawing his sword. When he came back, a few minutes later, his eyes were red and angry.

"Didn't I tell you men to be careful until we had eaten?" he cried. "Some of ye have dropped fire in lighting a pipe, and the dry grass is burning below the barn. If it spreads, the barn itself may catch, and then some of the torpid soldiers may be wakeful enough to see. Hurry, now, and get through. The psalm singers will be here soon, and we must be ready to invite them on board. Your carelessness will lose us part of the feast. Come now, girl; bring on the sweet things, quick! quick!"

Mercy ran into the storeroom, returning a few minutes later with her arms straining under a pyramid of pies. These she hurried along the table, dropping one before each man. Then she ran back after more. Oh, if she could only keep the men feasting until the soldiers arrived—and even more than that, if only the men in the meeting house would be slow, slow in discovering the smoke, so the soldiers could arrive as soon as they. All of them would believe it was a raid, with buildings being set on fire, and would come hurrying to the spot. Fortunately the freebooting captain himself did not suspect. He had gone just far enough to see it was not the barn, and then the feasting had tempted him back. He supposed the fire to be grass burning in some field beyond.

He did not seat himself again in his chair, but stood by the table, talking to the men.



THANKSGIVING SUGGESTIONS.

Appropriate Festoons of Corn and Peppers For Walls.

A unique and effective idea for brightening and garnishing the room where a Thanksgiving feast was to be given was worked out by the students of a kindergarten college in the West. The room was large—indeed, two rooms thrown into one—with much wall space between the windows, and admitted a broad treatment. Long garlands were made by tying ripened ears of corn in the husk at intervals of their own length along a stout cord. These were made in sections, as being more convenient to put up.

Between stretches of the ears of corn, which, of course, hung with every possible twist and angle, groups of large bell peppers were fastened in all stages of ripeness, from the deep, shining green tipped with red, to the rounded bell of scarlet. The husk was pulled back from the corn, so as to show the golden grain inside, and the contrast between this and the bright colors of the peppers was most artistic. The whole effect of the graceful festooning across the dark woodwork of the doorways, the filmy lace of the curtains and the background of green in the wallpaper was full of the spirit of the day; a suggestion of the fields, of the harvest and the garnering.

And then the table decorations kept the colors of autumn in the shining green of leaves and the flame of fresh gathered salvias and clusters of the red berries of the mountain ash. At each place was a guest card, a souvenir of the redoubtable monarch of the barnyard who had laid down his life for his countrymen. There he was, as the eye glanced from one card to another, pictured in every phase of his all too short life, from the proud spread of the defiant strut to the folded wing of the sacrificial offering.

When all was finished, from oysters to ice cream, with the nuts and coffee came on the tall wax candles, in their shining brass holders, it was with a heartiness which held a note of reverence that the circle rose and, with an unbroken chain of friendly grasp, sang "Should Auld Acquaintance Be Forgot."

The evening of a Thanksgiving gathering may, in music and games, mark further the blending of gentle memories and present joy. The old English ballad, "Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes," carries a strain of the oldtime love, the love that sought not a golden crown. "Believe Me, If All Those Endearing Young Charms," is the song for the older life, when the fact may have lost its freshness but the heart has proved stronger to cherish and the soul to be true.

The Feast of Pumpkins.

A pretty variation on the regular "harvest home" festival was made last year by the young people of a church in one of our smaller cities. They called it "The Feast of Pumpkins," and that useful and cheerful vegetable formed the basis of the whole affair. The hall was decorated with two shades of yellow bunting—the deep orange-yellow of the pumpkin and the lighter yellow of the Hubbard squash. Where the bunting was festooned it was caught up with bunches of corn. The husks were torn open or turned back, showing the yellow grain on the cob. The waitresses were all dressed in yellow, with a conventionalized squash flower made of tissue paper in their hair instead of a cap. At intervals were great "Jack-o'-lanterns" made of the pumpkins with electric lights inside instead of the traditional candle. The tables were ornamented with pumpkins hollowed out so as to form great bowls. These were filled with autumn leaves and flowers. The water for these decorations was put in a bowl which was placed inside the pumpkin. The menu included (beside the regular harvest supper fare) such delicacies as baked pumpkin, pumpkin pudding, pumpkin bread and pumpkin ice! The last named was a very yellow orange ice frozen in individual pumpkin moulds. At the table where were sold the fancy articles and souvenirs of the occasion, there were pretty little pincushions made to imitate pumpkins, and bonbonnières, which were china "Jack-o'-lanterns" filled with yellow candies.—Harper's Bazar.



CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT



A LITTLE SONG.

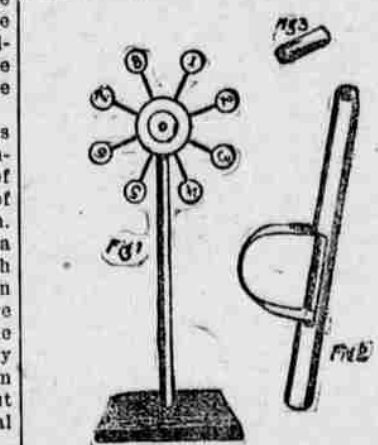
I. I have a little song in me, That sings and sings and sings, I wish it ever could get out Like other pleasant things.

II. I think it looks a bit like me, I couldn't say just why; Perhaps its eyes are very blue Like—those blue bits of sky.

III. And sometimes it's as white and pink As blossoms on our trees; And then again it hops about Just like that chickadee. —Jeanette Marks, in The Churchman.

TARGET SHOOTING ON TABLE.

Figure 1 shows the target cut out of cigar box wood. A circular piece is first cut, about one inch in diameter, and eight small round pieces of cardboard with the numbers 1—8 on them are mounted on toothpicks and grouped around it at even distances; the other ends of the toothpicks are then inserted in the sides of the circular piece of wood. The target itself is fastened to a stick of wood about eight inches long, fastened to a stand, as shown in the picture. The gun consists of a paper tube, which is made by winding cardboard well covered with gine around the stem of a



lead pencil. When it is dry, a piece about five inches long is cut off. One end and three-quarter inches from one end we make an incision about two inches long, cutting down to about one-half of the thickness of the tube. (See Fig. 2).

Figure 2 shows how a piece of whalebone about six inches long is inserted, acting as the propelling power of the gun. You shoot with a wooden peg about one and one-half inches long, fitting loosely into the barrel of the gun; to give it more weight and strength we insert a carpet tack, as shown in Fig. 3.

To shoot, hold the gun with the right hand, pulling the whalebone back with the index finger, and inserting the peg; as soon as the index finger releases the whalebone it springs forward and forces the peg out. To aim well, hold the tube in such a way that the whalebone spring points downward.—Washington Star.

HIS OPPORTUNITY.

You might have seen by Timothy's expression that he was angry. His father had set him to work hoeing, because farm workers were scarce that year, and because his dollars were almost as scarce as the hands. Timothy could see his father in the brook meadow, doing the work of two men; but this was not consolatory. Timothy had planned to spend the Saturday afternoon viewing a baseball game. Every time a gust of the fresh wind brought him the bursts of cheering from the ball field Timothy's anger grew. He kept regretting more and more that he had not spoken the word which would have permitted him to see the game. His father had not positively ordered him to work. He had said: "Just as you please, Tim. You have a choice of opportunities—one to see the game, and one to do a good turn to me." And somehow Timothy had made his choice.

When, however, a wagon dashed by and a young man tossed the stump of his cigar at Timothy, crying, "One strike on you!" Timothy threw down his hoe and reversed his choice. Why should he not see the game and do the hoeing after supper? He climbed the fence, scurried down the road—and in two minutes came back again. After all, he had promised to do the hoeing. A faint crackle, an up-licking tongue of flame stopped Timothy as he was astride the fence.

The smoldering cigar stump thrown by the passing stranger had fallen at the edge of a huge rick near the barns and outbuildings of the farm. The dry rick had caught at once, the flames were spreading—and his father and the hired man were far away.

With a gasp of fear, Timothy jumped from the fence. His coat was lying on the ground. He caught it up and ran to the nest of fire. He was in time. He beat and stamped the fire out. Panting, he stood a moment, looking at the black patch. What if he had not come back? What if he were now cheering and shouting at the ball game?

longer sullen; it was serious. Suddenly he looked up and turned toward the distant, unconscious figure of his father.

"Dad," he said, aloud, "I'll never think of breaking my word again!" —Youth's Companion.

CUTTING OF A BOY'S HAIR.

One of the most ancient and curious customs among the Chinese, and one rarely commemorated in this country, was observed with great pomp and circumstance in Chinatown Sunday night, when Fong Hock, a leading merchant who for years has had the supervision of the Chinese discounts in the Anglo-Californian Bank of San Francisco, entertained his relatives to a remote degree with a magnificent banquet in honor of the first cutting of the hair of his only son.

The banquet took place at an Eighth street restaurant and there were 150 guests. A notable feature was the fact that the wives and children of the guests sat down at the same table with the heads of families. A most elaborate menu, comprising birds' nest soup, steam stuffed duck, Foon Yon Ha, shark's fins and other rare and costly Celestial dishes were served.

The banquet cost the happy father \$1800. During the evening quite a number of prominent members of the San Francisco Clearing House called at the restaurant to offer their felicitations to him. The hair cutting ceremony, which was observed with picturesque rites, symbolizes that Fong Hock's hair is now a factor in the family. The guests brought presents for the little son worth thousands of dollars.—San Francisco Chronicle.

HIGH JUMPING AT SEA.

"The most stupendous of all leapers of the sea," says a writer in Outlook, "is the whale. I have seen a monster weighing hundreds of tons, possibly eighty feet in length, rise slowly and deliberately out of the water until it appeared to be dancing on the surface, entirely clear of it, then sink slowly back.

"Such a leap is on record in the annals of the British Navy. A large whale cleared a boat, going completely over it, an estimated leap of twenty feet in air—how many in a lateral direction was not known. "Exactly how high a tuna can leap it is difficult to say. I have seen the water beaten into foam by them four miles distant, and have a photograph showing a fish—a black streak at least a mile distant high in the air—a jump of certainly ten or fifteen feet; and it is my opinion, based on what I have seen, that it is possible for a lusty tuna at full speed to project itself twenty feet into the air and thirty or forty feet in a horizontal direction.

"I judge the latter possible from the leap of a big tuna which cleared the kelp and landed high on the rocks Santa Catalina. I have often stood in the centre of a school of leaping tunas and watched them, but the situation is not one suggestive of repose or peace of mind."

NAMING THE EVERGREENS.

Here is a suggestion for a little nature study for mother and children:

- White Pine—Five needles in a bundle; scales of cone thickened at the top.
- Scotch Pine—Two bluish-green short needles in a bundle.
- Fir—Erect cone; flat, spreading needles scattered singly.
- Norway Spruce—Large hanging cones; scattered needles point always.
- Hemlock—Small hanging cones; flat spray.
- Arbor-Vitae—Flat branches; cones few-scaled, and only two seeds under each.
- White Cedar—Cones roundish, with four to eight seeds under each.
- Pitch Pine—Dark, stiff needles arranged in threes.—Indianapolis News.

OPTICAL DELUSION.

