Two Christmas Turkeys.

Oh, it was glorious Christmas weather—sunshine and blue skies and a nipping frosty air that whisked about, tweaking noses and filliping cheeks until they bloomed like peonies!

Church was out, and a stream of people poured along the streets in the merriest humor imaginable, for, bless us all, it was Christmas day, and their hearts were aglow with the spirit of peace on earth and good will toward men.

The youngsters went hurrying homeward with skates slung over their shoulders of the new and glittering pattern especially delighted in by Santa Claus, for fine as the ice was the ringing of the noontide bells had called up visions of turkey and stuffing, plum pudding and mince pie which no mortal boy could resist.

As for the little girls in the new hoods and mittens and muffs they had found in the chimney place that morning, between vanity and appetite they stood irresolute at their own front gates, such happy, rosy, chubby creatures that everybody smiled involuntarily at sight of them.

The policemen on the corners slapped their arms about like windmills to keep themselves warm, grinning from ear to ear just because it was Christmas day. And over all pealed the joyous music of the bells in carols that found an echo on every lip.

Even the houses wore a gala air. Wreaths of evergreens hung in all the windows high and low, and the market on the corner was a thing of beauty and a joy forever, with piles of crimson cranberries, golden pumpkins, silver turnips, celery, apples, pears and nuts heaped picturesquely behind its frost etched panes of glass, and the whole framed in graceful festoons of ducks and chickens.

It was a triumph of art. No wonder the passers stopped in spite of their hurry to gaze upon it for the thousandth time and fall to speculating as to what had become of its two crowning glories—the biggest turkey on record and the smallest—which had hung there side by side for a week past in a contrast at once the joke and admiration of all beholders.

Popular belief held that the monster, the 30 pounder, had been purchased by old Ebenezer Green, the rich and crusty bachelor who lived by himself in a big house on the outskirts of the town, for he was the only person who could have afforded to buy it in such hard times. But the little one! There was hardly more meat on its tiny carcass than on a spring chicken. Who had a family small enough to get a Christmas dinner out of that?

Ebenezer Green had been asking himself the very question as he sat by the fire that noon, now watching the flames leap up the chimney, now turning to glance at the woman who presided over the housekeeping laying the table for his holiday feast—a feast, alas, of solitary splendor! He had been struck all at once at the absurdity of setting such a gigantic bird before a single person, and when he saw a platter half as large as the table taken down from the closet where his mother's blue and white Canton china was stored he fell into a silent fit of laughter.

The woman nodded grimly, with a quick appreciation of the situation. "'Tis funny, I declare," she said presently, pausing as she reached the door with the great platter in her arms, "but the funniest part of it all is that the little feller is cookin this minute next door where they've got six mouths to fill beside their own. 'Tis honest Injun!"

"Next door?" Ebenezer glanced up inquiringly.

"Yes, in the cottage on the east side."

"Why, it's tumbling to pieces. 'Tisn't fit for anybody to live in."

"Well, folks moved in a month or so ago, respectable looking, but I guess they are about as poor as can be. He's out of work, and he helps about the house handy as a woman, and she takes in sewing. There's a parcel of children, and I don't believe they ever have a good square meal among 'em. Think of 'em sitting down to-day to that mite of a turkey!"

And Ellen chuckled at the picture.

"How do you know they have that turkey?" demanded the old gentleman, more impressed than he would have liked to own by the curious coincidence which had kept the two fowls still near neighbors.

"The boy told me that brought ours last night. It seems he chores for the market sometimes, and they gave him the little turkey when they found there wasn't any prospect of its being bought. But, land's sake! I smell something burning." She hurried off in a flutter of anxiety. A Christmas dinner of all dinners to be spoiled!

Her master rose and slowly crossed the hall. He had been a handsome man in his day, and though his hair had whitened and his shoulders bowed under the burden of years he was still an imposing figure. He had few acquaintances in the town and was regarded with awe, principally on account of his wealth, which was reputed to be fabulous, but not a little because of a somewhat reserved and haughty air.

He made his way deliberately toward the sitting room, a spacious, comfortably furnished apartment, with windows looking out upon the shabby, weather beaten cottage, in which the other turkey was to end its mortal career. Sure enough, there were unmistakable signs of occupation about it.

The neglected garden had been put in order, the broken gate repaired and re-hung, and a general air of neatness gave a new interest and attraction to the little house long empty and unnoticed. The shades were drawn high to let in all the warmth of sunshine of the happy holiday, and Ebenezer Green could see what was going on in the room as well as if he had been one of the busy people in it.

Busy they were, for the table was spread with a clean white cloth, and the father, with a troop of excited children to help, was at that instant engaged in the thrilling occupation of taking up the children's dinner. The mother, pale, thin and sweet faced, was evidently the guest of honor, ensconced in the one comfortable chair, with a cushion at her back and watching the proceedings with a charming smile, half amused, half melancholy.

The eldest boy, a tall lad of 12, who did the chores at the market, filled the glasses with water fresh drawn from the well. Two gleeful little girls danced in with dishes of potato and turnip, and a brace of chubby youngsters in much patched trousers trotted after with the bread and butter, proud to assist in the serving of such a feast.

And last of all the father appeared in the doorway enveloped in a big white apron, to be greeted by an uproarious shout of delight. For he bore on a platter—oh, me, such a tiny platter!—the crowning splendor of the day, the turkey, done to a turn and smelling more delicious than ever a turkey smelled before, as the whole family unanimously agreed. There was gravy, too, in a funny china pot with a large handle, and who brought that in, feeling the importance of the occasion to the utmost, but the baby, toddling along as gravely as a judge, deep anxiety in her blue eyes. And cider! A whole quart in the big white pitcher—extravagance which could only be justified by the recollection that it was Christmas day.

And now the father laid aside the apron. The cook vanished; the head of the house appeared. He led the pale mother tenderly to the table, and the children, followed, prancing to their places around the table, which nobody thought bare or poorly set forth. There came a pause for a moment—the little heads, brown, black, and flaxen, were bent silently over the plates while the father asked a blessing and thanked God for his goodness in keeping them together and giving them so many comforts. And then he took up the carving knife as he gazed anxiously at the turkey. The revel was about to begin.

Ebenezer Green turned away, with a sigh. The bell had sounded in his own dining room, and standing on the threshold of the apartment he bent a fixed stare upon the table, where there were flowers and silver and cut glass, and on the side table, smoking hot and browned till he crackled all over, loomed up the mighty outlines of the prize turkey. For one man!

All at once the oddest idea popped into the head of that one man. If he had stopped to think about it, nothing would have happened, and the prize turkey never would have played a part in a story. But, for once in his life, the old man acted upon the spur of the moment. He hurried out into the hall, put on his coat and hat, opened the door, slipped back into the dining room and took up the platter from the table.

Oh, but that was a monstrous bird! Thirty pounds? Fifty! Old Ebenezer fairly staggered under its weight as he cautiously picked his way over the ice and snow toward the cottage door, and he couldn't even spare a hand to knock. The toe of his boot managed to make a good, smart rapping, however—a sound so unwonted that the father ran hastily out, with the children trooping in his train.

"Good day," gasped the visitor, quite out of breath after his Herculean efforts. "Good day, and wish you merry Christmas! You don't know me, but I'm your next door neighbor, Ebenezer Green. I've got the prize turkey, but I want you to help me eat it, for I'm very lonely over there all by myself. Can I come in?"

Come in? Well, the father saw in a trice how it was, and he opened wide to let in the turkey and its bearer, not to speak of a rush of crisp, chill air. The spirit of good will stirred in his heart, and forgetting the disparity of wealth and poverty between them he felt only a warm throb of sympathy for the solitary old man. The mother stepped forward, kindly gentle in a simple courtesy which would have become a palace.

"You need not have brought your dinner with you, sir," she said, smiling. "You are quite welcome to a share of ours on Christmas day. Jimmy, put a plate for the gentleman, and John," turning to her husband, "do not let him hold that heavy platter. Oh, what a turkey! He must have been raised in a land of giants."

So once again it chanced that the big turkey and the little one were side by side. The cottage was very soon a scene of riotous enjoyment, for Ebenezer's spirits rose at a bound and he felt like a boy again. He sent Jimmy back with a note to his housekeeper, who thought he had suddenly become mad when she found not only him but the turkey gone.

Over went the flowers, and the nuts and raisins, and apples and pears and grapes, the mince pies and the plum pudding from the great house to the small, and the children, who had not had a square meal for weeks, sat down to a board fairly groaning under the weight of the good things on it. The little boys ate till they could barely see.

The little girls were nearly distracted between admiration of the pink roses nodding in the tall vase on the festal board and astonishment at the pudding when Mr. Green set it to blazing in burning brandy.

And the father and mother wondered how their neighbor had ever got his reputation of being stiff and proud. Never had so delightful a guest descended into their modest household before.

They all put in and washed up the dinner dishes afterward. The father washed and Ebenezer Green wiped, wishing the directors of the bank could see him, and the young feet tripped briskly to and fro until everything was in its place, clean as clean could be. It was a real frolic.

Then they pressed up around the fire. The big logs had gone from Mr. Green's cellar not many minutes before Jimmy had worn a path through the snow to the house next door. It was story telling time, and in the cheery glow on the hearth the father poured out his soul and told how he had been thrown out of work by the closing of a factory, how hard he had tried to find another place, but to no avail, and how all they had to live upon was the sum his dear wife earned by sewing and Jimmy's pittance from the market. And the wife, in her turn, told how brave and patient he had been, with a loving glance that made him blush with pleasure.

And Mr. Green promised that he should have something to do by New Year's day and gave his word upon it, feeling for the first time how much happiness a rich man has the power to create.

Then it was his turn. The children gathered at his knee to drink in breathlessly his tales of travel by land and sea, of strange countries he had seen and people he had known—queer, quaint people in far off places, whose custom and history sounded like the most entrancing of fairy tales. The baby drew nearer and nearer, and finally climbed upon his knee, listening with her great blue eyes wide open. When it was her bedtime, she laid her cheek upon his in a soft caress.

"She loves you," she said, and in a burst of laughter was led away—not far, for the house was very tiny. Her childish voice could be heard prattling on while the elder sister made her ready for bed, and then the group outside fell into silence, while the little one knelt beside her crib and murmured the dear familiar words of her "Now I lay me down to sleep."

Oh, that was a happy Christmas day! As it drew toward its close Ebenezer Green lingered in his sitting room, bare and empty after that he had left so full of love and cheerful content. The fire leaped and flared and threw its rich light into the shadows round his chair. He felt the baby arms still round his neck, the dimpled baby cheek pressed close to his own, wrinkled and seamed with the cares of the world, and when the chimes rang out at midnight soft and clear the old man bowed his head, and for the first time in many a year he breathed a little prayer.

HOW CLEMENT HARRIS DIED.

He Fought While His Greek Comrades Ran Away.

The following story, related by a correspondent, in a letter from Athens, dated Oct. 17, is worth reading: Last autumn, he writes, a talented English lad of good family and good fortune determined to spend the winter at Corfu. He had already, though barely out of his teens made a name for himself in musical circles; he had earned the friendship of the great ones of the earth; he was a welcome guest in the house of the Dowager German Empress and of our own Princess of Wales. His compositions were the theme of common conversation, and the world was opening brightly for young Clement Harris. An enthusiast in all he undertook, he soon fell a victim to the wiles of the Ethnika Hetaeria. Before spring broke he had forgotten the hatred of Greek he had imbibed at Harrow, and was full of Greek wrongs and anxious for Greek freedom. War had not yet been declared when he threw in his lot with the cowards of Corfu. He became an enrolled member of the Andartes, and undertook to serve against the Turks when called upon.

THE CALL CAME SOON

and early in April Clement Harris, with about threescore Corfiotes, determined to cross to Arta to join the army there being formed for the invasion of the Epirus. In good English fashion, the campaign was to commence with a dinner; and on the evening of his departure young Harris entertained some twenty patriots at his hotel. The steamer was in the harbor. His modest and very amateur fighting kit was packed, his baggage was left in charge of the hotelkeeper, and toasts were freely pledged to the "Freedom of Epirus and Confusion to Turkey." As the evening wore on the head of the party went down to the steamer then lying in the harbor that was to take them across to Arta, and, returning, said she was so crowded, so dirty, and uncomfortable, that they had better wait until another steamer should arrive. The young Harrow boy retorted that he had made up his mind to go that night, and go he would! so, shouldering his pack he bade his Greek friends adieu and embarked for Arta.

Early on the morrow the Greek officer who had been his staunchest friend appropriated his bicycle, another his camera, and another his great coat; and whilst they fought the battle of words in Corfu they allowed their English friend to

SHED HIS BLOOD

in their cause without striking a blow themselves. Arrived at Arta, Clement Harris found himself drafted into a company of about sixty Andartes, each of whom was furnished with a woollen cloak, a cap, rifle and Albanian shoes and twenty drachmas in money. Some of the men struck for more money, but their clamor was silenced with the retort "You have a rich Englishman with you, he will pay for all your food. "From Arta, Harris went to Louros and was hurt in the foot endeavoring to put out the flames in a burning town. From Louros he marched over the hills to Pentopegadia, where with half a dozen Andartes, all that remained of the sixty who had left Arta, he held a knoll to the right of the old masonry fort. Here he fought as many a Harrow boy has fought before him, and as many another will fight in the days to come, and when the retire sounded, and his five unwounded comrades sneaked away, young Harris stayed until a friendly bullet ended a career full of promise and laid low a lad who knew not how to fly. There were seventy Greek prisoners taken by the Turks that day. The brave Corfiotes of the 10th Regiment knew how to save their skins, but they let their English comrade die without an effort to save him.

AGRICULTURAL

TREATING PRUNING WOUNDS.

A bulletin recently issued gives some results in the treatment of pruning wounds on trees. It says: Having done the pruning, and made the wounds, how shall we treat them? Shall they be covered with an application of any sort? This is almost universally recommended, especially when the wounds are large. In order to test this question, six different methods of treatment were carried through, all being used at each of the times when the pruning was done. The applications used were liquid grafting wax, shellac varnish, white lead paint, pine tar and coal tar, the other wounds being left with no application whatever. The comparison of the different applications is much more reliable than that between different times of pruning, for each tree received the same number of applications of each kind, so that the tree which was weak and feeble, where wounds would not readily heal, would leave the same impression upon the results in one case as in another. To incorporate all the observations made upon this point would be as uninteresting as useless. Wax is the only application which appears to possess any advantage in aiding the wound to heal, though most of the others did not hinder the process. A greater proportion of the wounds treated with wax are reported as healing extremely well than of any others, while but few are reported as healing slightly, the majority healing either well, very well, or extremely well. Those treated with shellac did not seem to have healed quite as well as those left untreated. Paint does not hinder the process of healing and there is little evidence that it favors it, the slight variation being no more than would naturally occur between two sets of wounds treated in the same way. Those treated with pine tar seem not to have healed quite so well as those untreated, although the difference was not great. Coal tar, however, seems to have been a positive hindrance to the healing process, not one wound having been reported as healing extremely well, while the majority are reported as healing only fairly well. When we come to the matter of checking, conditions are different. Although untreated wounds heal as well as any, except those covered with wax, we find that they check worst of all. Only two wounds of those left without an application of any kind, in our experiments are reported as not checked, while most are reported as checked and many as badly checked. In this matter the paint stands pre-eminently at the head. By far the greater part of the wounds treated with paint are reported as not checked, nearly all the rest as slightly checked, only three as checked and one as badly checked. Wax and coal tar are about on a parity in this matter, both being decidedly beneficial though neither is equal to paint. Shellac and pine tar also rank about even the pine tar having a little the advantage. Both succeed in preventing checking in a measure, but not to any great extent. It will be seen, therefore that while an application of any sort may not be worth while so far as healing is concerned, and may indeed even hinder it, as in the case of coal tar, it is of decided value in preventing wounds from checking. This is doubtless as important as the matter of healing, for the checks readily serve as starting places for decay, which may in time destroy the life of the tree.

It was noticed in the pruning done in January and February, when the weather was cold, that these wounds which were not treated with any application very soon began to check, while all the applications prevented this for a time. The shellac soon began to crack and drop off and the wood would then check in the spots thus exposed. The wax showed some tendency to do likewise, though not so much. The bark was commonly found to have died back for one-fourth of an inch or more, except where wax or shellac had been used. In these cases it seemed to be healthy and sound entirely to the edge. As to durability, there is still a different ranking of the various applications. The coal tar seems to have stayed on better than any of the others. This may not, however, indicate any particular advantage. It colors the wound, and that color remains, but perhaps without very much body to serve as a protection to the wood itself. Next to this comes the paint, which stayed nearly as well as the coal tar, and this in turn followed by the grafting wax, which proved to be fairly durable. Both shellac and pine tar failed utterly in this regard. In no case are either of them reported as staying well. In nearly every case they were all gone, or nearly gone, in June, 1897. Of course the question of durability is not an important one, provided the results may be obtained without it. If the wound heals well and does not check, it matters little whether the application stays well or not, but in general it will be found that if the application does not stay the wound is likely to crack open. Taking all things together, nothing seems to be better for covering the wounds made in pruning than common lead paint, which is closely followed by grafting wax. The wax is superior to paint in the matter of healing, but does not last as well and is not so convenient to apply, although in warm weather when it works well there is little trouble in this regard. Coal tar is useful in preventing the wood from checking, but appears to be a positive hindrance to healing so that, in spite of the fact that it stays well, there is little to recommend it. Pine tar is no aid to healing, being apparently a trifle detrimental while it helps only slightly in the matter of checking, and does not last well, therefore it has nothing to recommend it. Shellac is a failure. It does not last and neither aids the wound in healing, nor, to any appreciable extent, prevents it from checking.

FIXING UP THE FENCES.

The fence question is one of those persistent problems that will not down. In fact, the problem is sure to come up every time the fence goes down. If the farmer could arrange to have all the posts of any particular line of fence rot off at the same time, or all the boards to spring loose at once, the question would be much simplified. It would then be a question of rebuilding, and easily solved. But when it comes to fixing up the weak places and rebuilding a spot here and there with a new post in one place and a mended wire or renewed board in another, the problem becomes more complicated and vexatious. We are tempted to follow a system of patching, promising ourselves that the mending will last for a year or two and the doctored spots will last as long as the rest of the fence, when we will have a new one.

Fences must be fixed up as long as wood decays or wire and boards break, and we would suggest a few principles which we find practicable in doing the work: First, begin the work when building in the first place. Wire is supplanting all other kinds of fencing for field divisions. When properly built, a wire fence will last a long time and the repairing will be confined to renewing an occasional post or mending a broken wire. But where poorly built there is a ceaseless demand in restretching the wires and bracing the posts anew. Needed repairs should be attended to promptly. A broken post, is no support, but by swaying in the wind, loosens the wires and sags the fence on either side, and, again a broken spot is always a temptation to stock. They are always sure to find the weak places, and the hole is certain to be larger before they leave it. This is especially true of yard fences where we use boards and nails. Then we would say, let promptness in repairing any weakness or break be the second principle upon which we work. Third, be thorough. An old fence is a hard customer to deal with. As a rule it is best to use radical measures where a fence needs more than a mere strengthening in some weak part. When a fence gets in a dilapidated condition it is economy to tear it out at once and rebuild. Most of the old material can be used again and the fence instead of being patched for a year or six months will need no attention for several years and will also present a better appearance. We once knew a man who was always fixing his old fences and never rebuilding. Almost every post had a prop against it and the neighbors said that whenever the wind changed Mr. Blank was out changing the props along his fences. We must all have some old fences, and of necessity must do more or less patching at times; but it has been our experience that the most satisfactory way is to make a business of pulling off the wires and straightening up the posts, renewing any that may be broken off. Then the work is done for sometime. In repairing board or rail fences the sound posts can be settled to their places, new ones put in, and then the boards renailed. A poor fence is always a dangerous fence. A large percentage of all injury to stock is done in old fences, where the wires have become loosened or detached and the slack condition offers a temptation to stock. We cannot be too careful in keeping the ends of wires fastened where stock will not run into them. There is a general practice of stretching a wire along an old rail fence as a support to broken posts and to keep stock from rubbing against it. We know of no better and cheaper way to reinforce an old fence. Be careful, however, if horses have access to it that it is not left too long. If it is partially fallen down they will attempt to cross it and the chances are they will be injured.

ARE THE PULLETS LAYING?

With a season where obstacles of almost every form have been encountered, the farmer who has hens, few or many, must be looking very earnestly for eggs. Are the pullets laying? If not, what is the trouble. If early hatched and now five months old they should be shelling out eggs worth two cents each in the market. If they fail of their duty something is wrong and to find what that is and remove it, is the first duty of the farmer. Is it an overfat condition or a tendency to fat forming? Is it that the birds are lousy or the nests filthy? Is it because of lack either of food or exercise? Assuming that the birds are from four and one-half to five months old one of these questions will probably touch the seat of the difficulty. Attend to the pullets and they will attend to you. Get the machinery for egg building into operation at the earliest possible moment and keep it busy until April. Then the year's account will balance itself in a fair manner and the secret of successful poultry keeping be solved.

EXISTENCE IS PRECARIOUS.

Considering how many people die every year, it is evident that living is very, very dangerous.