

## THE STUFFING IN ALONZO SHEPARD'S XMAS TURKEY.

BY MAX BENNETT THRASHER.

"Where did you put it, Maria?"  
"In the teapot, on the buttery shelf."

"Good land!" said Alonzo Shepard, stepping in the middle of his nightly task of winding the kitchen clock, and turning around to look at his wife. "That is an awful careless place. That's the very first place a burglar would look. Don't you remember how Alvin Roddy had her money and breastpin stole out of her teapot?"

"Sure enough!" exclaimed Mrs. Shepard. "So she did. I'll put it somewhere else."

She went into the pantry, from which the rattle of a teapot lid was soon heard, and a moment after reappeared in the kitchen with a roll of bills in her hand.

The farmer had that day been paid \$850 for the lumber on a pine lot, and until he could deposit the money in the bank at Carey, the nearest large village, their riches would be a source of embarrassment to himself and his wife.

Mrs. Shepard remained standing in the middle of the room with the money tightly grasped in her hand. At last she disappeared in a large closet which opened out of the kitchen, from which she finally emerged empty-handed, and looking relieved.

"What did you do with it?" her husband asked.

"I put it in the toe of one of my stockings, and put the stocking at the bottom of the basket of dirty clothes. Nobody would ever think of looking there."

"No," said the farmer, "I guess they won't. But, if the house catches fire in the night, you be sure to make a grab for the clothes-basket." The next day the farmer had planned to devote to butchering the winter's stock of pork, working in company with one of his neighbors; so he could not go to town that day.

It was late in the week before Christmas, and every one was rushed with the season's work. In the afternoon, after the butchering was done, the farmer hitched up a lumber-wagon, and went to carry home the neighbor's hogs and a scalding-tub borrowed for the occasion. When he came back and went into the house, his wife was not there.

"I shouldn't have thought Maria would have gone off and left the house alone with all that money here," he said to himself. "Must be she didn't know I was gone."

He pushed open the closet door, and looked in. The basket of clothes stood in its accustomed place on the floor. As he stooped down to see whether the stocking with the money in it was at the bottom of the basket, there came a loud rap at the door. Directly following the rap the door was pushed open from the outside.

"Hello, Lon!" said a man standing on the door-step outside. "Excuse me for not waiting for you to answer my rap, but I'm in an awful hurry. Haven't you got one or two more good turkeys you can let me have to fill out a box? I've got a hurry order just now, and I haven't got quite enough to fill it."

"We've got one big one we'd saved for ourselves, and one extra one," said the farmer. "I s'pose you might have them, if it would be any accommodation to you; and I could kill another for us. This is only Friday, isn't it?"

"I wish you would," said the man, who was the proprietor of the nearest country store. "They'll just fix me out. I'll give you two cents a pound more than I did for the others," he added.

The two men went into a back room used as a cold storage-room, and, taking down two fine dressed turkeys hanging from stout nails in the wall, weighed them. The merchant, having paid for fowls, took them and hurried away.

In making the trade for the poultry the farmer forgot about the money, nor did he think of it again until suppertime, when he heard his wife, who in clearing off the table had gone to carry some food into the back room, give a scream.

"Alonzo!" she cried, hurrying back into the kitchen. "Where are them turkeys gone that were hanging up in there?"

"I sold them," the farmer said, "to Jim Richards, while you was over to Cynthia's. Why?"

"Alonzo Shepard!" the woman said, white to her very lips, and sinking helplessly down into the kitchen rocker. "The money was in one of them turkeys. I didn't like to leave it in any one place too long, and so I changed it there to-day."

The two looked at each other in silence.

"Well, it's gone, then," said the farmer. "Jim said he was going to send the box by express on the six o'clock train to-night, and, looking at the clock, 'it's half-past six now.'"

"Do you know where he was going to send them?" Mrs. Shepard asked.

"No."

"Well you better hitch right up, now, and drive over to the Corners,

and find out, so as to write and see if you can't get the money back."  
"Get back nothing!" said the farmer dejectedly. "It's gone, I tell you."  
"Well, try, anyway. It won't do any hurt to try. It may fall into the hands of honest folks."  
"Huh!" with an intonation which expressed the deepest disgust, was all the reply the farmer vouchsafed to this; but he went out to the barn to harness.

When he came back, just before starting, to get his overcoat and mittens, for the night was cold, his wife said, "For the land's sake, Alonzo, tell Jim to keep this to himself; so folks won't know what fools we've been."

"We've been!" shouted the farmer, as he buttoned his coat. "Who put the money in that turkey, I should like to know?" Then he went out and slammed the door.

Jim Richards was full of interest and sympathy. The Shepards were among his best customers, and he would not have liked to lose their trade.

"I'll telegraph to have the box held," he said, "and the money looked for. That was stuffed turkey, all right, wasn't it?"

"And you won't tell anybody?" repeated the farmer.

"Sure not!" said the merchant.

And he did not—that is, not anybody who lived around the Corners, who would have known the Shepards. But the joke on the farmer seemed so good that the merchant could not resist the temptation to tell the story to a drummer who called on him that evening, swearing him to secrecy.

"I'm going to telegraph in the morning and get the old fellow's money back," he said. "Our telegraph-office here is shut up at night; else I would send word now."

The drummer was going on that night to a near-by large town. Being a man who had a shrewd eye out for the main chance, and having no special interest in Alonzo Shepard, or moral principles in general, he sent a telegram to a friend that night as soon as he reached an open office:

"Buy all the turkeys shipped from Corners to-day, regardless of price, and hold until you see me."

The next forenoon the farmer drove down to the store to see whether there had been any news of the turkeys, but no reply had been received to the telegram. Two women who lived in one of the houses at the Corner watched him drive past.

"There goes Alonzo Shepard to the store again," one of them said, "and he was down there last night. They must be going to make Christmas at their house this year."

"You don't suppose that Sophrony is coming home, do you?" said the other.

"I don't know," replied the woman who had spoken first, with that unconscious deepening of interest in her voice which indicates a reference to a mystery or a scandal.

When Sophronia Shepard had married, some ten years before, in open disregard of the wishes and will of her parents, she had left not only her home, but the State, and had never returned.

"You can rest your mind on one thing," the speaker went on. "If Sophrony ever does come home, it'll be because her folks ask her to. I've heard people say that, when she went away to be married, her father told her not to come whining back with a family for him to support; and Sophrony stood up straight, and said, 'I never shall come back, father, unless you send for me.'"

"Well, I should think they'd send for her," the other woman said. "I should think they'd be ashamed not to, if all that's said about their property is true. And folks say she's cook for a family just out of Toronto, a rich family, where she does well—but a cook! And her husband dead, and she left with a child."

"You don't say!" said the woman at the window, as she watched the farmer hitch his horses and go into the store.

"Lemons, rice, raisins, citron, orange-peel, gelatine." A woman standing at the table in the big kitchen of a huge house in one of the suburbs of Toronto checked off the different articles as the grocer's boy unpacked them from his basket.

A little girl leaning on a crutch beside the table watched the operation with eager eyes.

"Mother," she said, when the boy had gone, "tell me once more about Christmas on the farm, when you were a girl at home, and raised the things you ate, instead of having to buy them as the folks do here."

Then the mother told, for the fifth time, perhaps, to this child who knew nothing of the country, and, except for these rare holiday visits to her mother, knew little of any life but that of a bleak boarding-house, the story of the Shepard farm and home—the turkeys and chickens and apples and pumpkins, all the spoil of the farmers' harvest season.

Before the story was ended the area bell rang again, and following the ring came in the marketman with more baskets.

"O mother!" the child cried shrilly. "He's brought the turkeys."

Alonzo Shepard drove down to the Corners every day to take counsel with Jim Richards, and each day saw him come home more and more des-



pondent of ever recovering his lost money.

"He hadn't heard nothing," was all the reply he made to his wife's anxious inquiries.

On the fourth day the merchant met the farmer with an open letter from which he drew a slip of paper and handed to him. It was a cheque for \$850.

"Well, I declare!" said the farmer. "I'd give up expecting to ever see it again. How did you get it?"

The merchant looked at the letter in his hand, and then looked curiously at the man before him.

"That box of turkeys was missent, some way," he said, "and didn't get to market until a day later than it ought to. That was why we didn't hear quicker. Coming that way, they got mixed up over my telegram, and this poultry had been sold before they got my letter, explaining what was wanted, and why. Then they started out to try and trace the birds, and at almost the first house they found the money. The cook had found it. As soon as she knew all about it, she said right off, 'Send it back,' and handed over the money."

"Do you know that cook's name?" inquired the farmer.

"Yes," said the merchant.

The farmer unstrapped his wallet, and took out a twenty-dollar bill. "Send her that for me," he said.

"The woman's name," the merchant said slowly, watching the man before him, "is Sophronia Thompson."

There was no one in the store but the two men. In the pause which followed the merchant's last words the room was absolutely still except for the ticking of a heavy wooden clock against the wall. The farmer had turned in his chair so that the other man could not see his face. A big yellow cat asleep in a square of sunlight on the floor got up, stretched lazily, and jumped up on the counter.

"What day is it, Jim?" the farmer finally asked. His voice sounded hoarse, and as if a long way off.

"Wednesday," was the reply.

"You telegraph for me to—that cook—that her father and mother want her and her little girl to come home to Christmas. She can get here by to-morrow noon."

The next day Alonzo Shepard drove to town again. The two women in the house on the corner saw him. "It's just about train-time," they said. "Let's watch and see if he goes to the depot."

But the merchant handed the farmer a yellow envelope with his mail—a telegram.

"Thank you, father," the message read; "but I cannot leave my work."

"He had me read the message out loud to him, after he had read it once," the merchant told some one afterward. "He acted as if he couldn't believe his own eyes. When I read it, all he said was just: 'Huh! We'll see,' and went out; but the next afterward, 'He acted as if he couldn't believe his own eyes. When I read it, all he said was just: 'Huh! We'll see,' and went out; but the next day after Christmas his hired man brought him down to the village all fixed up to go to Toronto; and, when he came back, Sophrony and her little girl came with him, to live; and they've lived at home ever since, and they're all as happy as you can often find folks. Good as a story, isn't it?"

In fact, the merchant thought it so good a story that the next time the drummer came to the Corners, he

told him how the lost money was found. But the drummer's enthusiasm in the denouement of the tale did not seem very great. You see he was reminded of the sum, considerably more than a month's salary, which he had lost in his recent speculation in Christmas turkeys.—Christian Endeavor World.

### HOW TO GIVE CHRISTMAS GIFTS

We have heard again and again from precept, Press, and pulpit that charity is a sacred duty; that only he who gives, and gives liberally, to those in need is fulfilling his obligations to his fellow-man.

There is another consideration of duty which is rarely considered, and that is the duty of obligation conferred. Be careful as to the manner of your gift. Be careful how you put another under obligation to you—be very careful.

There are many who make their gifts gall and wormwood to those who receive them. You know the sort—the women who make it a point to say: "Did you see Mary in that little frock I gave her?" and the men who say boastfully: "I educated that boy, sir!"

These loud reiterations of favors conferred are terribly hard to a sensitive person. But should the recipients of such advertised favors revolt, and refuse to receive anything further from the hands of their self-styled benefactors, then they are accused of the rankest and blackest ingratitude.

Tactful giving is an art which few acquire. The chief requisites of it are a desire to be genuinely kind and useful to another, a perfectly natural manner when giving the favor, and afterwards an apparent forgetfulness that such a thing has ever been done. For many a trifling gift there has been exacted thrice its worth in spoken gratitude. An exaggerated gratitude is never real. And no one likes to feel that the person who gave him anything is wondering why he does not say more about the gift.

### A NEW GUESSING GAME.

The necessity for amusing and entertaining one's guests at evening gatherings has led to the invention of many guessing games. A new and ingenious one consists of words beginning with c-a-t, and was called "A Quest for Queer Cats." There were twenty questions which, with answers, are given below:

1. A place for the burial of the dead. (Catacomb.)
2. A swoon. (Catalepsy.)
3. What is this book? (Catalogue.)
4. A well known domestic animal. (Cat.)
5. An ancient engine used for throwing stones. (Catapult.)
6. A raft with a sail. (Catamaran.)
7. Niagara falls. (Cataract.)
8. Cold in the head. (Catarrh.)
9. A calamity. (Catastrophy.)
10. To seize with the hand. (Catch.)
- 11.—A sauce. (Catsup.)
- 12.—To question. (Catechise.)
- 13.—A well known plant. (Catnip.)
14. One of the finny tribe. (Catfish.)
15. A book used in Sunday school. (Catechism.)
16. A large church. (Cathedral.)
17. A violin string. (Catgut.)
18. A whip. (Cat-o-nine-tails.)
19. A dupe. (Catspaw.)
20. A plant. (Cats foot.)

### CHRISTMAS CHIMES.

Daydawn of nations' joy and hope,  
Best day of all the year,  
Our hearts with anxious cares which  
cope,  
Are light, and void of fear.

To-day, as in the ancient time,  
He comes to bring "Good will  
And on earth Peace," to every clime  
The angel voices thrill.

Supremest day to childhood given,  
How showered its blessings down!  
When the sweet Christ-child out of  
heaven,  
Came forth their lives to crown!

O! Wondrous Babe of hallowed East,  
Not Bethlehem can claim  
Alone the right to hold thy feast,  
But all who name thy name—

Rejoice to-day, whate'er their creeds,  
And in their souls upspring  
The impulse high to kindly deeds,  
And sad hearts make to sing.

No gift He asks, but He will take,  
And bless it from above.  
If "Inasmuch" for Thy dear sake  
"The least of these" we love.

St. Nicholas and Christmas Tree,  
Come with unmingled joys,  
And child-hearts not unmindful be  
Of poorer girls and boys.

"More blest to give than to receive,"  
And surely this glad day,  
The blessings of the Christ-child  
breathe,  
How shall we Him repay?  
N. E. Watts, Victoria Villa,  
Malton, Ont.

### CHRISTMAS CANDIES.

**Fudge**—Put one tablespoon of butter in a saucepan, add three cups of sugar and one cup of milk. When the sugar has melted add four or five level tablespoons cocoa. Stir and boil 15 minutes, take from the fire, add one teaspoonful vanilla, stir until creamy, pour upon buttered plates, and cut in squares. This is the best and cheapest rule, as the cocoa is more digestible than chocolate and the starch makes the fudge creamy.

Some cocoas are richer than others, and four level tablespoons are sufficient.

**Sugared Popcorn**—In a large kettle put one tablespoonful of butter, one cupful granulated sugar, three tablespoonfuls of water. Boil until almost candy, then add three quarts of popped corn, and stir with wooden cake spoon or fork until cool. Each kernel will be separate and well sugared. If preferred the corn may be prepared with flavored candy, colored with fruit coloring or red sugar, or chocolate melted with the syrup. Nuts may be prepared in the same way.

**Peanut Brittle**—Shell and chop roasted peanuts to measure one pint. Put two pounds of granulated sugar in a clean frying pan, over a slow fire. Stir after it lumps until it melts and colors slightly; then add the nuts and pour quickly upon buttered tins—press out as thin as possible and break up when cold.

**Butter Scotch**—One cupful brown sugar, one-half cupful of water, one tablespoonful of vinegar and a generous teaspoonful of butter. Boil for 30 minutes or until it threads, pour on buttered tins, and when partly cool cut in squares.

Paper from the inside of cracker boxes or wafers as well as all small boxes and candy boxes add to the look of homemade candy. A certain number of girls who always have charge of the candy table at their church fair ask all their acquaintances to save as many pretty boxes for them as possible during the year. They solicit money—buy materials and then re-fill the boxes with their own bon-bons. Everyone who buys knows that the name upon the box is not the name of the maker, but judging by their sales the candy must be considered "just as good."

### A BIT OF CHRISTMAS COUNSEL.

When Christmas comes, it is well to get out of ourselves. Out of the rut, too, if possible. There are Christmas ruts, worn deep and furrowed as by ploughshares in the soil of our minds. We think we must bestow a certain number of presents. We ticket off the names of kith and kin and acquaintance. We spend more than we can afford, and, if we are very foolish, we mortgage our future tranquility by running into debt. One hears a tired Christmas shopper exclaim, with a breath of relief, "Well, I'm thankful there'll be no more of this for another year!"

Such Christmas-keeping is a despoilment of the glad day, a defacement of God's rich gift, sent us in loving-kindness.

When bestowal is a burden and acceptance becomes critical, and the dearest day of all arouses no enthusiasm, the ungrateful Christian has missed the Christian benediction. Why not go forth and get something from the many who have been lighting their little torches of courage and hope at the world's great bonfire of glory and joy? Why not expect something very precious and put yourself in the attitude of receiving it?

Hunting the wren is a Christmas custom in the Isle of Man and parts of Ireland.